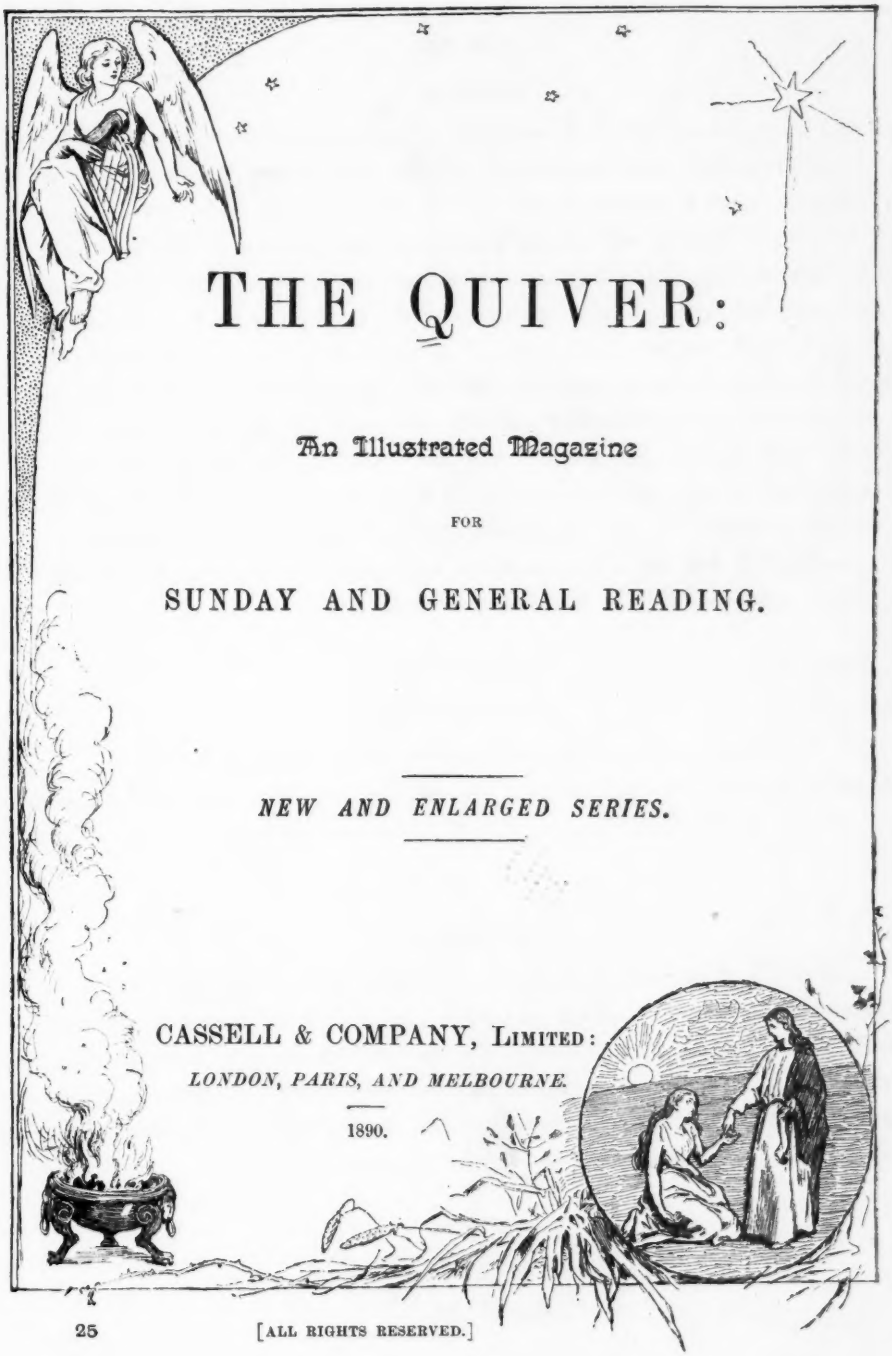


THE QUIVER:

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NEW AND ENLARGED SERIES.

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XUM

THE QUIVER.

"THE QUIVER" GOOD CONDUCT PRIZES.



ALBERT E. S. WATTS.

POSSIBLY we are beginning to learn in these days the lesson that, as a stimulating power, kicks are not so potent as halfpence, that in the long run encouragement will do infinitely more than all the driving in the world. It is strange that it has taken so many centuries to learn so simple a lesson, if, indeed, we have yet learned it; for how many masters and employers of labour we still find who seem to think that no work can be carried forward without a continuous stream of fault-finding and grumbling!

Still, we are beginning to find that the Irishman's idea of suspending a carrot before his donkey's nose is far more efficacious than any amount of belabouring in the rear. Hence we see that in our educational establishments the ferule and the birch are fallen from their high estate, and scholarships, prizes, awards, allurements of one sort or another, are held temptingly before the gaze of the rising generation. And with good effect too; for, with a wisdom equal to that of the Irishman's steed, the young idea breaks into a brisk trot along the path of knowledge, and—happy consummation!—in the exercise develops a love of knowledge for its own sake, of excellence for excellence' sake, and so can dispense with the carrot.

There are some few who object strongly to prizes of any sort whatever. "Virtue for virtue's sake," say they, "knowledge for the love of knowledge." This may be all very well for these high teachers themselves, but will scarcely do for ordinary flesh-and-blood youngsters. It is scarcely wise to expect the boy but just breeched, to whom toffee is a real factor in life, to spring at one bound to the topmost round of the ladder of virtue. Moreover, as rewards and punishments are divinely woven into the very nature of things, into the soul and body of man, surely such objectors fly a little too high and one is inclined to attribute their reasonings more to the liver than to the brain.

It must be generally known among our readers that for the last three or four years QUIVER Prizes for good conduct have been awarded at different benevolent institutions, such as the Princess Louise Home of the National Society for the Protection of Young Girls, the National Refuges, the Gordon Boys' Home, and others. The annual award of the QUIVER prizes is quite an event among the young people of these Homes. Few prizes have these little ones, for in many cases it requires the most strenuous efforts on the part of those who have given their lives to the carrying on of these charities to get funds to provide absolute necessaries—to fill the hundreds of little mouths, and find clothing.



ELEANOR R. GARNHAM.

In such institutions doubtless the QUIVER Prize is a real boon, and is highly valued by the winner. One guinea is sent annually to seven of the chief Homes for destitute and orphaned children, to be awarded to the best conducted boy or girl. In some places where there are both boys and girls the money is divided into two prizes: sometimes it is given entirely in money, but more often half in money and half in books or other useful articles.

We give this month portrait-sketches, taken from life, of most of this year's prize-winners. The histories of these young people are tinged with sadness, and it would be hardly wise or kind to draw the veil that hides the past. Orphaned, and some of them worse than orphaned, we can only hope for them that the shadowy part of their lives lies behind them, and that these prizes are but the first-fruits of many yet to be won in the battle of life.



CHARLES LEET.



ELLEN BROWN.

At the Orphan Working School, Haverstock Hill, the prize is divided into two, and the prize-winners this year are Albert Ernest S. Watts and Eleanor R. Garnham, both of whom have excellent reports. The artist has hardly done justice to the latter in the accompanying portrait. The sweet and pleasing expression that shone in her face when we first shook hands with her, vanished under the trying ordeal of sitting to be sketched.

At the Princess Louise Home of the Society for the Protection of Young Girls, Ellen Brown has received the prize. She, with many other of the elder girls, is employed in the laundry attached to this place. Here it has been found to work well to allow the young people to vote their own prize-winner, the superintendent and matron reserving to themselves the right to veto the selection if necessary. It has never been found necessary to exercise this right, however, as so far the vote has always fallen on one of the two or three that the matron had mentally selected herself. This rather interesting election takes place at a public meeting held by the girls in their own school-room.

At Field Lane Institution, Charles Leet and Mary Ann Green are the winners.

Charles is a quiet-looking boy, engaged in the tailoring department of the Boys' Industrial Home at Highgate, and is shortly to be put apprentice to that trade. He is a beautiful singer, the master informs us, and plays the piccolo in the band.

We next turned our steps towards



JOHN JOHNSON.

Shaftesbury House, the head-quarters of The National Refuges for Destitute Children—an immense institution with its Ragged and Industrial Schools, its Country Homes, and *Arethusa* and *Chichester* training-ships. We were introduced to John Johnson, a sharp little fellow who has carried off the Good Conduct Prize here. We set him up to have his portrait sketched, and such is the moral effect of a semi-military uniform, that he stood without flinching for the space of an hour with all the grim determination of a soldier facing the enemy.

Little Julia Johnson, or Judy, as she has christened herself, represents the National Orphan Home, Ham Common, Surrey. Her father was a soldier, and her mother, whom she has not seen for six years, was left on her husband's death with four little children unprovided for.

The Asylum for Fatherless Children at Reedham, among the Surrey hills is, like the Orphan Working School, a charity for the children of parents belonging to the middle class—a class less picturesque in its poverty, but as full of heart-rending records as the utterly destitute. From the 300 orphans here sheltered Joseph Lacy Goldsack and Edith Lampard have been awarded the QUIVER Prize. We give a portrait of the former, but Edith Lampard, we are sorry to learn, is on the sick-list; so we have to content ourselves with mentioning her name and the fact that will astonish many of our juvenile readers—that in all the five years that she has been at Reedham she has never lost a single mark.



JULIA JOHNSON.



J. L. GOLDSACK.

We were to have added a sketch of Corporal William Balmer, the prize boy at the Gordon Boys' Home, but as he is away on leave of absence, and time presses, we must close our portrait gallery without the gallant corporal.

Going from one Home to another we have met several of the QUIVER prize-winners of former years; some are still beneath the sheltering roof of their foster-homes, others have gone out into the world as sailors, domestic servants, page-boys, and some into trades and commercial offices; the report of all, in so far as we have heard, is that they are doing very well. So not without reason we end this short account as we began it, by saying—"A little encouragement is better than a great deal of driving."

WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHADOW OF MONT BLANC.

"Oh, thou proud mountain! whom I now survey,
Not in the phrenzy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty."

IT was a lovely summer day in the year 1861, and every hotel in Switzerland was full of tourists and pleasure-seekers, whose polyglot chatter came pleasantly through the open windows of the gay saloons. But though the principal hotel in Chamouni was even fuller than its rivals, it was curiously quiet. Only yesterday a party, consisting of two guides and two young men, had set out to ascend the great mountain that rears its snow-clad head so far above the little village, and of the four only three had returned alive. The fourth—a young English baronet—had slipped on the edge of a precipice; and though the party were roped together, the rope had had a rotten strand, as too many Alpine ropes have, and had given way at the critical moment. His companions had been unable to rescue the unfortunate young man, and had been obliged to return

without him. It was no wonder that a thrill of horror fell on the visitors, or that their hearts were stirred with pity for the young man cut off in the flower of his strength, and with sympathy for the two gracious and high-bred women who were staying at the hotel with him, and one of whom was known to be his wife.

The other was his wife's mother, Mrs. Kenyon, a handsome and distinguished-looking woman, whom many people admired more than the gentle and rather insipid Lady Vereker.

Nothing had been seen of either of these ladies since the climbing party returned with the news of the sad event which had plunged them in such sudden and overwhelming grief. It was whispered that Lady Vereker had been utterly prostrated by the shock; and that an English doctor had been in attendance upon her all day.

When at last he was seen coming down the stairs, he was watched by many curious and sympathetic eyes, and a lady, who was evidently English, stepped forward and accosted him.

"How is Lady Vereker?" she asked, in a voice that was singularly clear and sweet.

The pure, clear intonation had something of the same effect as the rather severe chiselling of the beautiful face. Both might have been cold, but for the sweetness of the one and the look of anxious sympathy in the other. The doctor paused for a moment before he answered, and in the pause he thought that he had never seen so beautiful a woman.

"Thank you, Mrs. Dalrymple," he said—he knew just her name, and that she was the wife of the gentleman who had accompanied Sir Raymond Vereker in that ill-fated ascent—"Lady Vereker is doing pretty well. It is the child I am the most afraid of."

"The child?" exclaimed Mrs. Dalrymple. "Do you mean——"

"Did you not know? Oh yes, a boy—but such a puny little thing! It is more than doubtful if it will live, I'm afraid."

Other ladies had gathered round Mrs. Dalrymple and the doctor, and there was a general murmur of sympathy and commiseration.

"Is there anything that I—that any of us—can do?" Mrs. Dalrymple asked; but Dr. Fletcher shook his head.

"I think not. I am going now to see if I can find a nurse, and I'm sure I hope I shall succeed. Lady Vereker is quite unable to nurse the child herself, and, humanly speaking, its life depends on that."

"Poor little thing! But if Lady Vereker gets on all right——"

"Lady Vereker will not get on unless the child does—I've seen quite enough to be sure of that. I believe its coming has saved her reason or her life—and I fear her life hangs on the child's."

The kind-hearted doctor went off to make inquiries of the landlady, and the little group of sympathising women dispersed in various directions. Only Mrs. Dalrymple remained, looking after the doctor's receding figure, and apparently debating some point with herself. Whatever it was, it was quickly decided; and indeed, one had only to look at the firm mouth and the lines of the beautiful chin to know that this was a woman whose decisions would be as prompt as her actions would probably be vigorous. She was a bride of a few weeks' standing, and her husband, Captain Dalrymple, was a man who had distinguished himself in the Crimean war, and had since been in active service in the East. Returning home, he had fallen in love with and married the daughter of a celebrated London banker, and the happy pair were on their honeymoon when the captain and Sir Raymond Vereker agreed to share guides and ascend Mont Blanc together. No faintest shadow of blame attached to Captain Dalrymple, who had done all in his power to save his companion's life; but the fact that they had been companions in that fatal expedition seemed to the happy bride a link between herself and the stricken widow that no one else in the great hotel possessed. She went up-stairs, and knocked with soft, firm fingers at Lady Vereker's door.

It was opened, not by a servant, but by Lady Vereker's mother, Mrs. Kenyon, and Mrs. Dalrymple felt a further impulse of pity to see the change in the elder woman's face, but she did not venture to remark upon it.

"How is Lady Vereker?" she asked. "I came to inquire for her, and to ask if I could be of use in any way. I am quite used to illness, and if I could do anything I should be so glad."

Mrs. Kenyon looked at her in a dazed, uncertain way.

"Thank you; you are very good," she said, "but my daughter is sleeping now, I am thankful to say."

A feeble cry from the room made her turn quickly.

"It is the child!" she exclaimed. "I must go to it, so I must ask you to excuse me."

She looked as if about to close the door, but Mrs. Dalrymple made one more effort.

"Cannot I help you?" she entreated. "I have so many little nephews and nieces, I am quite clever with children."

The elder woman gave way at last, vanquished by a will stronger even than her own. She took Mrs. Dalrymple into the room, where the child, dressed in some odd-looking foreign baby-clothes the landlady had lent, was keeping up a feeble little wail in the inexperienced arms of Lady Vereker's maid.

Mrs. Dalrymple took the tiny bundle from her and walked up and down, crooning gently, as she had often done to her brother's little ones, and the rhythmic movement and softly sung lullaby seemed to act as a charm. The wailing stopped, and the small eyes closed. Mrs. Kenyon ceased to look anxiously at her grandson, and sat down beside the widowed daughter, to whom, in the extremity of her trouble, had been vouchsafed the double blessings of motherhood and sleep. She had said, truly enough, that she could not sleep herself. There was too much to do and to think of; and now that poor Raymond had been taken from them, there was no one to think or to act for her daughter but herself. Something would have to be decided about the funeral, and she had already telegraphed for the family lawyer and for their own doctor. She understood that Dr. Fletcher

would be leaving Chamouni shortly, and in any case she would feel easier if Dr. Overton were there. Dr. Fletcher was a young man, and, grateful as she was to him, she would feel more confidence in Dr. Overton.

ful. The gravity of his bearing, the anxiety in his face, had haunted her ever since. She wondered how far she could trust to words that had to be set against looks like those.

"Did you see Dr. Fletcher?" she asked Mrs.



"Watched the two boys playing on the lawn."– *p.* 10.

This was the burden of Mrs. Kenyon's thoughts as she sat by her daughter's bed, and watched Mrs. Dalrymple walking up and down with the baby in her arms. If only Dr. Overton were there, she would feel easier, she thought. She could not feel easy now, for indeed she was anxious both about the mother and the child. Dr. Fletcher had spoken hopefully, it was true, but he had not looked hope-

Dalrymple, who was still pacing the room with her tiny burden.

"I stopped him to ask after Lady Vereker. It was then he told me about *this*."

"And what did he say about Evelyn?"

"About Lady Vereker? He said she was doing well. Oh, yes! I am sure of that. He said she would be all right if——"

"If!" exclaimed Mrs. Kenyon. "If *what*? Tell me—tell me exactly what he said!" The anxiety in her face quite frightened Mrs. Dalrymple. It seemed cruel—nay, as she glanced at the frail little creature in her arms, it seemed impossible to tell Mrs. Kenyon that the doctor had declared that the mother's life hung upon the child's.

She was spared a reply by the entrance of Dr. Fletcher himself, followed by a round-faced, comely peasant girl, clad in the picturesque costume of the district. She carried an infant in her arms, and looked a perfect embodiment of health and good-humour. Mrs. Dalrymple divined at once that it was the foster-mother of whom Dr. Fletcher had gone in search, and very proud he seemed of his success.

"It was the most wonderful piece of luck!" he averred. "Her husband is a strolling singer, and she had been left at her mother's while he went off on a tour. They are all poor enough, and Madame Balmano will be glad to turn an honest penny. She has a fine healthy babe, and is the very woman for us. She has brought her child with her: the best credentials she could bring."

He spoke a few rapid words in French, and the stolid face expanded into a smile as the nurse put back the wraps from her own child's face, and evidently offered him for the ladies' inspection.

Their looks were less admiring than the doctor's. Healthy the child might be, but pretty it certainly was not. Its skin was too swarthy, its hair too dark for beauty at an age when, to English eyes at least, extreme fairness is the only type of loveliness.

"He is not like his mother," Mrs. Dalrymple said; but Mrs. Kenyon was not thinking of his looks from an artist's point of view.

"He looks healthy," she said, in a tone of satisfaction, as she felt the firm, mottled arms. "As long as he is that, nothing else matters."

"He is not a bad-looking little fellow," said Dr. Fletcher; "but his father is an Italian, which accounts for his being so dark. The mother speaks French and Italian, but very little English."

"All the better; she will gossip less," Mrs. Kenyon said approvingly.

And then she began to arrange details, and Mrs. Dalrymple took her leave, almost as pleased as Dr. Fletcher himself that so promising a nurse had been found.

"For indeed, Hugh," she said to her husband, as she joined him on the balcony that opened out of the *salon* and overhung the steep little street, "Dr. Fletcher says it is the baby's only chance, and it would be too sad if Lady Vereker were to lose the child. It would break her heart—I am sure it would. Poor thing, poor thing! who could have thought, when we all came out here to look at the moon, only two nights ago, that such trouble was in store? It is wonderful—wonderful, how women bear such things and live! Hugh, if anything happened to *you*——"

She could not finish for the sob in her throat, but he felt the convulsive clasp of her hands upon his arm, and knew that tears were shining in her eyes. He drew her closer to him, and looked down on the quivering face with a sort of tender banter.

"Why, Madge!" he cried, "what sort of talk is this for a soldier's wife? Your nerves are all unstrung, and the sooner we get away from Chamouni the better. Would you like me to run away from the enemy's fire for fear of your feelings, my dear——"

She interrupted him with a quick, proud gesture.

"You *know* I wouldn't, Hugh. It seems to me that I never realised before what it must be to lose the man you love; but death would be nothing—*nothing* to dishonour!"

CHAPTER II.

THE LITTLE BARONET.

"Death borders upon our birth, and our cradle stands in the grave."—BISHOP HALL.

A MONTH later, the memory of the catastrophe on Mont Blanc had almost passed away. Chamouni was in the full tide of the summer season, and guides—with ostentatiously brand-new ropes—were as ready as ever to accompany adventurous tourists up the side of the great, white, beautiful mountain where Sir Raymond Vereker had met his untimely fate. Only in his wife's heart her grief was still fresh and new, and Mrs. Kenyon was pale with watching, and her eyes grew more and more anxious from day to day.

Louise Balmano proved, in a passive, indifferent way, an excellent foster-mother, but the little heir of the Verekers had not thriven under her care, and Lady Vereker had proved the truth of Dr. Fletcher's predictions, and seemed to fade with the fading of her infant's life. Mrs. Dalrymple would have felt her heart torn by sympathy for the mother and the child; but the Dalrymples had left Chamouni long ago, and of those who had been in the hotel when Sir Raymond Vereker lost his life, only Dr. Fletcher still remained.

Dr. Overton, the family doctor for whom Mrs. Kenyon had telegraphed, was away from home, holiday-making in Norway, and Dr. Fletcher, who had already sacrificed the greater part of his own holiday to the patients in whom he had come to feel so lively an interest, stayed on from day to day, reluctant to leave them till Dr. Overton arrived.

He would be with them in a few days now, but it seemed to Dr. Fletcher that the question was of hours rather than days.

"If we could but get her moved to a quieter place!" he said, as he stood by Lady Vereker's bedside, and listened to the low, delirious mutterings of the fevered lips.

The people at the hotel were considerate and kind, but neither consideration nor kindness could make a crowded hotel, where tourists were coming and going,

a suitable place for an invalid in Lady Vereker's critical condition.

To remove her seemed impossible, but Dr. Fletcher was energetic, and his patients were rich. Between English energy and English gold difficulties were overcome. and the night before her own doctor was expected, Dr. Fletcher had the satisfaction of establishing Lady Vereker in a châlet a little way from the hotel, where at least she would be free from the injurious effects of bustle and noise, from the clatter of feet shod with tourists' shoes, and the ceaseless buzz of French and English, of German and American tongues.

"At least she may die in peace," he thought, as he lifted her from the litter in which she had been moved, and carried her into the châlet. And then he wondered, for the hundredth time, if he had been right to risk the experiment of removal, and if, after all, it had not been made too late.

She knew no one now: neither mother nor doctor. It was only when they laid the child beside her that a glimmer of recognition came into the languid eyes, and the dry, burning lips parted with the dawning of a smile. It was touching to see how maternal love triumphed over the weakness that made her oblivious to all the world beside, and tears of infinite pity and the expression of a nameless dread she would not put into words filled Mrs. Kenyon's eyes.

"It is the one thing she notices," she said, looking at Dr. Fletcher with eyes dark with that awful, nameless fear.

"Yes," said the doctor compassionately: "the one thing she notices—her one tie to life. It is best to face the truth, Mrs. Kenyon—the mother's life hangs upon the child's."

"And the child's?" she whispered, with a sinking heart.

"The child's is in God's hands," said the doctor reverently.

"That means you have no hope!"

"While there is life there is hope. If the baby rallies—but I am bound to tell you I do not think it will——"

"Dr. Overton will be here to-morrow," she said eagerly, and then she gave a faint, bitter cry. "I see what you think—you think that will be too late!"

If Dr. Fletcher had said what he thought, he would have admitted that she was right; but few doctors have the courage of their convictions when a woman's eyes implore them to forswear themselves for dear pity's sake.

"We will hope it may not be," he said evasively; and Mrs. Kenyon was too anxious to accept the shadowy hope to press him further.

She told herself she hoped, but when the doctor had gone, she sat down with something nearer the inertness of despair. Her eyes were on her grandson, on the frail, puny child on whose life she had just been told that his mother's life hung, but her hands lay listlessly in her lap. What was there that she, that anyone, could do? No one could look on the frail little creature and believe that it would live. Already it seemed to the anxious woman, watching it with that fixed, hopeless gaze, that its eyes were glazing. that each breath was more feebly drawn. The nurse came and took the child from the pillow where his mother had fallen into an uneasy doze, and shook her head over him significantly; and Mrs. Kenyon felt as if a fresh stab had been dealt at her lacerated breast.

It was evening now, the exquisite evening of an Alpine sunset, when it seems as if heaven itself was opened, and all the myriad hills break forth into singing at the sight. Each separate peak seemed an altar, glowing with celestial fire, till the tints slowly faded through opaline glories to the mysterious greys and whites and faint translucent greens of an Alpine night. And still Mrs. Kenyon, keeping her sad vigil far into the moonlit night, felt as if a chill from those snow-clad hills had crept into her heart, and turned her veins to ice. If this child, on whose life so much depended, might but live! There seemed a cruel irony in the thought that this descendant of an illustrious house should be so frail and puny a thing, a creature doomed to death before he had well tasted of life, while the peasant-boy in the cot beyond was healthy as a babe could be. There could be no anxiety for the hearts that loved Giuseppe Balmano—if there were any such—Mrs. Kenyon thought bitterly. She doubted it sometimes, so stolid and undemonstrative were his mother's ways. She seemed to have no preference for her own son, to know no difference in her affection for the children—if the tepid regard she gave to both could indeed be called affection!

No one would have missed the little Balmano, Mrs. Kenyon thought now, as she kept her vigil that moonlit summer night. No mother's life hung on its baby breath, no ancient line depended for its continuance on its feeble existence.

It was not strictly true, indeed, that this was the case as regarded the Verekers. There was a distant cousin—so distant that Lady Vereker's mother had never known more of him than his name—who would be Vereker of Verecroft if he survived the present frail possessor of the title. To Lady Vereker's mother he hardly seemed a Vereker at all; he was an impalpable abstraction, a mere name the lawyers brought into their documents; but for all practical purposes he was as much a stranger as if he had not borne the name of Vereker. She forced herself to think of him now, however. John—or George—which was his name? She could not remember, nor where he lived, nor what his profession was; but the lawyers would know, no doubt, when the time came.

And thus the brief summer night wore to the rosy dawning of another day, and once more Dr. Fletcher came, with his soft professional tread and grave anxious face. Graver and more anxious than ever he looked as he bent over the little cot where the small Sir Raymond lay. For once he did not go to the mother's side, but stood with his finger on the little wrist, where even his accustomed touch could hardly detect the failing pulse. It was Mrs. Kenyon who caught a whisper from Lady Vereker's bed, and bending down to catch the feeble sound, came back with a white, scared face.

"She is asking for the child," she said, holding out her arms.

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But Dr. Fletcher did not lay her grandson in them.

"He is past moving," he said decidedly; and it seemed to Mrs. Kenyon that the death-warrant of her daughter was in those few brief words.

"What shall I do?" she cried, in tones of anguish; and for once the ready doctor had no suggestion to make. What could he say or do that would avail in a strait like this? But an answer to the hopeless question was unexpectedly supplied. Louise Balmano stood up stolid and unconcerned in the tragic little group.

"Miladi asks for ze bébé?" she said in her imperfect English, "and he must not remove? Ah, bah! is not one bébé all as good as anuzzer? Miladi know not'ing—Miladi will not know!"

And before either grandmother or doctor guessed her intention, she had taken her own son from his cot and laid him by Lady Vereker's side.

"How dare you?" the indignant grandmother began; but Dr. Fletcher interposed.

"Let her be!" he cried. "It is the best thing she could have done. See, it is true enough that Lady Vereker does not know. It is her best—I believe it is her only—chance of life."

The argument prevailed, and when Dr. Fletcher went away, Louise Balmano's son was still sleeping by Lady Vereker's side, and the little baronet was lying in the cot from which no one would venture to move him while yet the faintest signs of life remained. That they would cease before the sun was well above the snow-capped peaks, already blushing in his morning rays, Dr. Fletcher felt sure, but he could not wait to see the end. He had stayed to the furthest moment possible, and Dr. Overton would be there before noon. And after all, there was nothing he could do.

He wondered often on his homeward journey how the patients he had left in Chamouni were getting on, and he wondered from time to time even when he got back to his work, but he never heard. The child was dead, of course, he thought; but though he looked for its name in the *Times* obituary, he never saw it; and by degrees Chamouni and Lady Vereker and the poor little baronet almost faded from his mind, till he happened to meet Dr. Overton in consultation a few months afterwards.

Then, when the business in hand was over, he asked after the patients who had interested him so much on his summer holiday. Both the ladies were well, Dr. Overton reported, and the boy was getting on famously.

"But the boy died!" cried Dr. Fletcher.

"Died? Not a bit of it! As fine a little fellow now as you'd wish to see," the other protested stoutly.

"I can't understand it," Dr. Fletcher said, with a very puzzled face. "Why, the child was *in extremis* when I left him. He was dying, if ever I saw death. It seems impossible!"

"Ah!" said the elder man, "there are two things we always learn in our profession before our hair is as grey as mine: one is to distrust a positive prognosis, and the other is to believe that nothing is impossible."

CHAPTER III.

VERECROFT.

"Under the shady roof
Of branching elm, star-proof."—MILTON.

VERECROFT is one of the comfortable country houses common in England, and common nowhere else, and the well-wooded park that surrounds it is, if possible, more English still. The setting of the Verekers' lives is the sweet woodland scenery in which Shakespeare's life was set. The Avon that runs by Stratford runs by Verecroft too; the great Warwickshire elms stretch their umbrageous arms, and cast their deep, cool shadows about both; there is the same wealth of swelling upland, rich with corn, and of fertile pastures, where the cattle stand knee-deep in the long, lush grass. The few cottages near have the same whitewashed walls, with the cross-beams painted black, with moss-grown roofs of ancient thatch, and little latticed windows, where the roses and the jessamine climb and flourish as they never flourish on more pretentious walls.

They have budded, and bloomed, and faded six times since Lady Vereker came back to the house that was her husband's, and is now her little son's. She has put off her weeds at last, and looks almost a girl again, except that in her face is a satisfied fulness of content that only happy mothers know. And Lady Vereker is not only a happy, she is an ideal mother. Her life is bound up in her child's as entirely, if not as fatally, as in the days when Dr. Fletcher declared that the one hung upon the other. She thinks, and thinks truly, that he is a son of whom any mother might be proud: and proud and adoring she is, to the verge of spoiling. Whether, if she were left to herself, she would cross that impalpable line and ruin the child she loves so well, it is impossible to say. Lady Vereker is not left to herself. Mrs. Kenyon still lives with her widowed daughter, and is the ruling spirit at Verecroft; and Mrs. Kenyon takes care that her grandson shall not be spoilt.

She is even too strict with him, Lady Vereker considers—is a trifle stern in her manner, a little cold. The six-years-old baronet, who tyrannises over everyone else in the house, stands in awe of his stately grandmother, and is indeed a little afraid of her. He is a fine sturdy boy of his age, dark as a gipsy, and with long velvety black eyes that are his mother's especial pride. It is one of Lady Vereker's grievances that Mrs. Kenyon cannot be brought to admire Ray's eyes; but Mrs. Kenyon says, with undeniable truth, that his mother admires them enough for both.

It would be hard to say, indeed, what there is about her boy that Lady Vereker does not admire. She admires everything, from the crown of his dark-



"Lancelot stood entranced within the doorway."—*p.* 15.

haired head to the sole of the foot, that is so much less finely arched or well shaped than her own. The Verekers have generally been a fair-haired race, but the young Sir Raymond has curls of a crisp dark brown that is already almost black. He promises to become a handsome man, but of a type sufficiently unlike his immediate ancestors.

He is unlike, too, the only relative he possesses on his father's side of the house. This is Lancelot Vereker, a boy some three years older than himself, and son of the distant cousin who would have succeeded to the title had the little Raymond died when Dr. Fletcher expected him to do so.

They had known little or nothing of this distant cousin then—not even so much as his Christian name; but on their return to England Mrs. Kenyon had displayed an extraordinary interest in him, and had induced her daughter to seek him out.

"For we cannot forget that he is the heir if anything happens to Raymond," she began; but the look of anguish in the eyes of Raymond's mother made the words die on her lips. She never referred to that aspect of the subject again, but she never rested till the object of her solicitude had been discovered.

His name had proved to be neither John nor George, but Raymond; but this seemed his only link to the prosperous Verekers of Verecroft.

He was a country clergyman, with the poorest of livings, and in such failing health that it was possible for Lady Vereker to offer assistance without offence, and for him to accept it without humiliation. He had never known Sir Raymond, and was a good deal

surprised at the kindness shown him by his cousin's widow, but it served to assuage his sufferings, and to relieve him of the anxiety as to his son's future which had been the bitterest drop in the father's cup. His wife had been dead some years, and there was no one to care for the little Lancelot; but Lady Vereker promised to adopt him, and was rewarded as much by the satisfaction in her mother's face as by the dying man's unspeakable gratitude.

Lancelot had been at Verecroft two years now, and a greater contrast to his cousin could scarcely be imagined. He was tall and slight, with none of Sir Raymond's sturdy robustness, with much less vivacity, and, it must be owned, with a much more equable disposition. His eyes were a tawny hazel, his skin of an ivory fairness, and his hair stood up from his forehead in thick chestnut waves, and fell in natural curls upon his shoulders. In his suit of black velvet he looked like a painting by Velasquez or Vandyke, while Sir Raymond's dark round face and flashing eyes recalled as strongly the canvases of Murillo. But if the cousins were unlike—perhaps because they were unlike—they were devoted to each other. Lancelot had all the protective affection of his three years' seniority for his little cousin, and Raymond looked up to Lancelot with the imitative admiration of a small boy for a big one, and regarded him as the model of all manly excellences.

In one thing both were indeed alike, and that was their affection for Lady Vereker. Though Raymond tyrannised over her, he adored her with all the passionate ardour of his stormy little heart, while Lancelot regarded her with a mingled love and gratitude that made him absolutely devoted to her service. It was not in him to be demonstrative, but Lady Vereker was often startled at the depth of feeling in the boy's calm eyes and quiet tones. His mother had died too early for remembrance, and the father's reserved, undemonstrative nature had been, perhaps, too much like his own for perfect sympathy or passionate love. His father's dying charge had been the inculcation of gratitude to his benefactress, and the boy had never forgotten this, while his half-starved heart had opened to Lady Vereker's gentle caresses as flowers open to the sun.

It was a peaceful, pleasant life, this life in the grey old Warwickshire house, that was set amongst the silver windings of the placid Avon, and sheltered by the giant elms of Verecroft Park: a life of calm repose, that was broken only by the small storms of the little Raymond's impetuous wrath. These were, indeed, of tropical force and frequency, but when they were over, his repentance was so touching, his contrition so sincere, his attempts to conciliate or atone so generous and ardent, that Lady Vereker often thought she would hardly have had her boy less impetuous and hot-tempered than he was.

She and Lancelot were always ready to extenuate, excuse, and forgive. It was Mrs. Kenyon who seemed to set justice above mercy where her grandson was concerned: who extenuated no childish fault, excused no passionate outburst: and if she forgave, forgave so coldly that the high-spirited child resented forgiveness more than punishment.

Mrs. Kenyon had altered more than Lady Vereker since that fatal visit to Chamouni. The younger woman, though the catastrophe had affected her so much more nearly, had regained her health, and even her spirits, but Mrs. Kenyon seemed never to have recovered from the shock. She looked quite an old woman already, and the manner that had once been only dignified had become cold and forbidding. She shrank from society far more than Lady Vereker, and suffered from a sort of nervous depression which sometimes kept her in her own rooms for days together. At such times she shunned even her daughter's company, and the little Sir Raymond took especial care to keep out of her way. The only person who could approach her with impunity was Lancelot Vereker, for whom she showed a curiously capricious affection, sometimes treating him as coldly as her grandson, and sometimes overwhelming him with caresses, and lavishing upon him money and presents with a sort of reckless profusion, which Lady Vereker deprecated as unwholesome for a boy in Lancelot's position.

Lancelot was not ungrateful, but the spasmodic and capricious spoiling, with its intervals of entire neglect, failed to inspire him with the same regard as Lady Vereker's equable and unfailing kindness. The one was true affection, which he returned with all the devotion of his heart; the other—what was it? He could not tell. He called it affection now; but there came a day when he understood, and then he called it by another name.

Whatever it was, it prevented his dependent position from galling, and even from making itself felt. If Sir Raymond had a pony, Mrs. Kenyon insisted on Lancelot's having one too. When Lady Vereker gave Raymond a watch, Raymond's grandmother presented Lancelot with its duplicate. The clothes in which Lancelot looked the beau-ideal of aristocratic grace were the *fac simile* of those in which his cousin only looked a model of gipsy freedom and picturesque ease.

"He might be a gipsy!" a gentleman in clerical attire was saying now, as he stood beside Lady Vereker's chair, and watched the two boys playing on the lawn. It was Mr. Selwyn, the vicar of the straggling country parish on the edge of which Verecroft lay. He had ridden over to see Lady Vereker on parish business, and was enjoying the shade of the Verecroft elms, while he sipped the blandest of tea out of dainty Sèvres cups. "He might be a gipsy," Mr. Selwyn said. "Are you sure he isn't a changeling, Lady Vereker?"

Lady Vereker smiled at the harmless little joke, as she was meant to do; but Mrs. Kenyon stood up with a face that scared both her daughter and the vicar.

"What do you mean? Are you *mad?*" she asked, with white quivering lips, and eyes that looked as if they could have slain the vicar on the spot.

And then she forced herself to calmness, and broke into a shrill little laugh.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Selwyn; I am a Scotchwoman, you know, and never see a joke."

Mr. Selwyn bowed uncomfortably. It might be true that Mrs. Kenyon could not see a joke, but was that any reason she should transfix him with that

annihilating glance? He sat down with a nervous, deprecating smile, and cast about for some safer topic of conversation.

"Have you seen the paper to-day?" he asked Lady Vereker, who was looking almost as uncomfortable and astonished as himself.

"No; I was busy this morning. Is there anything particular in it?"

"Only the rumour of disturbances in Ashantee and the account of the Dalrymple case."

"The Dalrymple case? What is that? There were some people of that name at Chamouni—he was with poor Raymond that dreadful day.—Don't you remember, mamma?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Kenyon; "and his wife was so kind afterwards." The colour had returned to her cheeks, and self-possession to her manner.—"What is the Dalrymple case, Mr. Selwyn? I don't remember seeing anything about it."

"There was a paragraph a month or two ago, but the trial was in the papers to-day. It could not be your friend, I should think," ended the vicar nervously. "No one you knew would be likely to—to——"

"To put themselves within the grasp of the law?" Mrs. Kenyon finished the unfinished sentence with a curious mocking bitterness, and what the unhappy vicar mentally designated as "another basilisk glance."

"It was a Captain Dalrymple whom we knew at Chamouni," Lady Vereker said, "and I believe his name was Hugh."

"I am afraid it must be the same," said Mr. Selwyn, "for this man is in the army, and his name is Hugh."

"And what has he done?"

"He is accused of forgery."

"Forgery! Impossible!" with a horrified gasp.

"I fear it is too true. The evidence was very clear against him. It was altogether a painful case, for the chief witness was his wife's own brother. There was an inquiry about a month ago, and he was committed for trial; and now they have found him guilty, and the papers are full of it."

"And what will they do to him? He will be dismissed the service, of course?" Mrs. Kenyon asked. Lady Vereker looked too horrified to speak.

"Certainly; and has five years' penal servitude as well."

The good, nervous vicar glanced almost apprehensively at Mrs. Kenyon as he announced her friend's disgrace, but there was no offence in her face, only a good deal of womanly sympathy and pity.

"His poor wife!" was all she said. "Heaven help her! she was the proudest woman I ever knew."

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"—MARLOWE.

FIFTEEN years have passed away, and the Verecroft boys are boys no longer. The years have rolled on so uneventfully: one day, one week, one month, has been so like another, that both Mrs. Kenyon and Lady Vereker would be ready to aver that no change has visited their lives. It is only when they look at Lancelot's chestnut head towering so far above their own, and remember that Raymond only wants a month of his majority, that they realise that time has not stood still, that their boys have grown to man's estate, and that a change they can no longer ignore has come upon them all.

Only Lancelot is at home this summer, for Sir Raymond is still at Oxford, and will probably be there for another year yet. Lancelot was called to the Bar a year ago, but has not yet begun to practise his profession.

There would be time enough for that, Lady Vereker said, when Raymond came home; and meanwhile, what could Lancelot ask better than to devote himself with all his strength to his benefactress's service? The Verecroft steward was getting old and feeble, and the management of everything was practically in Lancelot's hands. Lady Vereker laughed fondly at his energetic administration, and Mrs. Kenyon hoped cynically that Raymond would make half as good a squire as his penniless cousin; but there was no doubt that Lady Vereker was spared much anxiety and worry, and that the estate would come to Sir Raymond next month in all the better order for its passage through his cousin's vigorous hands.

How Sir Raymond's majority should be celebrated was the engrossing topic at Verecroft now. Mrs. Kenyon would fain have passed it over without any public rejoicings, but Lady Vereker insisted that her boy should come of age with all due honour, and Lancelot supported her entirely. Verecroft should be *en fête* that day, they both agreed. Raymond would come home, of course, and there should be an ox roasted whole for the villagers, and a marquee in the grounds, with a cold collation for their own friends. There should be cricket and archery and tennis in the afternoon, and fireworks and coloured lamps at night. It would not be the fault of either of these amiable conspirators if the celebration of Sir Raymond's majority fell short of his father's, or of any other Vereker whose coming of age the county could remember.

Half the county was bidden to Verecroft for the 20th of June, and Lady Vereker and Lancelot passed the intervening time in a fever of excitement and preparation, while Mrs. Kenyon looked on with faint sarcastic smiles, and sad, wistful eyes. She was a feeble, white-haired woman now, looking much older than her seventy years, and going about leaning on a silver-headed cane. She seldom left her own apartments when Sir Raymond was at home, for the coldness she had always shown to her grandson seemed to have grown into actual dislike. To Lancelot she was as kind as ever, though it was still a curious intermittent kindness, and there were times, the young man fancied, when she shrank from the sight of him, nay, even from the sound of his voice. He could not understand it, but he did not trouble much about it. Mrs. Kenyon could not be quite right in her head, he thought, and so accounted for what was otherwise unaccountable.

Unaccountable indeed it seemed to Lancelot Vereker that anyone should undervalue his cousin Raymond—a crime in Lancelot's loyal eyes only second

to failing in duty or affection to Raymond's mother. Who was so handsome or popular as Sir Raymond? Who was so clever and amusing? who could talk so well? above all, who had a voice like his?

Lancelot felt all an elder brother's pride in his handsome young cousin intensified by the almost romantic gratitude he bore to Lady Vereker. Where and what would he have been but for her? There was nothing, he told himself, that he would not do for her or for her son.

He was proportionately indignant at Mrs. Kenyon's want of interest in the birthday festivities. Why should she be so indifferent when all Verecroft was anxious to do Sir Raymond honour? And why, oh! why should she have chosen this time of all others to traduce him to his mother?

For Mrs. Kenyon had been over to Leamington one day, and had come back full of a report she had heard there of Raymond's attentions to a young lady whom she chose to describe as a music-mistress.

"A nice connection for the heir of the Verekers!" she cried, looking severely at her daughter. "What have you been doing, Evelyn, that you could not bring him up better than that? Well, well—it is no fault of yours, I know. Didn't the vicar tell us last Sunday that every sin brings its own punishment? He was right, Heaven knows!—but the punishment has an odd knack of falling on innocent heads."

"What do you mean? What have you heard? A music-mistress? I don't believe it!" cried poor Lady Vereker, aghast.

"You can believe it or not, as you please. I heard it from Mrs. Lacey, and again from Mrs. Phipson, and they are neither of them given to making unfounded statements. You know yourself he was always in Leamington at Easter."

"Because Lance was away, and of course it was dull for him here."

"He contrived to amuse himself there, it seems, and not in the wisest of ways," said Mrs. Kenyon. "It is all over Leamington that he is going to marry the girl. Mrs. Lacey was astonished to find that we knew nothing about it. I told her I could say nothing as to Lance, but that certainly neither you nor I had ever heard a word."

"Lance would have told me," Lady Vereker said, with a look of affectionate confidence that made Lancelot colour with gratification; but Mrs. Kenyon interpreted the sudden flush in another way.

"Lance knows all about it, I've no doubt, but a Vereker *pur sang* does not tell tales or betray confidences," she said. And then she went away, leaning on her stick and frowning to herself, and looking, Lancelot thought, more like a malefic fairy godmother than ever.

"Did you know about it, Lance?" Lady Vereker asked, turning to him with imploring eyes and outstretched hands. "You know I don't want you to betray Ray's confidence——"

"There is no confidence in the matter," said Lancelot, clasping the delicate hands in his and raising them to his lips. "I knew that Ray had met a Miss Meredith at Easter, and that he admired her very much; but I did not regard it very seriously. As for any engagement between them, it is mere gossip, and utterly false, I am sure."

"He might have told me," sighed the mother.

"He was afraid you would be vexed, I suppose. I did not say anything myself, because it never occurred to me that it was a serious thing. I believed it would all wear off as soon as he got away. You know what Ray's fancies are."

"This is the first he has not told me of," she said, with a wan little smile. Did it mean, she wondered, with a shiver of foreboding, that this was a more abiding feeling? For indeed, Raymond had been in love a dozen times since he left off jackets, and his mother had always been his confidante—till now.

"Who is she, really?" she whispered, trembling. "A music-mistress? It cannot be true."

"A half-truth," said Lancelot. "She is a friend of Lady Rosalie Finch's. Ray met her there at Easter, and when I came home he raved about her—but I doubt if he even remembers her now."

"But is she a music-mistress?"

"Her mother is a widow, and not very well off, and I believe Lady Rosalie was trying to get her some pupils just amongst her own friends. She is certainly a friend of Lady Rosalie's, so you see it is not as bad as it sounds," said Lancelot, ready as ever to excuse his cousin and put his actions in the best possible light.

"And—and what is she like?"

"I have not seen her. Ray says she is—perfection!" said Lancelot, with a little smile at the extravagant word. It was so easy to smile at Ray's ephemeral raptures, and so difficult to believe in their reality. "He will have forgotten all about it when he comes home," he said again, and Lady Vereker allowed herself to be consoled.

Nevertheless, she admitted that she could not rest till she had heard more about Miss Meredith, and intimated her intention of driving into Leamington to see Lady Rosalie Finch that very afternoon.

Leamington was about nine miles from Verecroft, and while Lady Vereker found the distance a convenient excuse for only seeing as much or as little of Lady Rosalie as she pleased, the young men found it a pleasant ride or drive, and had come to be much more intimate at the Rosery—as Lady Rosalie called her pretty little house on the Kenilworth road—than Lady Vereker herself had ever been. The two ladies had known each other as girls, and had always kept up a certain acquaintance, but Lady Rosalie thought Lady Vereker prim and old-fashioned, and Lady Vereker was astonished and dismayed at her friend's utter defiance of conventionality, and especially at the way in which she took up fresh acquaintances and drifted into intimacies with people of whom she really knew little or nothing.

To hear that Miss Meredith was the friend of an earl's daughter was not as reassuring as if the earl's daughter had been anyone but Lady Rosalie Finch; and Lady Vereker was conscious of feeling both nervous and anxious as the carriage pulled up at the Rosery gate.

A play on her own name was one of Lady Rosalie's fancies. Her house was the Rosery; her rooms were

hung with rose-coloured curtains, looped up with gilt finches; her notes were written on rose-tinted paper, with a rose and a finch embossed upon it instead of initial or crest; her ornaments were chiefly in the form of tiny birds that a lively imagination could regard as finches; conserve of roses was handed round at her afternoon teas; and if she did not array herself in rose-coloured garments, it was only because Hilda Jackson, her friend and companion, told her bluntly that they would make her look a fright.

"With your sallow complexion you can't be too careful in your dress," this candid friend was fond of saying; and then she would borrow Lady Rosalie's maid for her own toilet, and scold her "dear Rosalie" for coming down *mal coiffée* just as her guests were ringing at the bell.

Lady Rosalie was the daughter of the late, and the sister of the present, Earl of Wimbledon. She had run away, when quite a girl, with a penniless lieutenant, and though, on his death, her family had made overtures of reconciliation, she had sternly refused the olive-branch. If they had not cared to remember her existence while her dear Charlie was alive, she would have none of them now, and she wrote a defiant little letter to her brother, in which she reproached him for a coolness that was rather her father's fault than his, and signed herself "Rosalie Finch" in enormous letters that had a note of resentment and defiance in every stroke.

"Poor Rosie! She always was a fool, and I suppose she always will be!" was Lord Wimbledon's comment as he put his sister's letter in the fire, and determined to dismiss Charlie Finch's widow from his mind.

Since that, Lady Rosalie had gone her own way. She had a small income of her own, and had chosen Leamington to live in because house-rent was cheap and society not difficult to find. She was a tall and rather stout woman, with bright dark eyes, a broadly beaming smile, and a perennial interest in her friends' affairs that some people called sympathy, and some impertinence; but as she also possessed an inexhaustible fund of amusing chatter, and a genuine good-heartedness that showed itself in a hundred little kindnesses to high and low, Lady Rosalie Finch was a decidedly popular person, and the Rosery one of the most popular of houses.

She had soon tired of living alone, and had invited a distant relative of her husband's to share her home—an arrangement that suited Lady Rosalie's dread of solitude and aversion to household management as well as it suited Miss Jackson's limited income.

Hilda Jackson was a pretty little brunette, who still possessed an elegant figure, and the remains of considerable beauty of feature, and whose endless flirtations were a constant amusement to her friend. Both the ladies were in the pretty rose-tinted drawing-room when Lady Vereker was announced, and Lady Rosalie ran forward and greeted her with a little scream of delight.

"You *dear* thing!" she cried, with an effusive *abandon* that was perhaps more appropriate to a girl of eighteen than a portly widow of eight-and-thirty. "You dear thing! I haven't seen you for ages—positively *ages!* If it wasn't for those dear boys of yours, I should know absolutely nothing about you.—Hilda, find Lady Vereker *the* comfortable chair, and ring for tea, dear, do! She comes so seldom, we must pet and make much of her now we've got her.—Well, and what's the news, Evelyn? You might be all dead and buried at Verecroft for anything we hear of you now. Lancelot never comes near us when Raymond's away, and I'm sure we make no difference—do we, Hilda?—We're just as glad to see him as if he were the heir of Verecroft, with more pounds a year than he has pennies, poor dear boy! You can tell him so, Evelyn, and I hope he'll remember it when he's Lord Chancellor, as he's sure to be some fine day."

"He is coming for me presently, so you can tell him yourself," laughed Lady Vereker.

"As if he would believe such fudge!" interjected Hilda, who prided herself on a bluntness of speech not to be distinguished from sincerity. "Poor relations see easily enough through flummery like that, as *I* know, Lady Vereker."

Lady Vereker thought the remark ungrateful, with kind Lady Rosalie standing by.

"We do not think of our dear Lance as a poor relation," she said coldly; and then she turned to Lady Rosalie, and spoke in lowered tones.—"I came for a little talk with you," she said nervously. "It is not exactly on business—but——"

"But I am in the way, all the same?" cried Hilda gaily. "Why didn't you tell me so before? I'll take myself off at once."

And though Lady Vereker looked extremely disconcerted and uttered a few feeble protests, Miss Jackson laughed her politeness to scorn, and disappeared through the French window into the bright little garden.

"Of course she has heard what a fool that boy of hers made of himself at Easter, and has come to hear all she can about it," she reflected, as she went across the smooth-shaven lawn. "I wonder what Rosalie will tell her? I shall get it all out of her afterwards, so her ladyship need not have troubled to send me away."

And meanwhile the two friends were closeted together, and Lady Rosalie, who divined as easily as Hilda Jackson the object of Lady Vereker's visit, plunged into the subject at once.

"You needn't tell me what you've come for," she cried. "Somebody's been telling tales out of school, I can see, and you've come to scold poor me! Sir Raymond did lose his head, I'm afraid; but really, when you see Avice you'll forgive him."

"Is that Miss Meredith?"

"Yes; the eldest, and the dearest girl——"

"But who are they, Rosalie?"

"Great friends of mine, dear; and you'll like them *immensely*, I'm sure."

"I've never seen them, have I?"

"I don't fancy you have. The girls have been at school abroad, and Mrs. Meredith never goes out. It's a great pity, for she must have been as handsome as Avice, and quite in the same style."

"But who are they?" persisted Lady Vereker.

"Ah, I don't know their pedigree, if that's what you mean. Their father—well," continued Lady

Rosalie, "I don't think I ever heard what their father was, but you've only to look at Mrs. Meredith to see she's a lady. They're dear people, all of them, and the girls are charming—Avice especially, as Sir Raymond seemed to think."

"I'm afraid he's been very silly."

"He had every excuse, as you'll say when you see her. And, by the way, I'm expecting her every minute. She promised to come in and sing for me this afternoon—and there she is, I declare!—Come in, Avice, come in this way. Here's someone here I want to introduce you to."

Lady Rosalie opened the French window through which Miss Jackson had gone out, and as Avice Meredith entered, Lady Vereker rose with quite indescribable feelings.

Framed in the window, with a background of green leaves and sunny sky, was a gracious, youthful figure, a girl with great grey eyes that looked dark against the fairness of her hair, and a face the like of which Lady Vereker confessed at once she had never seen before. Nothing could be finer than the contour of brow and chin; nothing more delicately haughty than the fine straight nose and the short upper lip; nothing more splendid than the great dark eyes, or more regal than the carriage of head and neck. It might have been a young princess standing amongst the clematis and roses that clustered round the window, and looking at her with soft, serious glance; but Lady Vereker did not ask if she were princess or music-mistress—she only felt, with a sudden yearning thrill, that it was the girl her Raymond loved.

She did not say anything, for she had sense enough left to know that the time was not ripe for saying. If Raymond had not spoken yet, it was not for her to speak.

"Lady Vereker, let me introduce my young friend Avice Meredith," said Lady Rosalie, and the conventional words seemed to strike a sudden discord on her friend's excited nerves. It was like being awakened from a dream.

"I am very glad to make Miss Meredith's acquaintance," she said, with the smile Lancelot always thought so inimitably sweet, as she held out a hand small and delicate as Avice's own. And then Lady Rosalie made talk that fell a little flat, for the mother's heart was full of one thought only, and could respond to nothing else. What did she care for Leamington gossip, or the last tit-bit from society papers, when the girl sitting beside her was the girl whom Raymond loved, who might some day be Raymond's bride?

"You know my son, I think?" she said, turning to Miss Meredith, when at last there was a pause. She felt as if it was scarcely a fair question, but Avice Meredith looked far more composed than herself.

"Sir Raymond Vereker? Oh, yes; I know him quite well. He has a beautiful voice."

"And Avice measures all her friends by their voices," said Lady Rosalie, in a bantering tone.

"No," said Avice gravely, "but Sir Raymond's is unique. You do not often meet with a true *tenore leggiero* in an Englishman. It is a pity he is a baronet."

"A pity!" exclaimed Lady Vereker, looking with artless surprise at this composed young lady who could speak of her lover without blush or tremor, and apparently without the least consciousness.

"A voice like his ought not to be wasted on drawing-rooms—it should be for the world!" said Miss Meredith.

"Sir Raymond will have something better to do in the world than to sing to it," said Lady Vereker, with all an English patrician's scorn of artists and of art.

"Come, Avice, sing to us yourself. That will be better than talking about singing," said Lady Rosalie. She meant it well, detecting the slight chill in Lady Vereker's tone, and hoping to restore the *entente cordiale* between her two dissimilar guests, but the little ruse was scarcely successful.

Avice laid aside her hat and went to the piano; Lady Rosalie sat down to play her accompaniment, and Lady Vereker leant back in her chair, and looked critically at Miss Meredith, as she had hardly been able to do before.

She was beautiful, beautiful exceedingly, Lady Vereker confessed, and her beauty was of a type both unusual and refined. The dark eyes, the rippling waves of fair hair, were a combination striking from its rarity. The hair was not golden, but fair, simply and purely fair, and the eyes grey, without any tinge of blue. It was the dark line round the irids, and the long black lashes, that made them seem so dark. It was a face, Lady Vereker thought, that might enchant any man. No wonder it had bewitched her too susceptible son!

And then there came forth a voice that seemed the natural expression of the beauty of the sweet, fair face. At the first notes one felt that just that voice and no other could possibly belong to those mysterious star-like eyes. But as the pure, clear soprano filled, and more than filled, the little room, Lady Vereker shrank more and more into herself.

It was beautiful singing, no doubt, but it was not the ballad style to which she was accustomed in Warwickshire drawing-rooms. There was something unusual, something almost *professional* about it, Lady Vereker thought, and Avice—the girl whom Raymond loved—seemed to be only Miss Meredith, the music-mistress, once more. Lady Rosalie felt that her friend's thanks lacked the warmth she had expected, and tried to atone by the fervour of her own.

"I *never* heard anything so lovely," she protested; "but, Avice, may we have a ballad for a change? Sing that little thing of Barry Cornwall's you were singing the other day."

"Do you mean 'Ask me not how much I love thee?' You always like such sentimental songs," protested Avice, with a smile.

She did not care for modern ballads herself, but her singing seemed to lift the simple words and trivial music into a lofty and passionate devotion they scarcely possessed alone.

Lady Vereker listened to the perfect articulation and exquisite phrasing of the song, and every note

seemed to set her further from the singer. It was Lancelot who, coming in while the last verse was being sung, stood entranced within the doorway, listening in rapt amaze.

"I am thine, while the stars shall shine,
To the last—to the last!"

He had never heard singing before, the young man thought; nor, as he looked at the singer, had known what beauty meant.

He did not ask who she was, nor did he care to know. He only knew that he had met his fate—that whether this peerless girl were Raymond's love or not, she was for him, now and for ever, the one and only woman in the world.

(To be continued.)



"BE OF GOOD CHEER!"

BY THE REV. NEWMAN HALL, LL.B.

HE who uttered these words to His afflicted disciples utters them still. He knew what tribulation means. He chose to come into a world full of it. The "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" was familiar with every form of tribulation—bodily privation and pain, social suffering, hatred of foes, deeper wounds from friends, fierce conflicts with Satan, mental depression, spiritual anguish, and the agonies of death long foreseen. Knowing from experience how greatly His disciples would need comfort, He addressed to them a farewell discourse, replete with consolation—a treasury of comfort to all afflicted disciples in all ages (St. John xiv., xv., xvi.). "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace." He forewarned them, lest they should be taken unawares: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But He poured forth such rivers of consolation that, if they believed, they could not but have peace in Him. Though visibly leaving them, He would still be spiritually present. He would send them "another Comforter" to abide with them always. They might still hold intimate fellowship with Him; He would listen to every request; they should be blended with His very life, inseparable as branches in the vine. He was going to prepare mansions for them in heaven, and would soon return to take them to dwell with Him for ever. Should not such assurances give them peace? "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you."

Believers exist in two conditions — "in the world," and "in Christ." They are as certainly in Christ their Peace, as they are in the world their Tribulation. "A Christian lives in two kingdoms: an outer and inner; and in proportion as he lives in the one or the other he feels the tribulation or enjoys the peace." By Christ's atonement we are in harmony with God, pardoned, reconciled, saved: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." We have filial peace, trusting in a loving Father, who makes all things work together for our good. We have peace in abiding fellowship with Christ. The tribulations are on the surface. The wildest waves of ocean do not disturb the abiding calm of the waters not far below. In confiding intercourse with a dear friend or in loving service for him, in some inner chamber, warm and well lighted, we do not feel, we often do not notice the roaring wind and rattling rain against the window-panes. When the promise is fulfilled—"I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me"—though in the world of tribulation, we have peace in Christ.

Having this peace, we are enabled to overcome all difficulties and bear all trials. Nay, more: we can triumph, we can rejoice. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." The world might be regarded by the disciples as an enemy, seeking their injury and destruction. They might well be dismayed by having to encounter not only ordinary trials, but the malice of persecutors and the fierce assaults of Satan. They might tremble as they saw their Champion enter the deep darkness of Gethsemane and the Cross. They might think—for a little while they did think—that the world had conquered. But He sought to dispel such fears beforehand. He uttered a cry of victory in advance. He had no doubt of the issue. He went forth to encounter all

the powers of a wicked world and all the hosts of darkness with the shout of a conqueror—"I have overcome the world." Two inquiries arise. How did Christ overcome the world? and why should His victory make us of good cheer?

Christ overcame *the sin of the world* by atoning for it. He was the Sacrifice whereby pardon and reconciliation were secured for the guilty. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and with its sin all its power to injure. And we overcome when by faith we share the benefits of this atonement.

Christ *overcame the world's sorrows* by suffering them. He did not ostentatiously seek them nor timorously avoid them. He did not submit because He could not escape, but He voluntarily accepted the sorrow. There was no impatience, no murmuring. Had there been, the world's sorrow would have overcome Him. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He *overcame the world's hatred* by love. The world would have overcome Him had He rendered evil for evil. He loved His enemies, wept over the city that demanded His blood, and prayed for His murderers. He *overcame persecution* by perseverance. Threats and frowns never deterred Him from duty. There was no deflection from the straight path. "He endured the cross, despising the shame." Had there been any yielding, persecution would have overcome Him. He *overcame the allurements of the world* by scorning them. Smiles, flatteries, honours, were to Him as nothing. He *overcame the temptations of the world* by resisting them. By the sword of the Spirit, "It is written," He parried every blow. Obedience was to Him more than bread. Confidence in God never induced presumption. No advantages, even to His Kingdom, could be gained by the least compromise with evil. So He overcame. He overcame "*the prince of this world*" by casting him down from his usurped throne. He "came to destroy the works of the devil." He *overcame death* by dying for the world. He, "through death, destroyed him that hath the power of death, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Living in God, He lived above the world, and so overcame it.

But why should His victory make us of good cheer? He showed us how to conquer. Let us imitate His example. Let *us* overcome tribulation by patient suffering, carrying the cross, kissing the rod. Let *us* conquer hatred by love, not retaliating except by kindness, not being overcome of others' evil, but overcoming their evil with our good. Let *us* conquer difficulties, not by avoiding, but by mastering them; and persecution by perseverance; and worldly allurements by the inner life of godliness, that scorns whatever cannot reflect the Master's smile; and Satan's temptations by the Word of God and prayer. So let us overcome, even as Christ overcame.

But the example of Christ in overcoming cannot alone make us of "good cheer." A giant's victory will not give confidence to a child when assailed by the same formidable foe. If it needed all the power of Christ to overcome the world, how can this encourage me in my weakness? Yet He says, "You are in a world of tribulation; but be not troubled; the world shall not overcome you. I have triumphed, so shall you: be of good cheer!"

He conquered as our representative, not for Himself alone, but for us: in our name, on our behalf, as our Champion, to secure our salvation. As by the first Adam defeat and death befell humanity, so by the second Adam victory and life are won for all, and are actually possessed by those who accept Christ. May we not therefore be of good cheer, since He has overcome? Christ's victory encourages us because we have now to fight a defeated, wounded, weakened foe. The enemy is in retreat. Before our David the Philistine host flies, and we may now win an easier victory. Christ's triumph obtains for us the help of the Holy Spirit, so that we fight not in our own weakness, but in the strength of God. "He hath ascended up on high, He has led captivity captive, and hath received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them." His victory proves that He survives the conflict, a living not a dead Champion. He went into the Red Sea, but came forth out of it unhurt, "mighty to save." He is seated on the throne of the universe. After His resurrection He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." He is stronger than the world. He can "put down all rule and authority and power." "He is able to save to the uttermost."

Surely such a victory should make us of good cheer. This was its effect on the disciples. How these feeble few blew the trumpet of victory on the day of Pentecost! When scourged, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus." Paul and Silas in the inner prison sang songs of triumph. Not the prisoner, but Felix, trembled. The apostle spoke of himself and his companions as the "offscouring of all things;" yet he said, "Thanks be to God, who always maketh us triumph in Christ." "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loveth us." In daily expectation of martyrdom, he was of good cheer, saying, "I have fought a good fight; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." The disciple who recorded these words of the Master said, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." The disciples overcame, even as Christ, but it was by trust in Him. "Ye have overcome because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." And he records also the subsequent assurance of his Lord: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

Let afflicted believers be comforted: nay, let them rejoice and be of good cheer. In Christ they have inward peace, and may well endure the world's

outward trouble. An old writer says: "The world afflicts believers because they are too good; God afflicts because they are not good enough (to make them better); the world to drive them out of earth, God to help them into heaven." Do not regard tribulation as an evil. Tribulation! It is a whetstone to sharpen the sword by which we are to win the battle! It is the harsh blast of the trumpet calling to the fight that shall secure the victory! It is the fire, not only of the purifying furnace, but of the flaming chariot to carry us to glory. Tribulation is the path to triumph—along which our Saviour marched to the Throne; it reminds us of Him who fought for us, conquered for us, won eternal life for us, and who is saying to us this very day, as He said to His disciples of old—"In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

JOTTINGS FROM A MINISTER'S NOTE-BOOK.



"The parks seemed to grow more precious."

THOSE who prize every glimpse into the "short and simple annals of the poor" may perhaps scan with interest these notes of some years' residence in one of the busiest corners of the London world. My first experiences there were the more impressive as I had come to my new district from one of the most pleasant suburbs of the metropolis. There life wore a smile for all comers. My neighbours spent their leisure hours in their pretty gardens, and found time for many a recreation which gave zest and enjoyment to life's daily task. In the new sphere all was changed. The struggle for life seemed to have entered the acute stage. The faces you looked on in the streets supplied illustrations of every phase in the story of care. Workshops lay hidden behind the houses, covering what were once bright gardens. But utility had taken the place of comfort. The better-to-do were now far away in the suburbs; those who filled their places had to sacrifice everything to their toil for daily bread. The parks seemed to grow more precious. One scarcely cared to think what would have come of our busy toilers but for those happy pleasure-grounds, where youth and old age were alike at home during the scant week-day intervals of recreation. For them a glimpse of real country was a rare treat, but the parks were always there, and always wore a welcome for their poorest neighbours.

Visiting was not easy at first. A characteristic incident may perhaps amuse others, as it amused me. One afternoon I set out in quest of a parishioner whom I had not yet seen. The noisy, narrow street was reached, and the number found. There was another difficulty, however. Every room seemed to have its own family. Two or three rough little urchins were playing on the step. When I had knocked at the door, there was time for a pleasant word or two with them. Soon a boy appeared, to whom I told my errand. Almost as I spoke, one of the little fellows, who could scarcely reach the knocker, lifted it up and banged it heavily down four times. The shock jarred on my nerves. I heartily wished that the boy had not been so lively. I soon

found, however, that he had caught the name of the person whom I wished to see, and, like a little gentleman as he was, had come to the rescue with a promptness and decision which surprised me.

The column of bells at the side of the doors showed how crowded those houses were. It was not unusual to find them four or five deep. Where there were no bells, the door-knocker enjoyed a somewhat extended sphere of usefulness, appreciated and understood only by the initiated.

A visit to the more respectable members of my little flock proved at first somewhat impressive. I used to stand in the passage whilst my friends who had just let me in ran down-stairs for the key of their best sitting-room. It was scrupulously locked. Privacy was almost unknown when three or four families lived in a house. It was not always wise to leave hat or umbrella in these lobbies. A visitor soon learned, in fact, to keep such belongings in his hand wherever he went. Shortly after we reached the neighbourhood we enjoyed a hearty laugh over an incredulous cobbler. My wife asked him to send home some boots that he was to repair. "What part of the house, ma'am?" he asked. "Number 25," was the reply of the bewildered customer, who had not yet learned the ways of the district. "We have the whole house," she added, seeing his look of wonder. The man stared in amazement. We enjoyed the story, but the boots did not arrive. Our servant found that the man had been so utterly staggered by my wife's incredible statement, that he had not known where to send them.

Immediately on our arrival we were inundated by applicants for charity. I had wondered why the notice-board at our church had not the minister's name upon it. Strangers in the district, or people who wished for someone to visit the sick, seemed thus left without a clue. But when I knew the district I ceased to wonder. As the stream of applicants poured in, it was clear that I could have spent half a year's income in a fortnight, on what, to judge by the stories told, were the most deserving and heartrending cases of distress. Women could be reclaimed from a course of profligacy by a shilling; a few coppers would find a homeless man a night's lodging, boots or clothes would help him to get work, or make a new start in life. It became evident that to listen to such stories was worse than useless; to relieve these people in this fashion was to encourage vice, and to rob one's poor old members of some little comfort for their last days.

At our services we generally had a fringe of such hearers. They were ready to go into the inquiry-room or attend the Bible-class; they would even come to the meeting for prayer on a week-night if only they could ingratiate themselves and gain a little charity. We had to give a wide berth to such people. That was far from easy. They knew how to plant themselves at any coign of vantage, ready to swoop down on you. Time was worth nothing to them; their patience appeared inexhaustible. After our mission services we learned to expect some after-crop of doubtful cases. Our hopes would be awakened on behalf of some man or woman who seemed bent on living a new life. But we had many a bitter disappointment. No pains were spared to counsel and help them. Ministers and people vied with each other in the effort to hold these people fast. But by-and-bye the old spirit often regained its hold. We saw the hopes of weeks die away, and felt that we had lost the day. Sometimes we were grieved to discover that all this show of earnestness had been simulated in order to secure financial help; in one case at least the pretended convert proved to be a thief in disguise. Those who made a regular trade of attendance at churches did not forget us. They contrived, as the Rev. Harry Jones found in the East End, to distribute their attentions so as to put in a claim for the gifts of two or three denominations. It was not always easy to detect their purposes.

Such were some of the trials. It was hard indeed to make any impression on the neighbourhood. House after house was occupied by people who never attended the House of God. Not far away was a district in which a man and his son were known to have made a sovereign of clear profit by the sale of Sunday papers in a single morning. As soon as we awoke the newsboy's cry was heard. A couple of girls with arms filled with papers would pass along throwing Sunday journals through the rails into the area before the houses. These were for regular customers. There was no public feeling that could be brought to bear. Had such people lived in the suburbs or in some provincial town, their conduct would have given rise to remark among their neighbours, and have elicited signs of disapproval, but here there was no such influence to move our ungodly neighbours to consider their ways.

A devoted Christian who came to reside among us was appalled by this carelessness. He supplied himself with bright magazines for Sunday reading,



enlisted helpers, and visited from door to door. He was received kindly, but his hope of inducing some of our neighbours to attend God's House soon sank very low. Our Mission Band, indeed, always received a hearty welcome. When we went to sing in the courts and mews around, the beautiful Gospel hymns proved great favourites. We were urged to come again. If we were long in appearing, or if the winter compelled us to suspend operations, we were told when we re-appeared that they had been eagerly expecting us, and had not forgotten our visits months before. Windows were thrown open, and men and women sat in the rooms drinking in every word. An earnest invitation to Christ was given, with an entreaty to go with us to the house of prayer, but we generally had to content ourselves with the evident welcome and appreciation shown for our out-door work.

The Sunday-school and Band of Hope were an unspeakable blessing in that busy neighbourhood. Our teachers were a fine staff. They had not much leisure for preparation. Most of them were busy from morning till night. Only two or three had enjoyed any special advantages of education; but zeal and devotion abundantly compensated for such drawbacks. It was a pleasant sight as I wandered round the school on Sunday afternoons to watch the attention of the children. The groups of scholars were pressing eagerly round their teachers to catch every word. There was a religious earnestness about the school which never failed to cheer us. A large number of young children attended the Sunday evening service. In that district you did not see the clusters of little children sitting in a circle on the pavement between ten and eleven o'clock on a Sunday night, as I used to see them under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, but there was many a home where it was a relief to have the restless little people out of the way for a time on Sunday evenings. The result was, some of them came to us, and, though we were a trifle disturbed at times, the little ones were always welcome. Special devotional meetings for children had great success.

Our library, which had a capital selection of interesting books, was a never-failing attraction to the boys and girls. Something to read is one of the first essentials for such mission centres. Free libraries were not available, and the homes from which we drew our scholars had few coppers to spare for books. There was a healthy craving for literature. Nothing came amiss. Tracts, religious newspapers, magazines, or books were all eagerly asked for. We took some pains to meet the demand, but we could have done much more if funds had been forthcoming. Such work had no taint of pauperism. It carried the truth into homes never visited by any church-workers; it filled up many a leisure hour that might have borne evil fruit if the great employer of idle hands had found them waiting for him. There is a fine field for Christian energy in this direction. Well-selected books and magazines will inculcate many a wholesome lesson, and awake many an impulse towards a more worthy life.*

Visiting the dying is always a painful part of a



minister's duty, but I never seemed to have so much of that work as during the earlier part of my residence in this district. The first winter, when one summons to a death-bed followed another in rapid succession, we all seemed under a cloud. Our servant, who was not without previous experience of such matters, grew quite gloomy. Some of the cases were unutterably affecting. A young fellow who had been a baker's assistant—a steady, respectable man, just about to be married—was seized with consumption. I visited him often during his long fight with death. One night, when I returned home late after a service, a message awaited me that he was at the point of death and would like to see me. I went round at once. When I stepped into the room he sent all his friends out, and said, with gasping breath, "I want to make my peace with God." Then he hesitated. "I don't like," he added, "to ask Him to forgive me at the last moment." Under such circumstances, when it was almost agony for him to hear more than a sentence, I had to point him to the Saviour. I think it was next morning—for he lived through the night—that he told me, with a tone which I never forget, "You would not believe, sir, how long this night has seemed to me." He found rest to his soul, and died in Christ.

The disappointment of such work was illustrated by this young fellow's mother, who had nursed him with unflagging care. She had been an earnest Christian, but self-indulgence had led her astray. She was fast becoming a drunkard. We spared no pains to help her. After her son's death there was a happier prospect. The dying man had reproved her faithfully.

* See "Fifteen Millions," page 80.—Ed.

"Oh, mother," he said, "I wonder that you, who know the Bible so well, have not lived nearer to God." That remonstrance stirred her conscience, and we hoped for better things. One day, however, she disappeared from the neighbourhood. She had sold her little business and gone off by stealth, leaving her debts unpaid. We never heard of her afterwards.

By the side of that disappointment a notable success may be chronicled. I was asked to visit a man dying of cancer in a neighbouring street. His pain was terrible, but worse than all physical distress was the trouble of a burdened conscience. As I talked to him of the mercy of God and the atonement of Christ, light broke into his mind. Soon a blessed change was wrought by God's Spirit. Once, when he was suffering great pain, I asked whether he felt troubled. He calmly answered, "How can I be troubled when He hath said, 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid'?" Years have passed since then, but I still remember the thrill of joy with which I passed from that dark room, feeling that the sufferer had found sure anchorage at last. His gratitude was unbounded. He urged his family on his death-bed to come to our little church, and before I left the district they were among the best workers in every branch of service—teachers in the Sunday-school, members of the choir, workers in the Mission Band and Band of Hope—ready for every good work. We had several missions conducted by men well adapted for such labour, and attended with real blessing to us all; but none of our missions could show such substantial and abiding results as those produced by visits to the dying. In times when more imposing methods are so much in vogue, it is well to bear witness to the blessing which rests on quiet ministries to our neighbours in life's darkest hours. There is a blessed harvest to be reaped in the house of sorrow, and the fields are "white already."



The members of my own church were simple-minded, devout Christians, whose heart-felt experience often cheered us. Some of their portraits will never lose their place in my memory. One died in the fever hospital. He had come up from the country to a large workshop, and found Christ in our Bible-class. In the midst of ungodly workmen he set a noble example. He had a hard life, but learned to stand firm amid sneers and temptations. When he died we felt that we had lost a true Christian. He was familiar with difficulty, and there was something sad about his dying hours, spent alone in the fever hospital. His friends in London visited him, but his relatives were far away, and he breathed his last among strangers. The last time his teacher was at the hospital, Thomas said, "I am very happy. I have nothing to fear." In that spirit he calmly awaited the inevitable hour.

The patriarchs of the church were a remarkable group. Strangers in our prayer-meeting were often struck by the earnestness and power of one of these worthies. He had been a canal-boy—the son of a bargeman, who brought pig-iron and bricks from the potteries of London. He was bred amid oaths and curses, and never spent a day at school, not even at a Sunday-school. He could not read a line. No religious influence seemed to touch his life until he married a Christian woman. Some years afterwards, as he was going through a square in the neighbourhood, he found the peace of God. The Holy Spirit had wrought conviction in his heart. For six weeks he had gone about his daily employment in an agony. Now he had found the blessing. It was a hard task to learn to read, but he struggled on till he managed to pick his way through the easiest chapters of his Bible. Everyone respected him. The railways robbed him of his first employment on the canal; then he worked for a coal-merchant, until at last he opened a coffee-stall. His constant readiness to oblige, and his pleasant conversation, made him very successful, and helped him to speak many a word in season. His last illness was very painful, but prayer and praise were always on his lips. When the struggle was over, all who gathered round his grave felt that one of the best Christians

they had known was gone to be for ever with the Lord.

My old crossing-sweeper was still more interesting than the ex-bargeman and coffee-stall keeper. He lived in one room, which cost him four shillings and sixpence a week. But for a small parish allowance, he would have found it impossible to live. I saw him and his old wife grow gradually weaker. They were above eighty years old, and kept their sixtieth, or diamond, wedding-day whilst I visited them. The husband was worn down with bronchitis and rheumatism, so that he could at last scarcely get to his crossing. He had to rise soon after five to light the fire and make the breakfast, as his wife was nearly blind. As he went to the crossing he would sit down on a doorstep for a few moments, and then go hobbling forward. He had been brought up as a shepherd-boy in a little Hertford village, which he left more than sixty years before to become a drayman in London. In town he soon made himself a great favourite with his master, a working-man who had become the owner of several carts and horses. This man was fond of hearing his young carter sing, and used to treat him at the public-house on Saturday nights in order to secure this pleasure. This led my old friend into drinking habits, and ruined the peace of his home. One Sunday he watched a neighbour returning from his little chapel. The sight awoke him to better things. He felt his misery and degradation, and resolved to lead a new life. He attended the same place of worship, and broke off his visits to the public-house. One day as he was driving a team of three horses over Blackfriars Bridge he found the peace of God. Such was his joy that he almost forgot where he was going. He never lost the blessing. Half a century had rolled by when I first visited him. His life had been a sharp struggle. Twenty-five years before a terrible attack of rheumatism compelled him to give up hard work and take a crossing. But amid all troubles my old friend's faith didn't fail. He was full of trust, thankful for God's care, and looking on with joy to the rest of heaven.

It was pleasant to see how the old man loved his Church. He knew its great preachers, and carefully read one of the religious newspapers, that he might follow the progress of its work at home and abroad. "Doctor so-and-so," he once told me, "was the best doctor he ever had." He had gone to hear this popular preacher whilst suffering from a smart attack of neuralgia. Once or twice he was on the point of turning back, but he persevered. He soon forgot all his pain in his delight at listening again to the much-loved minister, whom he astonished at the close of the service with his greeting: "Well, Doctor, you are the best doctor I ever had in my life!" The old crossing-sweeper had learned the lesson of contentment. His happy spirit was so full of gratitude for God's mercies that troubles and poverty were almost forgotten. It did one good to spend a few minutes with one whose religion was so evidently full of Divine comfort, amid all the rough ways of poverty.

Life was sadly monotonous for some of my parishioners. One woman had lived thirty years in a little front kitchen, the ceiling of which was not much higher than the street. Her husband, a pianoforte finisher in excellent work, had been seized with a nervous complaint, which ended in melancholia. He was taken to Colney Hatch, where he lingered out a living death for twenty-eight years. At first he recognised his wife; but as time passed by, even this scrap of comfort was denied her. She earned a humble livelihood as a dressmaker, till she injured her hand with a needle. Eager to support herself, she began to work again too soon, and the hand had to be amputated. When I knew her, she earned a pittance by carrying out dresses and doing occasional errands. Nevertheless, her cellar wore a bright look. Some pleasant pictures on the walls—relics of her happier married life—were still there, to tell the story of a darkened lot, lighted up at last with God's endless peace.

The experience gained in such scenes was in itself no small reward for the tension upon mind and heart which they brought. It was wonderful to see how human nature could adapt itself to its environment, and live on amid surroundings which might have been thought fatal to every effort. That was one lesson. Far more blessed was the reflection that grew with added experience. The peace of God could fill human life in its most uncongenial surroundings with light from Heaven, and make it a benediction to all who had eyes to read its lesson.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

JESUS, in what tender ways,
What drawings from above,
Our hearts are called, with joy and praise,
To offer Thee our love!

Thy sweet compassions are the same,
And all may happy be
As those who for Thy blessing came,
And gathered round Thy knee.

Thy little ones may understand
The whispers of Thy grace,
And still in faith may hold Thy hand
And look into Thy face.

Lord, in the brightness of our youth,
Thy summons may we hear,
With simple hearts that love the truth
And feel Thee always near!

J. R. Eastwood.

HOW ST. EILLONS LIGHT WENT OUT.

CHAPTER I.—IN SHINE.



"THERE'S the boat in already, and me not half done; it's surely soon the day."

Christian Grant laid the damp coil of baited line into a basket beside her, scattered a handful of cut grass over it, and began upon another interminable coil. It was half-mechanical work; the silvery morsels of bait seemed to slip over the hooks almost of their own accord as the quick brown fingers flitted over them, her eyes intently watching the passengers filing up from the panting steamer that had just drawn up at the end of the little jetty that stretched out from one side of the bay.

Once a day it arrived, that is, during the summer months, and formed the little fishing village's chief means of communication with the outside world. When the October gales began to blow it vanished from the horizon, and was seen no more till early June. It was September now; every boat might be reasonably expected to bring one or two staying visitors, not those mere birds of passage, the day tourists, who strolled up the one street, sniffed at the fish-curing sheds, called in at the "Traveller's Rest" for their refreshments, and returned on board, satisfied that they had exhausted every charm of the quiet, quaint, out-of-the-world place—St. Eillons.

There were three hopeful-looking arrivals to-day: an invalid lady with luggage, an artist with an easel and a battered portfolio, and a fair-haired young man in a light suit, who carried a leather bag and a hat-box.

Christian watched the artist's progress rather blankly. Three—but she doubted there would be little extra fish required for the whole of them. A family would have been far better.

"What do you use for bait? It looks slippery work."

Christian looked round; the young man had set his bag on the low wall, and was inspecting her and her work with frank curiosity.

"Why, sand-eels, of course," she answered, a little uncomfortably, conscious all at once of her tumbled hair and shabby petticoat. Another hour, and she would have been as fresh as a daisy.

"Are you obliged to do that sort of thing?" was the next question, settling himself easily against his hat-box.

"Folks must live."

"Yes, but you should let the plainer folk do the dirty work. Your pretty hands were made for something better."

Christian flushed hotly; she was not used to compliments; the line raced faster through her fingers.

"Who is it for?"

"My father," without looking up.

"Ah, well! I am going to stop a few days; perhaps I'll look round and see the fishing to-morrow. Good afternoon."

He lifted his hat—just as if she had been a lady, she said to herself afterwards—picked up his bag, and sauntered leisurely away. Christian, glancing round the tarred fence presently, observed that he made his way to the one inn half-way round the bay—"family hotel" it had begun to style itself this last year or two, since the steamer had brought the first stray visitors.

"Why, Christian, you're late the night; you've surely been to sleep over it."

It was a different voice this time—rough and uncultivated, though not unpleasant—but somehow just then it jarred upon Christian. Colin and she were half friends, half lovers, after the curiously shy, self-contained Scottish fashion. The character of the young man's attentions would have puzzled an English lassie sorely, but Christian had been trained up with the system, and took more meaning out of the silences than many would have found in speech.

"Did you see the boat come in?" she asked shortly, vouchsafing no comment upon his remark.

"Aye; we'll no mak' our fortunes out of all the visitors she brought."

Christian went on with her work in silence; Colin leaned over the wall, whistling softly to himself. Christian generally led what conversation there was, but she made no attempt to carry it on now.

"Air ye ailing anything?" he inquired presently.

"Of course not. Oh dear, how fishy you do smell!"

"Fishy!" he echoed. "Why wouldn't I, carrying in all those nets; and you're no much better yoursel', I'm thinking."

"Well, I'm finished and going home, now. You needna come up the night; I'm busy."

Colin nodded. "All right; I'll go and see after the Light—the wind's rising."

The Light—St. Eillons Light—was a primitive oil lantern chained to the end of a dangerous ridge of rocks at the north of the bay as a danger-signal to the boats on rough nights, and the lighting of it had drifted into Colin's care of late; it was a risky climb over the rocks, and, sooth to say, the St. Eillons folk were not clamorous for the honour of it.

Christian crossed the strip of short wiry grass to a tiny cottage that crowned a sandy hillside at the back of the jetty. The village proper ended with that jetty: it did duty for pier, promenade, landing-stage, fishing station, and custom-house, if ever any doubtful arrivals had needed looking into. There was also an extensive coastguard kept up, presumably on the chance of the same contingency.

At the door she found her step-mother rinsing out

a pile of blue fishing-jerseys in a tub of cold water; a bare-footed baby crawling about, ready for any mischief that might offer. Christian picked him up, swung him over her shoulder on to the window-ledge, with an injunction to stay there on peril of his life, and began to wring out the jerseys too.

"I'd have been through the now, Christian," said the mother. "I got hindered sending off that fish."

Christian never grudged a helping hand in any direction, but this evening there was something not quite as cheery about her movements. Mrs. Grant looked at her once or twice doubtfully.

"Air ye no weel?" she asked as she put on the big black kettle.

"That 's twice in less than an hour," said Christian impatiently. "I 'm weel enough, Lisbeth. Those lines took such a time to-day, and I meant to be cleaned up before the boat came in."

Mrs. Grant looked rather mystified. What had the boat to do with it? But she was a wise woman, and went on preparing the tea without any comment. She boiled an egg for herself, one for her tall step-daughter, two for her husband, and as she was taking them out of the pan, he came in—a big, handsome man still, though sunburnt and grizzled. It was easy to guess where Christian got her winsome face from; there was a curious likeness between them, even to expression.

"The boat brought us good luck the day, wife," he said, cutting off a huge "whang" of cheese for himself.

"I didna see many folk coming off," said his wife, sitting down beside him, the baby on her knee.

"There 's a young fellow put up at the 'Fife Arms.' His folk are coming on in a week or so, and I 'm to take them all out rowing and fishing whenever they want to go."

Christian looked up sharply.

"Did he say that?"

"Of course he did, lass; d'ye think I 'm dreaming it? A decent young fellow he is; he 's been sitting by the flagstaff for an hour past. There 's his mother and sister and a cousin coming, and if they like the place they 'll be here for a month or mair—Saxton their name is."

"That 's the sort of visitors we want," said Mrs. Grant approvingly; "it 's strange we didna see him coming up, Christian."

Christian did not answer; she was stooping over the kettle, and—it might have been the effect of the unaccustomed compliment—some curious shyness kept her from owning that she had both seen and spoken with the new-comer.

Perhaps it was the same reason that led her to put on her clean pink short gown when she went down to bait her lines the next afternoon, and that also made her carry her stool and baskets to the back of the tarred fence that shut in the fishing-sheds. It was a benefit in the point of outlook. In place of the sandy road, there was the strip of yellow sand, narrowing every minute as the creeping waves rippled over it; the wide blue sea, with here and there a brown sail or grey line of smoke from a passing steamer, lay still as a painted picture in the soft September sunshine. Christian, except for her quick fingers, was almost as still. The boat was faintly visible on the horizon. It would be an hour or more before it came panting in, and long before that hour passed, down the road behind came Mr. Saxton, who quietly skirted the sheds to her retreat. He had seen her take up her position from his sitting-room window. Far-seeing Christian, not to have remembered those inn windows, taking in the whole sweep of the bay!

"What a lovely place for doing one's work in!" he began, perching himself on the fence close by. "If those things *must* be done, you couldn't have chosen a better place."

No answer.

"I saw your father last night," he went on lightly. "He seems to be an authority on fish, and he is going to let me have the use of his boat while I am here."

"Yes, he was telling us."

"Does he go out by himself at night?"

"No; there is Sam—my brother—and Colin."

"Colin a brother too?"

"No."

"Shall I interfere with your work if I wait till the boat comes in?"

"No," was the response. "I 'm nearly finished."

And yet, long after the last hook was supplied and laid away under the damp grass, Christian sat there listening to the gay talk she only half understood, and though she half despised it, as coming from a stranger and a Southerner, the easy tones, the pleasant grace of it, had a certain charm for the roughly nurtured fisher-girl, accustomed only to the honest, plain matter-of-factness of her "ain folk."

She looked after him wistfully as he sauntered away when the steamer drew up at the end of the jetty. She had scarcely spoken beyond an occasional yes or no, and yet how that hour had slipped by! Colin was true and dependable enough, but it was a change to listen to someone who spoke as if he thought her opinion of value, and listened with an air of polite deference that was a very novel feature in her experience, and so—she hardly knew why—she did not mention this second meeting either, to Colin when he came back from his fishing.

CHAPTER II.—IN SHADE.

THAT was the whole of it—those one-sided chats over the lines of bait—it never reached any further stage. Mr. Saxton was no gay Lothario, bent on conquest, only a kindly, easy-going young fellow, with a good many idle hours on his hands. A man could not golf eternally, and there was literally no other occupation in St. Eillons except the fishing, which was prosecuted, like everything else in that sleepy hollow, after a very leisurely fashion. "Once in a great storm and hurricane, three hundred years before," saith the local chronicle, "nearly the whole of the fishing fleet was

exterminated in one night, and the industry has never thoroughly rallied from the shock."

Mr. Saxton laughed aloud when Christian gravely mentioned this fact to him, but he apologised the next minute, and acknowledged that it did take a very long time to recover from some shocks, and on the whole he thought the inhabitants had the best of it, especially as it had saved them a good deal of hard work in the three centuries that had gone by since.

He never tried in those lazy talks to make the girl dissatisfied with her lot; in truth, he gave little thought to it of any kind, but the effect was there all the same. The glimpses into a world so different from her own; nay, even the white, shapely hands and well-fitting garments made Colin's rugged outlines seem more rugged, and his manners blunter. Christian overlooked the item that those manners were more in accordance with her own than those of this fair-weather acquaintance could be by any possibility. All her interest in the day's work began and ended, just now, with that hour or two in the afternoon while Colin and most of the fishermen were sleeping, ready for the night's work.

"My mother is coming to-morrow," Mr. Saxton remarked casually one day towards the end of the second week: weeks that had slipped by so swiftly, and yet seemed to have begun in some remote past, "and then I'll have to be on duty again; she likes little attentions. I must do something at the golfing too."

"Why have ye no done it before?" queried Christian.

"Laziness, I think," he laughed. "Is your father greatly attached to Colin?"

"Greatly attached," echoed Christian, a little puzzled by the sudden change of subject; "why, he's knowed him since he was a wee laddie."

"And that constitutes a sufficient reason, of course; and you share his views, I suppose?"

"I dinna ken," said Christian, rather stiffly. "Colin is—Colin."

"So I believe, but he's not the most cheerful companion I ever had on a fishing trip. I'm not bad-tempered as a rule, which was a great pity, I thought two or three times last night."

"What's come ower you and Christian?" her father was asking Colin that same day, as the two pegged their nets down on the sunny sand-hills to dry.

"What should come over us?" was the response.

"Nay, gudeness kens; ye no seem very thick the now."

Nobody was more conscious of that than Colin, but he was not given to talking over his grievances either with his prospective father-in-law or any other person, and Grant asked no more questions, reflecting that young folk were aye young folk, and not once connecting the advent of the pleasant-spoken stranger with the matter. Colin finished his share of the nets, and marched grimly away to his own quarters; he had to pass the Grant cottage on his way, and there Christian was standing knitting a coarse blue stocking beside the low boundary wall of shingles that fenced off the sand-hills. He walked straight up to her, and leaned across the shingles.

"What was that fellow talking to you about all the afternoon down here?" he began abruptly.

Christian looked at him coldly. "That's my business," she curtly answered.

"And mine too. I'd no have believed you were the sort of girl to be whistled out by any ne'er-do-weel that liked to hold up his finger."

"That's enough, Colin; you may just go on believing it. I'm tired of the whole business. Gang and look for any lass that'll suit ye better."

"Tired?" cried Colin. "Are ye forgetting how I've waited for ye since ye were a wee bit lassie that high? When did I ever look at any other lass when ye were by, or when ye were na by either? Tell me that, Christian."

Christian's head bent over her needle. "I canna help it," she said stubbornly, "but I'm just tired hearing of nothing but the fishing and the boats, and that bait, all day long."

"And what wad ye be wanting to hear about? You've been brought up to it."

"That's just the reason I want to get away from it."

"Get away from it!" Colin took one step forward, facing her full. "Look here, Christian;" but Christian was counting off the heel-stitches, and to all appearance utterly absorbed in them; the next instant, sock and needles were snatched from her hands and flung away out on the sand-hills. "You shall hear me!" he said in a low, hoarse voice, "and answer me: Are ye wanting to get away from me too?"

The hot, angry colour surged up into Christian's face, then ebbed away, leaving it white and cold. "I'd be hard up indeed for a man if I wanted to keep you," she said presently, speaking slowly and with cutting scorn.

And so face to face for one minute they stood—this lover and his lass who had held by each other in their own peculiar fashion for so long. The sky had clouded over, a sudden drift of raindrops pattered unfelt, unheeded, on their faces, on her bright uncovered hair—hair that Colin believed was the bonniest crown even a queen could wear—and then, without another word, he turned on his heel and went away along the sand-hills, and Christian, free and fetterless, perhaps by way of celebrating that same freedom, walked soberly down to the sheds and worked at her haddies for kippering for the space of three mortal hours.

Mrs. Grant looked up anxiously from the griddle where she was baking scones when she finally went home. "Christian, what's keeping your father? Sam's away with the creels this half-hour. Ye might slip down to the boats and see; it's no' often he's behindhand."

Slip down to the boats, with the certainty of there encountering Colin, and possibly Mr. Saxton likewise!—the one place where she did not want to go. The wind was rising, and now and again came a gusty shower of heavy drops. Christian caught up her plaid and hurried down to the jetty. The dusk was creeping up, but she made out that most of the boats were already away, their own among them. She called up to one of the old coastguards, standing like a sentinel by the flagstaff—

"Do ye ken what made my father gang so sudden-like?"

"He's no' gaun, lassie; he's ben the boat-house."

Christian looked inside the wide door. There, on a coil of tarred rope, sat John Grant, his foot stretched out before him.

"There ye are, my lass! I've slipped my foot on the step, and I'm doubting I'll no' get the use of it the morn's morn, either. Gi'e me your shoulder in."

"But the boat?" asked Christian.

"The lads have ta'en it. They'll just have to do the best they can, and it's but a dirty night they'll have of it, I'm thinking. Colin swung up the light last thing; if it was needed ony time it'll be the night."

Christian saw it flickering, away at the end of the rocky ridge, as they went slowly back. Grant was able to limp into his big chair by the hearth, but it was evident to both his wife and daughter that it would be a good many "morns' morns" before he would be down amongst the boats again.

Free, quite free! But Christian fluttered restlessly about the kitchen, seeing after various items of work with an odd empty feeling at her heart, now and then holding her breath to listen to the sough of the wind or the dash of the white breakers



"'There ye are, my lass!'"

on the rocks. Even the bay was sheeted over with foam. Her father went to sleep at last in his box bed in the corner, the baby followed his example, and then Mrs. Grant came softly out into the porch, shutting the door behind her, to where Christian stood straining her eyes seaward.

"It's a bad night for the lads," she said anxiously; "and so dark."

They stood together listening, sheltered by the cottage wall from the full force of the wind. It was late, but neither once thought of going to bed, though it would be hours before the boats came in, unless they were obliged to make for the shore in sheer distress. Suddenly Christian sprang away up the steep slope behind the house. A minute or two, and she was back at her stepmother's side.

"I was sure of it," she said breathlessly. "The light 's out!"

"Oh, Christian, and the puir lads!"

A change had swept over Christian's face; she turned back to the door. "I'm gaun down to light it," she said half to herself.

"Lassie, ye canna; it's wark for a man in daylight, and in this wind—and the dark——"

"Dinna hinder me, Lisbeth; I maun try it. I've been before with the lads."

Yes—with the lads to help and drag her over the awkward places, and in the full sunshine. It was a different story crawling on hands and knees in the teeth of that howling wind, the lantern tied about her waist. Christian did get there, she hardly knew how, and she never cared to talk of that journey after. She lighted the lantern and sent the warm glow streaming out again over the tossing waves below, and then, too utterly exhausted even to try to struggle back, she crept behind a big boulder to rest.

The night wore on; she was used to solitude and stormy weather—that did not trouble her, but something else did. The discontent of these last weeks was rolling away like morning mist. What was this outside stranger—what were his white hands, or pleasant manners, or the big city he came from—to her, in comparison with Colin?—Colin, who had grown up beside her—grown into her whole life—Colin, who had fought her battles against all the other fisher-lads when she was a wee girlie in pinafores: Colin, who had never spoken a rough angry word to her or hers till that day, when his very anger had been a revelation of how much he loved her?

And it was out there on the rocks in the grey dawn that Colin found her. The boats came riding safely in past St. Eillons Light, guessing nothing of its brief lapse from duty. Mrs. Grant told them of it first when they reached the cottage, and that Christian was still away. "I didna tell her father; he could do nothing," she said; "and I'm thinking she 's just waiting there for the daylight; it 's a gey hard road over those rocks."

There were no explanations; the place where he found her explained it all better than words. Colin took her, wet and battered as she was, into his arms. "My lass, my lass!"

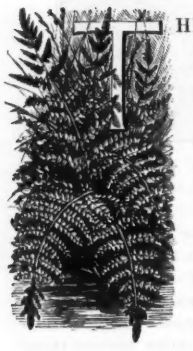
And Christian forgot the fishy smell, the rough jersey, and rougher hands. "Oh, Colin! my heart was just sair for you."

She saw Mr. Saxton that same afternoon escorting three ladies up from the jetty, his mother and two fashionably attired damsels, who looked as though no rough wind had ever blown across the even tenor of their days. Mr. Saxton was so busy talking, that he never remembered to look round as he passed the fishing sheds. Christian watched them very gravely as they skirted the bay to the "Family Hotel." Only yesterday! It seemed like months since she had listened to his gay talk over her lines.

"I 'm glad he came, though," she said to herself half aloud, "very glad; maybe I'd never have found out what Colin was if I hadna been so near losing him."

NEVER YOUNG AND NEVER OLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED," ETC. ETC.



THERE are some people who seem to have always been grown-up. They do not understand, and have no sympathy with, the thoughts, feelings, and doings of unconventional youth, and it is impossible to imagine that they themselves ever played like young animals. This is not always their fault. The cares and responsibilities of life may have come upon them too soon, making them old men and old women before their time. Nothing is more painful than to see premature age on the faces of children of the very poor, many of whom cannot enjoy a romp or an unconscious laugh, and are as knowing and suspicious as an old soldier or an old rat.

But there are others who never were young because when they ought to have been it was the desire of foolish friends, or their own ambition, that they should be "old-fashioned." In these days of competitive examination, children are driven from one kind of drill to another, and have no time to be young. The following epitaph, written by Waller on a young nobleman, describes the not unusual result:—

"Like buds appearing ere the frosts are past,
To become man he made such fatal haste,
And to perfection laboured so to climb,
Preventing slow experience and time,
That 't is no wonder death our hopes beguiled:
He 's seldom old that will not be a child."

The reason that in so many cases middle life is a struggle and old age a regret is because youth has been a blunder—something that ought not to be described by that pure, bright, happy word. Youth is the time for settling habits, and nothing but misery can result when this, the most precious time in life, has been wasted or misused. There are boys and girls who exhaust the enjoyments of life so early that nothing remains to them in middle life and old age but *ennui* and regrets. What can be more odious than the precocity of "little wee bit mannikins" who think that they can make themselves men merely by imitating men's vices? Not to have had, either through our own fault or through the fault of circumstances, a pure and happy youth, is the greatest loss we could have.

"We were sad
In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun;
Now in this miry darkness are we sad."

Here is a warning to those who are not giving to the morn of life its natural blessedness, who are sad in the sunshine of youth because they forget their Creator, and will not rule themselves after His Word. Unconsciously, perhaps, to themselves, some young people seem to say, "Now is *not* the appointed time for us to turn to God; now is not the day of salvation; wait till I get older. Don't trouble me about religion for about fifty years, and then, when I am going to die, I shall give the matter my serious attention." And yet

"Why should we think youth's draught of joy
If pure would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy
Which God hath deigned to bless?"

If young people knew what religion is, instead of trying how long they could do without it, they would feel that every year and month and week and day they live away from its "sweet reasonableness" is so much of their precious youth wasted—lived on a lower level than it might have been. Mr. Pomfret, who became an eminent Christian minister, was converted at the age of nineteen; yet the remembrance of so large a portion of life spent in impenitence ever after affected his heart, and he used often to repeat the words of Austin, "O Lord, too late I loved Thee." Those only rejoice in a way that does not bring subsequent misery, who in the precious but dangerous time of youth remember their Creator. The youth of those who forget Him might be described as non-existent were it not that it makes its existence felt by very sad results in after-life.

But if it is a mistake never to have been young, it is no less a mistake to grow old. Leigh Hunt quotes the following, which he calls "a delicious memorandum," from Mrs. Inchbald's diary: "One Sunday I dined, drank tea, and supped with Mrs. Whitfield. At dark, she and I, and her son William, walked out, and I rapped at the doors in New Street, and ran away." This was in 1788, when Miss Inchbald was thirty-five. What would the tenants have thought if they had been told that the runaway knocks had been given by one of the most respectable women of the day—the authoress of the "Simple Story"? "But," says Leigh Hunt, "such people never grow old."

Householders cannot altogether approve of elderly people giving vent to the exuberance of their lingering youth in this way, but we all must admire those who grow old in the graceful possession of such feelings. "As I approve," says Cicero, "of a youth that has something of the old man in him, so I am no less pleased with an old man that has something of the youth. He that follows this rule may be old in body, but can never be so in mind." We do not think that the first part of what is here said is opposed to the sentiments expressed in the beginning of this paper, for though we ought not to expect to find an old head on young shoulders, still the thoughtlessness and carelessness which produce so much of the world's misery have no right to excuse themselves on the plea of youth.

We shall all agree, however, to praise old people who retain something of their youth when there is no self-consciousness or pretence. When there is, the result is very far from pleasing. It is indeed a sad sight to see an old lady, wrinkled and withered, dressing, talking, and acting like a very young one, and forgetting all the time, as she clings to the feeble remnant of the past, that there is no sham more transparent than hers, and that people, instead of feeling with her, are laughing at her. Old boys disguise their foibles a little better; but they are equally ridiculous.

Very different are the juvenile old people whom we commend as worthy of imitation. In one sense they have put away childish things; in another they have not. They have put away the weakness, imperfection, and immaturity of childhood; they retain its open mind and heart—"In wit a man, simplicity a child." Having been long in this "naughty world," they know good and evil, but they are as innocent as new arrivals from a better world.

What an object of pity a man is whose extreme dignity will not allow him to have any fun in this world! The elderly people of whom I am thinking are without this extreme dignity. They enjoy a romp with children; and one celebrated man at least used to amuse himself when safe from the interruption of fools by jumping over chairs. It was a boyish leap over a fence that caused the death of Matthew Arnold in his sixty-fifth year. The way to preserve the grace of youth in that old age to which, if we do not soon die, we must all come, is the way of self-control, the way of sympathy, and the way of unselfishness. The grand essentials of happiness in every stage of life, but particularly in the last, are—having something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. In explanation of the fact that he could still play the *rôle* of a young man, old Adam says in *As You Like It*:—

"For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,

> Nor did I with unbashful forehead woo
> The means of weakness and debility;
> Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
> Frosty, but kindly."

"If you wish," says Sydney Smith, "for anything like happiness in the fifth act of life, eat and drink about one-half of what you *could* eat and drink." Then the old should live with the young, sympathising with them and helping them. When over eighty years of age, Jeremy Bentham wrote to a friend: "I am living surrounded with young men, and merrier than most of them." We have all seen instances of unhappy rich old men who have retired from business and have no habitual recreations. They used to enjoy the excitement of uncertainty in their business; now everything is safe and dull; then mere rest after fatigue was happiness; now there is no fatigue, but there is restlessness in monotony. It is well, therefore, that all should prepare for the decline of power in recreations, as in much graver things, and there are many that do not lose their charm or their utility as they grow older. "Without a hobby-horse," exclaimed James Watt, "what is life?" and he himself is a proof that riding one keeps people young and vigorous. He went on inventing and perfecting his inventions to the end of his life, presenting to his friends the first copies of the busts made by his copying machine as "the productions of a young artist just entering his eighty-third year." When Cato was drawing near the close of his life, he declared to his friends that the greatest comfort of his old age, and that which gave him the highest satisfaction, was the pleasing remembrance of the many benefits and friendly offices he had done to others. To see them easy and happy by his means made him truly so. Someone said to a good man: "You are on the shady side of seventy, I expect?"—"No," was the reply; "I am on the sunny side; for I am on the side nearest to glory." Very beautiful is an old age which, looking to "the light that never was on sea or land," is joyful through the hope of entering into the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The ideal life begins with a happy youth, and ends with a free and beautiful old age, but it is only realised by those who remember their Creator *all* the days of their life.

THE FROGS IN THE PADDY-FIELD.

A NEW FABLE.

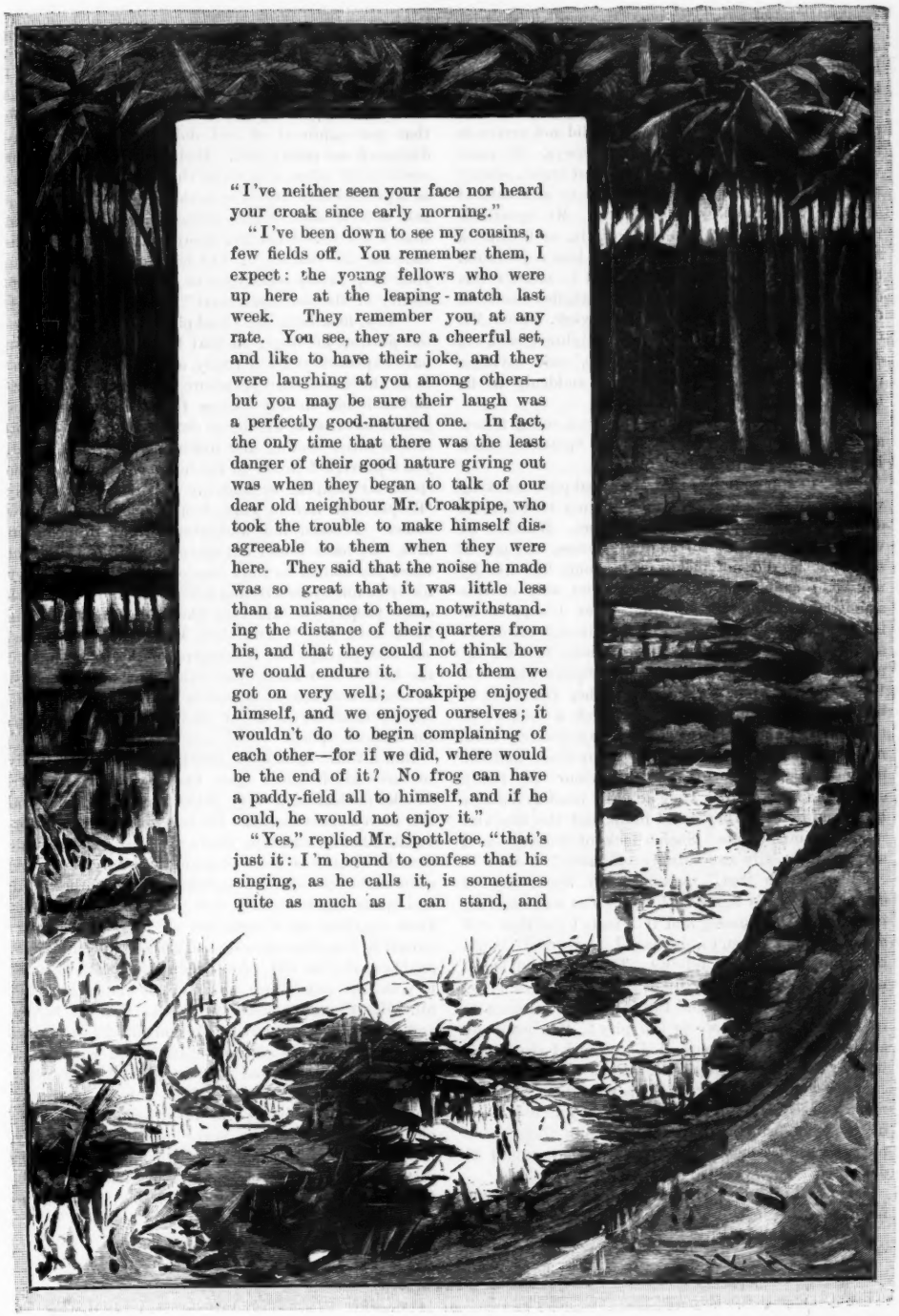
BY ALFRED J. BAMFORD, B.A., AUTHOR OF "TURBANS AND TAILS; OR, SKETCHES IN THE UNROMANTIC EAST," ETC.

WITH a hop and a skip and a jump, flop came Master Brighteye, close to where old Mr. Spottletoe was sitting, on the raised bank that ran between the paddy-fields. Master Brighteye was a lively young frog, not much more than half-grown, and Mr. Spottletoe was a frog of experience, who had seen these same paddy-fields irrigated for rice, and then drained off for other crops, a good many times. The bank had not been made for him, but it suited him almost as well as though it had been. It had been made to prevent the water, in which the rice loved to grow, from running off and leaving the rice-roots dry, and he found it a cheerful and airy place to sit on in the cool of the evening, and was as regularly to be found there at sundown as though he owned it. He was something of an invalid, and troubled with what he called "nerves." Although the story was one on which as a rule he avoided saying much, having an idea that it did not present him in a dignified light, it was well enough known that he had once been caught by a man who had fixed his foot in a thing called a microscope, to study the movement of the blood through the veins. Thanks to great courage and agility, favoured by some happy accident, Mr. Spottletoe had managed to make his escape; but he had had a stiff joint ever since. And far worse than the stiff joint had been the effect on his nervous system, which had received such a shock, that from that time till his death the least thing would startle him dreadfully. That is how it was that he gave a jump when young Brighteye came suddenly to the end of a flying leap right in front of him.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry to have startled you so," said Brighteye, who was as kind-hearted a frog as you could wish to see. "I did not mean to."

"'Mean to,' my tadpole! of course you didn't; of course you didn't. I know that well enough," said Mr. Spottletoe, as soon as he had recovered his breath. He had a great liking for young Brighteye, and, indeed, for most of the young frogs of the place. Some folks, when they get old, do not seem to care to have anything to do with young people, except to scold them or complain of them. But old Mr. Spottletoe was not one of that sort at all; he was a general favourite, always friendly and bright; as young in spirits, if not in limbs, as any frog in the neighbourhood; and so, when the youngsters were tired with their gymnastics and games, in which, of course, poor lame old Mr. Spottletoe could not join, they liked nothing better than to come and have a chat with him, to tell him the news of the paddy-fields, or to listen to some of his wise saws, or to the stories he could tell of things he saw and heard about when he was as young as they.

"Where have you been all day?" asked Mr. Spottletoe.



"I've neither seen your face nor heard your croak since early morning."

"I've been down to see my cousins, a few fields off. You remember them, I expect: the young fellows who were up here at the leaping-match last week. They remember you, at any rate. You see, they are a cheerful set, and like to have their joke, and they were laughing at you among others—but you may be sure their laugh was a perfectly good-natured one. In fact, the only time that there was the least danger of their good nature giving out was when they began to talk of our dear old neighbour Mr. Croakpipe, who took the trouble to make himself disagreeable to them when they were here. They said that the noise he made was so great that it was little less than a nuisance to them, notwithstanding the distance of their quarters from his, and that they could not think how we could endure it. I told them we got on very well; Croakpipe enjoyed himself, and we enjoyed ourselves; it wouldn't do to begin complaining of each other—for if we did, where would be the end of it? No frog can have a paddy-field all to himself, and if he could, he would not enjoy it."

"Yes," replied Mr. Spottletoe, "that's just it: I'm bound to confess that his singing, as he calls it, is sometimes quite as much as I can stand, and

always more than I like. But he would think I ought not to have such weak nerves. At any rate, he enjoys it, and I must make the best of it, and bear it as well as I can."

At this moment up came the very person of whom they were speaking. Mr. Croakpipe did not arrive in the boisterous manner of Master Brighteye. He came with what he intended to be a dignified crawl, simply taking a genteel hop when he came to any tuft of grass or weed too big to crawl over. Mr. Spottletoe received Mr. Croakpipe very cordially, as became a neighbour. Young Brighteye made him a profound bow, which Mr. Croakpipe understood to mean reverence, though he was not perfectly satisfied about it. Close upon his bow followed a quiet wink, which Mr. Croakpipe did not see; and then Brighteye said, "I expect I must go, or I shall be late," and, giving a prodigious leap, he disappeared as suddenly as he had come.

"That 's a nice young fellow—as nice a young fellow as we have in the field." So said Mr. Spottletoe when Brighteye was quite out of hearing.

"Yes, I suppose he is," said Mr. Croakpipe, speaking with a certain hesitancy, which plainly told that he did not suppose anything of the sort. Whether he was moved by a desire to be quite honest, and not to say what he did not mean, or by some less worthy motive, I cannot say; but he did not stop at this assenting to the other's praise. "Yes, I suppose he is," he replied, but added, "I do not like his manners; and as for his friends and companions, I must say plainly that I regard them as a painfully vulgar set. Why, do you know—I forget whether you were at home that day or not—but last week a number of them were up here playing leap-frog in this very field, not far from my front door—yes, leap-frog—and the boisterous heartiness of their behaviour was really exceedingly offensive. They actually tried to see how high and how far they could jump, and the laughter was most immoderate. Such a lack of dignity—as I say, it was really exceedingly offensive."

"Why, as to that," responded Mr. Spottletoe, "I cannot say I fully agree with you. You see, leap-frog is a good healthy game, and if I hadn't got this stiff ankle, and if I weren't quite so old, I expect I should be joining the young fellows. Though it condemns myself, I 'm bound to say I don't think much of a frog that cannot jump, and find fun in it too. I cannot do it myself, I know, more is the pity! But were my ankles as sound as yours, I 'd try; and I should not wonder now, Mr. Croakpipe, if a little more muscular exercise would do you good, help your digestion, and make you feel ten times happier than you do. Why do not you ask them to let you join their sports next time they come? I am sure they would be delighted."

Mr. Croakpipe opened his eyes in sheer astonishment. "Can you think that I could join in any such exhibition of vulgarity? Mr. Spottletoe, your question surprises me beyond answering almost. I beg you to understand I do not play leap-frog at all, and if I were to do so, I should not play with such frogs as these we are speaking of. I never dreamed of finding that you approved of such doings as have recently disgraced our paddy-field. Feeling, as I do, that the credit of all of us is at stake, that we shall lose caste as a community unless something be done to put a stop to these objectionable proceedings, I must confess that I am astounded and disappointed at your attitude in the matter. I had counted confidently on your help in my endeavour to maintain the respectability of the neighbourhood."

"Now, look here, Mr. Croakpipe," said Mr. Spottletoe, putting his finger on that frog's shoulder; "you have expressed yourself freely, and you will allow me to do the same. Let me assure you that our respectability is not in any danger from the young folks' games, but that it will be in danger from any exhibition of bitter feeling and unkindness. And I 'll tell you a proverb I heard in the house of that man who spoilt my jumping by studying my foot. It ran thus: 'People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.' I could not understand what it meant at first, but have found out since; and it is this: that when you intend to hurt someone else, you are very likely to hurt yourself, and when you find fault with other people, you are very likely to set them finding fault with you." And then Mr. Spottletoe pointed out that perhaps Mr. Croakpipe ought to be among the last to find fault, since other frogs had at least as much occasion to complain of his noisy and incessant croaking as he of their occasional meetings for athletic sports.

But all Mr. Spottletoe could say was little likely to have much effect upon his neighbour, for Mr. Croakpipe had been very delicate as a tadpole, and had been a trifle spoiled. He had got into the unfortunate habit of thinking that everybody else must do exactly what was most pleasant to him. It seemed quite right for him to complain of what others did, and quite right, further, for them to cease at once from anything he complained of. But it never occurred to him that anybody had a right to complain of anything that he did. And when Mr. Spottletoe tried to point this out to him, he could not understand it at all. His thoughts and expectations were as before, and his conduct unaltered. He continued to interfere with other people's affairs, telling them what to do and what not to do, and for the sake of peace many did as he told them. So he often got his own way, but he was never happy—at least, never so happy as old Mr. Spottletoe, who never interfered with anybody if he could help it, but tried to make things pleasant for everybody, and who was so great a favourite, that everybody tried to make things pleasant for him.

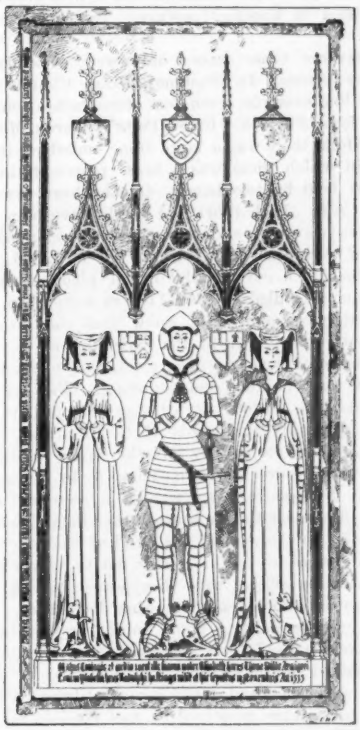
ON THE CHURCH FLOOR.



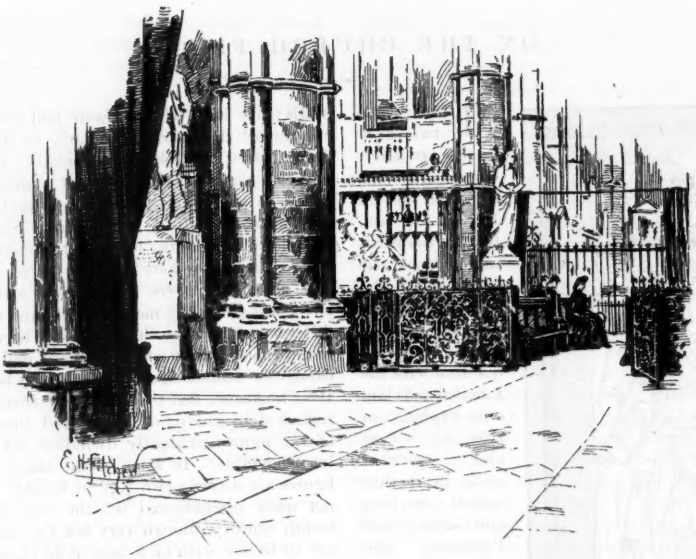
STONE OF ONE OF THE TRUMPINGTON FAMILY, TRUMPINGTON CHURCH.

MORE than two hundred years ago it came into the heart of George Herbert to ask, in the beautiful sacred poem he called "The Temple," "Mark you the floor?" He answered the question with the fanciful and elaborate explanation that the square and speckled stone in it that looked so firm and strong was Patience; the alternate squares of black and grey were Humility; the step or gentle rising leading to "the quire above" was Confidence; and the cement that bound all together in one sure band and tied the whole frame was Love and Charity. We also are about to call attention to church floors, though from a more material point of view; for besides the black and grey and speckled tiles, or squares of marble, so exquisitely compared to moral excellencies, there are many objects, either in the paving or associated with it, that are of considerable interest.

For instance: in many of our churches, especially in many of our village churches, there are yet to be seen, embedded in the floors, superb memorial brasses, or flat brass effigies of knights and squires, with or without their dames, and of merchants with and without their wives, and of clergy, all long since departed to the mercy of God. For three centuries at least it was the custom to incise upon thin metal plates representations of those whose memory it was desired to perpetuate, and to cut out these brass presentments, and insert them in large flat stones, properly prepared with matrices, or indentations, to receive them, so as to present an even surface when fixed. The large flat stones thus converted into frameworks for the brass figures were then laid down on the floor among the paving-stones or tiles. Some brasses were also placed on altar-tombs, and some on walls; but most of them were laid down level with the rest of the floor, particularly in the churches in Kent, Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. Curiously, the earliest examples of this sort of monumental art are found to be the best, as though perfection in the matter was attained at the first. Size, simplicity, and elegance were the leading characteristics to begin with; the figures were large, or life-sized, and single; few ornaments were introduced, and the general effect was gained by means of bold and graceful lines. After a century or so this excellence began to decline; more ornamentation was introduced, more escutcheons, canopies; female figures were placed by the sides of their husbands, and the number of their children was indicated in groups of them: and then the life-size of the figures gradually dwindled till they became inconsiderable. In some of the latest examples the figures are scarcely two feet in height. This art was not quite discontinued till the close of the seventeenth century, though very few fine specimens of it are to be met with of a later date than the reign of Elizabeth. The feet of the earliest effigies generally rested on representations of animals treated



IN BROMHAM CHURCH, BEDFORDSHIRE.



THE CENTRE-TREAD IN THE NORTH AISLE AND TRANSEPT, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

heraldically. In later examples the figures were often delineated in kneeling postures. Inscriptions were usual.

Sometimes brass crosses only were embedded in the gravestones. In Blackmore Priory Church there was a fine example, seven feet three inches long by three feet in width. In St. Peter's Church, Merton, in Norfolk, there was a large stone embedded in the floor in which there was a brass representation of a heart held by two hands. On the heart was the word *Credo*. Both heart and hands have been long lost, but two scrolls and an inscription have remained till our own time. We learn, by the last-mentioned, that the stone covered the burial-place of Alicia Fincham, who died in May, 1477, or more than four hundred years ago. We know that the heart is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures as the seat and source of love, courage, grief, and pleasure, as well as of wit and understanding. May we not conclude this curious device was intended to set forth pictorially the words of the Psalmist, "My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation"; or, "With my whole heart have I sought Thee"? In Brampton Church, Derbyshire, there was to be seen part of a female figure, holding a heart in her hand likewise.

Exposed to the wear of the tread of the congregations of successive centuries, it is not to be wondered at that many effigies have disappeared, leaving the matrices only to mark where they have been. But we may yet see many a noble knight, arrayed in his "warlike harness" from head to foot, delineated as he remained in the sorrowing remembrance of those who loved him; and many a noble dame with as much portraiture preserved as was possible for the artist. There are, indeed, but few counties that are not thus enriched, from Cornwall up to Northumberland. In Cobham Church, Kent, there are some fine brasses, well known to enthusiastic collectors, who have made many a pilgrimage to the Pickwickian village, with paper and heel-ball, to carry away rough rubbings of them. In Trumpington Church there is a good example, representing a Trumpington. In Morley Church, Derbyshire, there is a squire kneeling on his helmet with his lady in the attitude of prayer, with an inscription stating they gave three bells to the church, and ordained three shillings and fourpence to be laid out for bread for the poor of the parish, and that the "Squyer" died in 1454, and his "wyfe" A.D. 1444. Sometimes two wives are delineated, as in Bromham Church, Bedfordshire. In Thornton Church, Bucks, there are three wives of one husband thus depicted. A brass in Etwall Church delineates a knight and his wife and their seventeen children. In a Cornish church the metal used for the plates is copper. In a Berkshire church there is an instance of lead being used for the purpose. At Burwash, Sussex, plates of cast-iron were laid in the pavements instead of gravestones.

There were a few years ago, and probably still are, two interesting figures on the floor of the north side of the chancel of North Ockendon Church, which are no more than two feet nine inches high. The inscription belonging to them relates that they represent William Pointz and his wife, who was the sister of the Lord Mayor of London. The squire is delineated in armour and spurs, with his head uncovered resting on a pillow. The dame's robes fall in graceful folds and cover her feet. Her hands are slanted, as if in prayer. Two groups of children, with six figures in each, evidently indicate that their

issue were twelve in number. In Hutton Church there was recently, and probably still is, a stone on the floor of the chancel, on which two figures represent a warrior and his lady, and two groups depict their sixteen children. The inscription and armorial bearings that should have told us who they were have been lost, but the evidence of their dress points to the reign of Richard III. as the period in which they lived. The knight in this example is but one foot four inches and a half high, and his dame is depicted only one foot four inches high; and the groups of children are only six or seven inches high. Unfortunately, as these metal memorials were easily melted down, many of them have disappeared—even recently. In Croydon Church, for instance, two handsome female figures, with high-crowned hats, peaked bodices, and ruffs of Queen Elizabeth's time, were surreptitiously removed, with four others, in the course of repairs after the fire there in 1859.

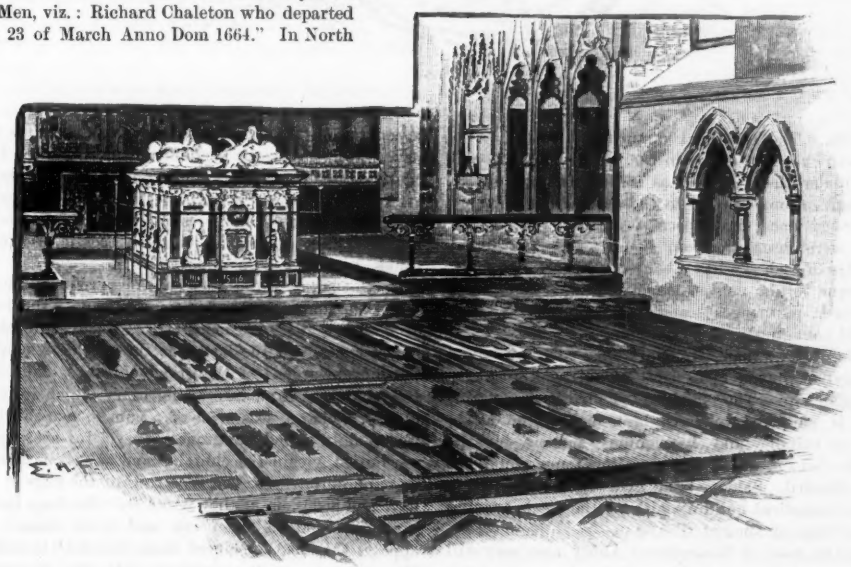
Besides brasses, we have many interesting memorial gravestones embedded in church floors of different materials, according to the locality. In Cornwall these slabs are frequently made of Purbeck marble and of slate, as in Wales; in Derbyshire they are sometimes alabaster; in the northern counties sandstone is most generally used. Some of them keep the secret rather than disclose the identity of those who are buried below them. A still larger number, of later date, have curious inscriptions. On a flat stone in the flagging of the north aisle of Alnwick Church, now covered up by pews or removed, was the following:—"Wonder not Reader who soe obscured lies. A loyall subject of most unvalued Price. Soe have we known such iewels Hid in mould. And sweetest Flowers the shadiest Leaves Enfold. Know Reader in thos sacred ashes there Lies under coverd A loyallest of Men, viz.: Richard Chaleton who departed the 23 of March Anno Dom 1664." In North Hinksey Church, in Berkshire, an inscription commences thus:—"Reader, look to thy feet; honest and loyal men are sleeping under them. Here lies," etc. Still quainter wordings than those of the seventeenth century are to be seen in the examples of the preceding one. On a plain floor-stone in the chancel of Mountnessing Church was cut:—

"17 Decembris 1583.

Layde heere aloone all dedde in tooeme John Peers of Arnollde Hall,
Awaitheth for the daye of dooeme till Christe hym up shall call,
Whose tyme nowe paste on earth well spente hath gotten him good name.
His honest lyfe and governmente deserved well the same
God grawnte that his good dealyne may to us example be
Of Mowntneysinge that rightelie saye an honest man was he."

As our glances fall upon church floors, then, and these memorials remind us of those who have gone before us, whose hearts were filled with the same aspirations as our own, and who, in their day, perhaps did more than we have been able to do—kept in their minds the love of God more constantly, and loved and served their fellow-men better than we have done—it is no wonder there come to us the words, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Mosaic pavements are the most costly of all floors. Though comparatively common in Italy and Sicily, they are extremely rare with us. We have one ancient example in Westminster Abbey of the famous *Opus Alexandrinum*, as this sort of mosaic-work used to be called. It is spread out, as it was laid down in Abbot Ware's time before the Chapel of Edward the Confessor, in a line with the east aisles of the transepts. A golden floor, however, is mentioned as having been laid down in the richest and most sacred

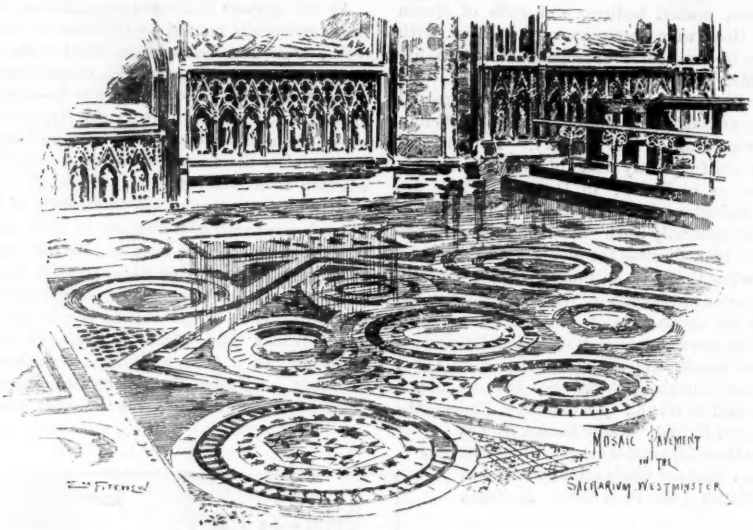


JOBHAM, KENT.

part of Solomon's Temple. We are told King Solomon built the walls of the House of the Lord within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house and the walls or the ceiling, and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir, and that he overlaid with pure gold the sanctuary wherein was deposited the ark of the covenant. We may read:—"And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, within and without. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold within and without."

Glazed or encaustic tiles, with and without ornamental designs upon them, are of frequent occurrence with us. The continual disturbance of the pavements in churches, owing to the burial of clergy and laity under them, as well as the passing to and fro of congregations, has led to the destruction of many that must once have been beautiful. Sometimes there were inscriptions on them, which ran round the edge of each tile like a border. Fantastic animals, grotesque birds, conventional foliage, warriors on horseback, personages seated on thrones, and ornamental configurations, were among the chief objects depicted upon them. In Canterbury Cathedral there is a zodiac graven upon tiles of thirteenth-century workmanship. The subdued colouring of ancient tiles is supposed to have been ordered so as to form a suitable and harmonious surface for the foot to fall on, which very startling tones would not have afforded. Seldom is an excavation made in any old ecclesiastical building without the spade turning up portions of ancient tiles.

On the floor of Westminster Abbey, also, may still be observed, here and there, lines of square stones marking the centre of the diagonal paving. By the aid of old engravings we may see that the nave and aisles, and the aisles of Henry VII.'s chapel, were once all furnished with this "middle tread," as it is called in the Clerk of the Works' register. It is supposed it was intended to conduce to the maintenance of regularity in processions. As the numerous interments and tombs had effaced most of this middle tread, and the need of it no longer existed, the meaning of it had escaped notice when the nave was repaved with diagonal squares, about fifty years ago. In a more recent repair of the paving of the north aisle of the choir and the western aisle of the transept, it was noted and carefully perpetuated. In York



Minster there was another curious provision in the paving, for the proper conduct of ceremonials. This consisted of three rows of circular stones placed at regular intervals, which, we may conclude, were considered suitable and symmetrical standing-points for the leading dignitaries on grand occasions. These stones, too, have been removed.

North-country antiquaries have observed mention of *lair-stones* and *layr-stones* in connection with the floors of churches in the account-books of churchwardens in old times. In the book for the year 1732 kept by the churchwardens of the grand old abbey-church at Hexham there is an interesting entry which informs us that a charge was made of a sum of one shilling, "commonly called lair-stone money," for every person buried within the church; and that this money was appropriated for the repairing of the flags in the nave and aisles, or, as they wrote it, "the fflags in the great isle and in the north and south isles." It appears they had appointed their "beedle" to collect these charges, on the understanding that he would

keep the flagging in repair, but he had failed in his undertaking, and at the date mentioned it was ordered that the churchwardens should receive the said lair-stone money, and pay the same into the chest of the said parish, and lay it out as occasion might require for the repairs to the pavement. The memorandum in question goes on to say that no bargain shall be made by the churchwardens in the future for any person to receive the lair-stone money and make the necessary repairs, unless such person will give security, not only that he will keep the flags in good repair, but that he will sweep and clean all the passages to and from the church, and keep the same clean and decent at all times.

The accounts of the churchwardens for the two churches so curiously close together at Bywell, in the same county, also mention lair-stone money, some as received and some as "wanting." They set forth that in 1695 two "sesses" of sixpence per plough were to be laid on the parish for paving the floor of the church and making it plain and even, and that money that had been due for layr-stones for three years should be gathered in and paid in towards the charge of paving and making even the floor of the church. We may learn, too, from other entries that they received one shilling and eightpence for the layr-stone money of an adult, and tenpence for that of children, in this Border town. The inhabitants of Bywell, we learn from an Elizabethan survey, were hardy men, who occupied themselves chiefly with the manufacture of bits, stirrups, and buckles for the horsemen and borderers of the country, and they were very subject to incursions of the thieves of Tynedale, which caused them to drive all their cattle and sheep into their one street every night, winter and summer, and keep watch at both ends of it, that on the approach of the enemy they might raise Hue and Cry for rescue of them. Under these circumstances it is scarcely to be wondered at, perhaps, that their payments for layr-stones were not very prompt.

Church floors were once frequently strewed with rushes. Some authorities state they were universally strewn with rushes when halls and parlours were also strewed. Occasionally, in remote rural districts, where the congregation is gathered together from distant farms, we may yet see clean straw neatly placed in the pews in wintry weather; but formerly rushes were strewn at stated intervals in most churches. The strewing usually took place on the day of the dedication of the church, except in the Peak Forest, where it took place on Midsummer's Eve. Many persons left land and money for the supply of the requisite rushes. The right to cut rushes and grass for the purpose is still maintained by the churchwardens of various parishes, ceremoniously, that it may not lapse, as at Clee, in Lincolnshire, and at old Weston, in Huntingdonshire, and at Pavenham, in Bedfordshire. Perhaps the custom of strewing in its integrity lingered longest in Derbyshire and Cheshire, though some observance of the ceremony is still gone through both in the northern and southern counties. Glossop, in Derbyshire, continued the strewing down to this century. The carts that brought the rushes to the church were decorated with garlands, and the inhabitants made a festival of the occasion. In Cheshire there were processions of young men and women, gaily dressed, carrying garlands, which were afterwards hung up in the churches. The custom was called rush-bearing. The ancient records of the parish of St. Michael, Cornhill, mention payments to "a raker" for taking away the dust and rushes that he swept out of the church. George Herbert, too, says of the country parson that he takes care that the church be swept and kept clean, without dust or cobwebs. Another clergyman of the days of the Stuarts alludes to rush-strewing in his "Hesperides," where, after enumerating the succession —rosemary, bay, mistletoe, holly, box, yew, and birch —for the respective seasons of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, for the adornment of homes, mentions "green rushes then, and sweetest bents."

As we think of the piety, the prayers, the vows, the endeavours, the self-effacement of thousands who have passed away, we must own George Herbert was right, and that church floors should remind us of Patience, Humility, Love, and Charity, and more besides.

S. W.

LOWELL'S RELIGIOUS POETRY.

LOWELL occupies a peculiar position in literature. He has written elegant verses, scholarly essays, and some serious poems of sustained merit, but the humorous poems which were first made popularly known here by John Bright are those the public chiefly associates with his name; and thus some of the beauties of his graver verses are overshadowed by these "Biglow Papers" which are rich in humour, and keen in satire. Perhaps next to Longfellow Lowell is the American poet most known, though not most fully known. He has written nothing so well known as the verse in which Hosea Biglow figures; his religious poems have not the repose that many of Whittier's have, nor is any one of them so clear in its poetic ring as that of Bryant's "The Cloud on the Way," but there are in Lowell's works poems that might not unfitly be brought into our collections of sacred poetry, and there are dispersed through his writings couplets that will well bear extract.

It is probable that the early training and association of James Russell Lowell have had much to do with

the determination of his mind. He was born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1819, and was the son of the Rev. Charles Lowell, D.D., a Congregational minister there. Graduating at Harvard College, he was in 1840 admitted to the Bar in Boston, and his first published verses were issued the year previously. It is forty-one years since the first of the "Biglow Papers" appeared, and from the time when the authorship became known, fame has crowned the brows of the writer with the wreath, and until diplomacy ousted for a time literature, poem and essay succeeded one another, and appealed to widening circles of readers.

It is with the religious poems of Lowell that we here have to do. They are not very numerous, and there is not one which is so directly a hymn as those of some of his competitors—as that of Bryant's "*Mors Janua Vitæ*," or Whittier's "My Psalm." Lowell's moral rises out of the common things of life; he sees an oak towering in his gnarled shade and growing in unkind soil, and it teaches the lesson—

> "Lord! all Thy works are lessons—each contains
> Some emblem of man's all-containing soul;
> Shall he make fruitless all Thy glorious pains,
> Delving within Thy grace an eyeless mole?"

And then arises the desire that through the man the Lord may speak, that he may have some message to bear. The daily doings in life become to the poet the media of lessons; and though the frequency of the sight of the object makes that lesson one that is often given, yet it has the advantage of more frequent application. Possibly in "The Search" there is a fair illustration of that lesson. In it the search for Christ is told; it is begun, and nature seemed so fair that the woods were believed to be the place where He would be found. But winter came and shook the crown and purple from the wood, and so "back to the world I turned." Believing that Christ is King, the seeker spurned the "cramped alley and the hut," as far beneath where He should sojourn. He sought 'mid power and wealth, but "found no trace of Him," and the costly offerings grew dim with rust and mould. Then the seeker shook from his feet the dust of the proud world; and led by love he turned to the city, following the footprints of the Lord, and found the King he sought in a hovel rude. A naked hungry child clung round His knee,

> "And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled,
> To bless the smile that set him free."

He saw new miracles done by the gracious Presence, the morsel swollen out to a goodly store, and then he knelt and acknowledged that the throne of Christ is with the outcast and the weak! It is a lesson that needs to be taught, and that is sometimes forgotten by both the poet and the preacher.

Another poem, "A Parable," has a somewhat similar moral, but Christ is the Seeker, and His quest is to see *how* men believe in Him. The chief priests and rulers spread carpets of gold for the Son of Man to tread on; great organs swell jubilant with praise, but still the "Lord in sorrow bent down His head," and asks if the altars are founded on bodies and souls of living men. He tells them that with golden bars and silver gates they have fenced the sheep from the Father's fold, and he seeks an artisan stunted and haggard, and a motherless girl, and sets these in the midst of the rulers and kings, and says—"See here the images ye have made of Me!" For Christ Church, in his native town, Lowell writes a poem to aid in procuring a chime of bells, and from it some lines illustrative of his teaching may be quoted:—

> "O chime of sweet Saint Charity,
> Peal soon that Easter morn
> When Christ for all shall risen be,
> And in all hearts new-born!
> That Pentecost when utterance clear
> To all men shall be given,
> When all shall say, '*My Brother*' here,
> And hear '*My Son*' in heaven."

One of the suggestive poems is "What Rabbi Jehosha said," but it does not so well invite extract. The story of the Holy Grail has had its attractions for Mr. Lowell, and in treating it he has altered the time and the persons. His "Vision of Sir Launfal" is that of a knight who wishes to go in search of the Holy Grail "in his unscarred mail." As he went his way, he saw a leper, who moaned as he begged, and a loathing came over Sir Launfal, "the sunshine went out of his soul," but he tossed the leper a piece of gold scornfully. The latter rejects it; gold is worthless to him, and he would rather have a slender mite when given with love. Time passes; Sir Launfal returns from his long search "an old, bent man, worn out and frail." He has lost his earldom; he again sees the leper begging, and he now beholds in him "an image of Him who died on the tree;" he parted his own crust with him, and gave him drink, though it was only "water out of a wooden bowl." Then the leper stood up glorified, "shining, and tall, and fair, and straight," and the Holy Grail is the cup which "thou didst fill at the streamlet for me but now."

> "The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
> In whatso we share with another's need,
> Not what we give, but what we *share*,
> For the gift without the giver is bare.
> Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
> Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me."

The conclusion of the poem has a fine fancy, though one that has been often used. There is an open gate at Sir Launfal's castle; the wanderer is welcome there, and there now summer smiles "the whole year round." Sir Launfal has hung up that "richest mail" which he wore—the idle armour may become "the spider's banquet-hall," for

> "He must be fenced with stronger mail
> Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

And then the closing lines of this version—widely different from that of our Poet-Laureate—are

> "The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
> Has hall and bower at his command;
> And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
> But is lord of the earldom as much as he."

The whole poem has its attraction, but the reader will at once notice the changes in personages and in time from that of the heroes of the Round Table, whose deeds have been sung by Lord Tennyson.

It would be difficult to classify the "Biglow Papers" under the heading of the poems we are commenting

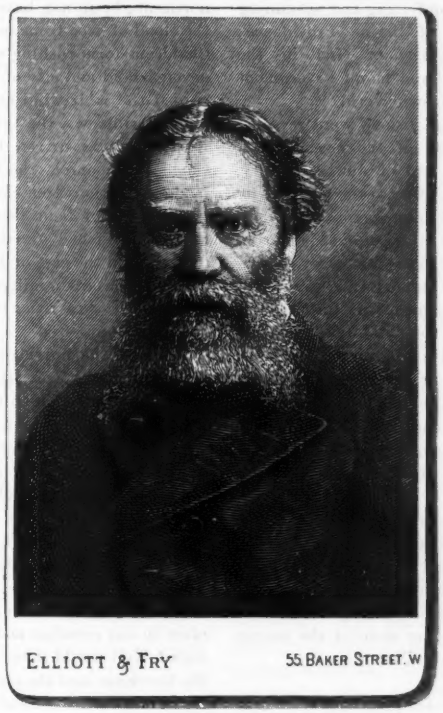
on, but there are dispersed over both the first and second series of these remarkable verses, couplets that might fittingly illustrate the position we have taken up. There is the splendid apostrophe to the "Strange new world, that never yet was young," in the "Yankee Idyll;" there is in the same poem the quaint axiom, "That only manhood makes a man;" and there is the caustic utterance of Parson Wilbur on the political preacher, who endeavoured to uproot the good old ideas of what's right, and what is not. The "first epistle" of Hosea Biglow, even with its characteristic Yankee familiarity, did much to put slavery into the right light, and one verse has certainly an enduring moral :—

"Labourin' man and labourin' woman,
Hev one glory an' one shame;
Ev'rythin' thet 's done unhuman
Injers all on 'em the same."

But the form of these "Papers," and their caustic irony, renders them less the vehicle for the carriage of thoughts of love than of stern reproof; and it is in the volume called "Under the Willows" that we find better illustration and truer embodiment of that charity that thinketh no evil. The spirit of the poet, in one poem, walks in thought through long aisles; he sees the altar's gleam shine from Calvary, where "the Church's East" is; and from Calvary down centuries, he finds lives that "end at the Cross," and he learns that many sects and warring creeds find their paths have one goal. So—

"Moravian hymn and Roman chant
In one devotion blend,
To speak the soul's eternal want
Of Him, the inmost Friend.
One prayer soars cleansed with martyr fire,
One choked with sinner's tears:
In heaven both meet in one desire,
And God one music hears."

It will be seen in many cases that the thoughts thus expressed have been carried too far; but Lowell does not aim at doctrinal teaching—his desire is rather to exemplify what he thinks are truths that are not sufficiently heeded, and his verse is usually more marked by vigour than by the nice distinctions that one or two poets have made. We have not so much to look critically to the wording, but for the spirit of the verses; and so read, in poems such as we have named, and such as that of "A Parable," we find a healthy moral, and that usually embodied in vigorous verse. It is probable that some will discover the influences of the land and the people in which and amongst whom they were written, but there is little of "provincialism."



THE HON. J. RUSSELL LOWELL.

Finally, as illustrative of another moral taught, we may quote the poem, "All Saints." It no more compares with Tennyson's than an American apple with a hot-house peach :—

"One feast, of holy days the crest,
I, though no Churchman, love to keep—
All Saints; the unknown good that rest
In God's still memory folded deep;
The bravely dumb that did their deed
And scorned to blot it with a name—
Men of the plain, heroic breed,
That loved Heaven's silence more than fame."

There are other poems that would bear quotation; there are in "The Cathedral" touches that are very tender, and others holding fancies, such as when the stern faces looked down

"And seemed to say,
Ye come and go incessant; we remain
Safe in the hallowed quiet of the past;
Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot,
Of faith so nobly realised as this."

And thus through many verses the lesson is taught. It is one to which an old sin of America—that of slave-holding—gave a part of the meaning; it is the moral of trust; of the brotherhood of man; of the enduring love of God, and of the pity of His Son. It is not entirely of the highest type of poetry, as we have hinted; but it has tenderness of thought, facility of versification, and an easy presentation of its moral. Lowell will not take the place of Longfellow, but the extracts we have given show that at least some niche in the gallery of American sacred poets is his. Hitherto, we have had too limited ideas of the number of the singers in that gallery; and Lowell's satirical verses have prevented some from hitherto thinking of him in connection with it.

PROVIDENCE.

A SERMON PREACHED AT A TIME OF NATIONAL ANXIETY.

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God," etc., etc.—EZEKIEL i. 1.



THIS sublime chapter, with its series of figurations, represents to us, in what I might call dramatic form, the great and ever comforting and sustaining theme of Divine Providence; the agency of God in the natural and moral government of His own world.

These visions were revealed to the prophet Ezekiel at one of the most memorable as well as the saddest eras of Jewish history. Jerusalem had now been for five years besieged by the armies of Chaldea. After an heroic resistance, she had reached her last throes — her expiring agonies. The Hebrew seer was far away, separated by mountain ranges and rivers, leagues of dreary wilderness, from the home of his fathers. He was the head apparently of a colony of Jews, who had previously been carried captive to Assyria, and now, in their exile, had stationed or settled themselves on the banks of the Chebar. The words we have read transport us to the distant home of the prophet, with his sorrowing band; each bosom heaving with the torture of anxiety as to the fate of city, country, friends —all so dear.

What is Ezekiel's refuge?—or rather, what does the God he trusted and loved vouchsafe to him and his fellow-colonists, to comfort and cheer them? It is the succession of magnificent picturings we are now to consider, commencing with the whirlwind cloud, and ending with the calm, reassuring sight of the august Being seated on the Heavenly Throne.

I. First in order, let us contemplate the symbol of *the Four Cherubims*. There were outward significant figurations which ushered these in. The prophet (shall we suppose in the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men?), while gazing up, it may be, on the calm, clear stillness of a Mesopotamian sky, beholds, in the far north, a whirlwind approaching; a cloud encircles it, lighted up at the same time with an infolding fire.

Might he not think at the time, might he not utter in trembling awe, the very words of his country's Psalmist, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him"? Such, however, was evidently not the design or interpretation of the vision. It was comfort—comfort to himself; comfort to his sorrowing companions. In that whirlwind he recognised the well-known emblem of Divine power. In the cloud he saw the reflection of his own depressed and desponding spirit—the clouds and darkness that are so often round about God's throne—the deep, unfathomable mystery of His ways. The cloud, impelled by the whirlwind, and coming, too, out of the north, might it not have been to him suggestive of the cloud of woe from northern Babylon, the gloomy Chaldean storm rushing with whirlwind speed on the devoted land and city of his fathers? Even if he regarded the whirlwind as an emblem of God, all the more terrible was the thought that that cloud, laden with woe, was driven by the Almighty; that the Chaldean monarch, the Cedar of Lebanon, who had made the nations tremble, was like the Assyrian before him, the rod of Jehovah's anger, the staff of His hand, to whom He had given a charge as the waster to destroy. In the case of these two invaders, too truthfully were words familiar to him realised: "God hath spoken once—yea, twice have I heard this—that power belongeth unto God."

But after the hurricane and the earthquake comes the still small voice. He looked, and while terrible to him would have been this impetuous whirlwind and portentous cloud, lo! "a fire infolds itself" (verse 4), "and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber." There was light in the darkness; the black cloud was relieved by a shining fire, a glorious radiance as the colour of amber illumined the skirts of the storm. It is a picture of all God's judgments, whether national or individual. The whirlwind and the cloudy darkness are followed sooner or later by the fire and the amber. We are hasty often in our surmises and verdicts on the Divine dealings. Well would it be were we to wait patiently till the hurricane and the cloud pass by, and until He set up in our dark night, as He did of old to Israel, His pillar of *fire*. "At evening time it shall be light." While gazing at the cloudy whirlwind we are apt to exclaim, "He is terrible in His doings toward the children of men." But when these doings come to be illuminated with the infolding fire, the harsh, precipitate verdict gives way to a more truthful one: "I know that Thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me."

The prophet still farther gazes, and lo! out of these conflicting elements and symbols there emerge *Four living creatures*. It is impossible to read the description of the appearance of them as given in verse 10—with the fourfold face of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle—without having forcibly suggested to us those slabs of Assyrian marbles close by in our British Museum; moreover, that he who was now the spectator of this vision had himself probably wandered

amid these gigantic halls and Nineveh palaces nigh his Chebar abode, and was familiarised with these strange colossal shapes—the rude but impressive Assyrian types of majesty and intelligence, strength and courage.*

We cannot now dwell minutely on this second part of the vision. Suffice it to say, that the manifestation seems evidently to bring before Ezekiel's mind the agency and instrumentality of angels in the Divine government of the world. He had just gazed on the material symbols (the material elements which God has under His control in effecting His purposes)—whirlwind, and cloud, and fire. But He has mightier agents and ministries. The prophet, from the mute, dumb, insensate figures, ascends a step higher in the ladder, and in these four representatives of the cherubic host, he is reminded of Him who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.†

These angels are God's intermediate administrators in working out His behests, and who employ the elements of nature for this purpose. But, observe, they are viceroys, but not plenipotentiaries. There is a Supreme Voice and Hand represented as directing and controlling their every movement (verse 25):—"There was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood and had let down their wings." Whenever God gave the word, whenever the great Being who marshals their ranks utters His voice, the swift wings collapse. And again (verse 20): "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go." It was at the bidding of the Spirit of God they set forth on every enterprise. They followed the Divine impulse alone, and never deviated from the track of their great Leader (verse 12): "They turned not when they went." Whatever be the view we take of this Scriptural doctrine of angelic agency, its main comfort is that these are not irresponsible agents. I could not trust the highest or the brightest of them. For, after all, they are but creatures "kept by the power of God." But as the subordinate ministers in His hand, I rejoice in their mission and ministry. The Psalmist does not say, "They have themselves taken charge;" but, "*He* shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." "Are they not all ministering spirits, *sent forth* to minister to them who are heirs of salvation?"

II. We pass on to the second vision of the chapter. It is a new delineation and symbol of God's Providential dealings: the *Vision of the four wheels*. Let us glance at a few of their characteristics.

1. They are high, lofty, mysterious (verse 18): "As for their rings" (the tires of the wheels—the circumference), "they were so high, that they were dreadful." "O God! Thy ways are past finding out! Thy justice is as the great mountains, Thy judgments are a great deep!" "Who can, by searching, find out God?" We look upwards to this vast wheel of Providential dispensations. Its height is often lost in the clouds. We cannot attain to it. Daniel's name for Jehovah is "the great and *dreadful*."

2. God's dealings are intricate (verse 16): "Their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel." To the unscientific, the uninitiated, the most perfect and elaborate piece of mechanism is a mass of complication. Take an unskilled, unlettered man into one of our engineers' works or factories. Show him piece after piece of a machine; each piece lying by itself—axle, and rings, and cogs; what a mass of apparent confusion! He can scarce believe, when he sees it at last put together and working like a thing instinct with life, that it is the combination of these unshapely fragments of steel and iron and brass which he first beheld in disjointed confusion. Aye, even *when* working, it is all a mystery to him—these cross movements, wheel propelling wheel, cog fitting into cog, the revolution of the smaller wheel depending on the larger; and all subject to the intelligent mind and intelligent hand which fabricated and now controls it. Such are God's ways. Such are the dealings of the great Artificer. We are but children, gazing with awe and wonder on the complex wheel within wheel, ever and anon ready, as we gaze, with our "why and wherefore": very much that is mysterious, incomprehensible. Yet

3. God's dealings are all in harmony (verse 16): "They four" (wheels) "had one likeness." Every rotation of the wheel was in accord with the motions of the living creatures. "When the living creatures went, the wheels went by them." Intricate, perplexed, and perplexing as often the plan of the Divine government seems, the intricacy is only to us, and from man's point of view. The most elaborate of machines is the most harmonious. As in the structure of the outer universe, the wheel within wheel obeys the silent law of gravitation, from the circling of the planet to the

* See Dean Stanley's "Lectures on the Jewish Church," Second Series, *in loco*.

† The description here given may help us to understand alike the nature and the mission of angelic beings:—

(1) They are exceedingly glorious (verse 7): "They sparkled like the colour of burnished brass."

(2) They are pure and holy (verse 13): "Their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps."

(3) They are exceedingly powerful. This is indicated (verse 10) by the fourfold image of strength and dignity—the lion, the ox, the eagle, and the human countenance.

(4) They are swift to fulfil God's bidding. They rush to and fro with lightning speed (verses 13, 14): "Out of the fire went forth lightning, and the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

(5) They are persistent in duty. There is not with them, as alas! often with us, faltering, caprice, hesitation (verse 9): "They turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward."

(6) There is a blessed harmony in their ranks—no jarring, no contention (verse 9): "Their wings were joined one to another."

(7) They are employed as God's ministers and messengers in all parts of the earth (verse 6): "Every one had four faces, and every one had four wings." A face turned in the direction of every point of the compass—north, south, east, and west—ready, at the bidding of their Almighty Lord, to go on errands either of mercy or judgment.

formation of the dewdrop. All is perfect; not a wheel, or part of a wheel, in disorder, otherwise the universe would rush to disorganisation and ruin. So, in the still more intricate and complex moral world, if we understood it aright, there is no clashing, or confusion, or disharmony. Mystery may often be written on it to *us*: "But as for God, His way is perfect." Nay, farther—

4. Not only is there harmony in God's moral government, but beauty (verse 16): "The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl." A delicate azure green—one of the most precious of gems. These high wheels, reaching to heaven, the great motive power and propellers of the smaller wheels, these colossal tires sentinelled and turned by angels, were as distinguished for beauty as for height. God's darkest dealings will yet come forth radiant with faithfulness and mercy and love. "He will beautify the meek with salvation." "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." And once more—

5. Not only will God's dealings come forth beautiful, but they will be, they are, harmonious and beautiful, because every one of them is His own. The machine is guided by supreme Intelligence. It is not self-acting, automatic, the wheels turning capriciously, having no supervision—the world, as some secularists nowadays would have it, left to the control of general laws, its God the unknown and unknowable (verse 18): "Their rings were full of eyes round about them four." The eye of God, the eyes of perfect wisdom, are not only gazing on every revolution of the wheel, but they are represented as *in* the wheel itself—eyes above, beneath, on every side. "Whither can we go from Thy presence, or whither can we flee from Thy Spirit?" "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him." "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth."

III. But we must hasten on to speak (it must, however, be but in a few sentences) of the third vision of the chapter, although it is the grandest and most comforting of all, and might well demand more special consideration. It is Ezekiel's *Vision of the glory of God*.

We have hitherto spoken of the earthly and semi-earthly imagery and symbolism, the complex machinery under the ministration of angels. We ascend now to the heights of the firmament above their heads, as described in verse 26. Far above cloud, and whirlwind, and infolding fire, there is "the likeness of a throne." The beryl, beauteous as it is, is outdone in brightness by the flashing sapphire. The whole throne had "as the appearance of a sapphire stone." It was one blaze of luminous glory. On this august and royal seat (verse 26) there was "the likeness as the appearance of a Man above upon it." This glorious Being was surrounded with a glow of brightness like the colour of amber mingled with fire. And then (as the prophet still farther gazed), this coronal of amber and fire seemed to suggest, or to resolve itself into, the well-known covenant emblem, the type and symbol of the Divine faithfulness alike in Providence and grace (verse 28): "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about." Can any doubt as to the interpretation of this magnificent closing part of the vision, this its culminating glory? the sapphire throne of Deity, the likeness of a man, the encircling rainbow? It was the God-man Mediator, Jesus, in His glorious twofold nature of Deity and humanity, surrounded with the blessed symbol of covenant love!*

Come then, dear brethren, in conclusion, and ere the sublime vision of which we have caught a brief glimpse, and no more, passes by, let us gather up its lesson of comfort. It is a pictured parable of Divine Providence, conveying the assurance that there happens nothing, domestic or national, which is the result of blind chance or fate. There are no random revolutions in the wheels of Providence. Nay, more—that some wise and gracious purpose and disclosure will yet emerge from what is perplexing and mysterious, if we could only trust Him who dwells in the thick darkness, and yet whose name is Light! We may see the whirlwind coming. It may be as in the case of Ezekiel—descending hosts, the march of whirlwind armies. It may be the whirlwind of famine, or pestilence, that is to make homes and hearths and granaries desolate. It may be the whirlwind of individual sorrow, sweeping fond props and cherished treasures down, and turning the heart's garden into a lonely wilderness. In one or all of these we are often able to see no controlling, superintending hand, no living agency, no Divine instrumentality. We see the whirlwind careering along in its apparently capricious course. There is nothing but what Ezekiel saw at first in the vision—clouds round about it, and "men see no bright light in these clouds." But there *is* light, there *is* an infolding fire; there are ministering angels seated in that whirlwind chariot, guiding the horses of fire, aye impelled by a higher power and agency, and turning only whithersoever their great Master listeth. Better still. Do you entertain one unbelieving doubt

* Who is not reminded, in this vision at Chebar, of more than one future one at Patmos?—"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." Or the antecedent vision, in the same book, of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who was pronounced alone worthy to open the sealed roll, and who is immediately worshipped as the slain Lamb. The lion symbolising the might of Godhead, the lamb the reality and tenderness of His manhood: what was this but the New Testament rendering of "the amber throne" and "the likeness as the appearance of a man?" while the song of praise, the song of the ransomed, "to Him who had redeemed them with His blood," corresponds with the rainbow of Ezekiel—the silent memorial and symbol of redeeming grace and love.



[*Drawn by* MARGARET I. DICKSEE.]

"Let an old man smit with blindness
Sing his grateful thanks to thee."

(*See p.* 42.)

as to the wisdom of some mysterious dealing? Look upwards. High above whirlwind and cloud, smoke and fire, in that calm, serene heaven, see the reins of universal empire in the hands of the Man who has the rainbow diadem around His head! See these chariots, twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; they are all doing His bidding, they are His ministers that do His pleasure, hearkening unto the voice of His word. What could you wish more than this? All events, the wheel within wheel of your complicated life, in the hands and under the superintendence of the Christ of Calvary. The clouds may gather, the complex wheels may roll dreadfully and terribly along life's highway: we shall keep our eye on the sapphire throne and the amber rainbow, and exclaim, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Aye, and the wheels in the vision are going "straight forward;" there is no divergence. All that is taking place in the world—science, politics, philosophy, the miracles of steam, the wonders of electricity, the very curse and demon of war—all, all are helping the onward career of the advancing chariot and the assured triumphs of the Prince of peace, the rainbow-crowned King!

This theme of to-day cannot fail to be one of individual comfort to many of us. The chapter cannot fail to touch some page in our manifold and chequered histories. The homeliest part of the vision—that of the revolving wheel—must, in some sense, be true of all. It is a child-picture and illustration, but its meaning is patent to the oldest. The wheel of life is ever revolving. We hear in common yet truthful phrase of the "ups and downs" in life. It is the revolution of this gigantic wheel. With some of you it may be now the top of the wheel, with others it may be the bottom. Some may have reached that point in the revolution where they are raised above the ruts and mud, the anxieties and cares, the trials and adversities of life; others may be underneath, crushed and broken. Some may have never known a trial, never had their eyes dim with the tear of sorrow; others may have had the shadow almost always brooding over their path. Be comforted! "The rings of the wheels are full of eyes." Better than angel or cherub or living creature are at the turning of these wheels. "He setteth up one, and putteth down another;" our life is a plan of His devising and developing. He is above all and over all, "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." You may take up Ezekiel's scroll and inkhorn, and write over whatever befalls you, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord." Regard your troubles only as the dust on the high road, raised by the ponderous wheels which are revolving for your good. Yes, look up! If within be troubles, and without fear, if cloud and whirlwind encircle heart or home, or Church or nation, keep your gaze on the eternal calm above, where no tempest sweeps, and no cloud gathers. Let your eye fall on the similitude of the old Hebrew seer, and think of it *not* as a similitude but as a glorious reality. There is a Man on that sapphire throne. That Head now crowned with God's own triumphal arch, was once wreathed with a crown of thorns. Trust the Brother-Man who died for you, Who now lives for you. He has storms and tempests, clouds and whirlwinds, under His control. With your eye on the rainbow round about His throne, you can triumphantly sing, "A MAN shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest."

A BLIND MAN'S SONG.

[To the honour of a little girl, a complete stranger, who persisted, one very cold winter's day, in guiding the author, who is blind, to his destination, and when leaving him, insisted upon his accepting a penny, which he declined to take for a time, but as she still pressed him to do so, saying that her mother had often told her to be kind to the old and blind, he at last consented to accept it for the sake of the poetry of the action.]

LITTLE Angel—great in kindness—
Heaven-sent guardian once to me,
Let an old man smit with blindness
Sing his grateful thanks to thee.

For the coin thy goodness gave me,
Which might be thy only store,
My soul's memory fain would have thee
In its casket evermore.

I am feeble, old, and hoary,
So I must not tarry long,
Yet 't would give my muse a glory,
To enshrine thee in a song.

I have nothing else to give thee
But my song, and earnest prayer:
Oh, may arms of love receive thee
When thou leav'st this world of care!

And may I be there to meet thee,
When thou ent'rest into bliss,
That I may rejoicing greet thee,
With a holier song than this!

JOSEPH SENIOR.

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

BY C. DESPARD, AUTHOR OF "INTO A LARGER ROOM," "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.—THE HURRICANE-DECK OF THE "AMAZON."



OST of us know what it is to be haunted: not, of course, by the conventional ghost who, years ago, came rapping at the doors of chilly mortals at the dead of night, and who, in these latter days, if we are to believe the mystery-mongers, has undergone a strange resurrection, but by things far more subtle and various. Words and looks and tones, pictures, faces, even dreams will sometimes, for days and weeks, take possession of us, floating through our brain like an often-heard melody.

Little Thekla Ellerslie is haunted to-day—haunted by a phrase. It was spoken by one of her father's friends some days before they started on this wonderful journey, that, for many weeks, has been her one thought.

"Why don't you go with us?" Sir Richard said.

And his friend answered, with a wistful smile, "If I could take the wings of the morning, I would; but unfortunately I can't."

The words took Thekla's fancy, and over and over again she repeated them to herself. "Wings of the morning"—wings that would carry them east, to the beautiful land of the sun-rising, where palms wave softly their feathery crowns in the balmy air; where dusky people, dressed in gorgeous robes, move slowly through the land; where flowers are as thickly strewn over the sunlit earth as the stars in the midnight sky; where birds and insects are like brilliant gems; and where marble tombs, cave-temples, ruined palaces, and dead cities are every-day sights.

All of this will make us suspect that Thekla was not only very young, but also exceedingly inexperienced. She was: but youth and inexperience have a charm of their own; and when, as in this young girl's case, they are transfused with imagination, there can be nothing in the world more interesting.

She is sitting on the hurricane-deck of a large East Indian steamship that has just slackened speed to put out the Channel pilot.

A very young girl—merely a child, we should say, at a first glance—but when we look again, we shall probably change our opinion. It is the youthful style of her dress and the peculiar sweetness and purity of her face which give this impression. The eyes are wonderful—grey in one light, almost black in another, and so large and lustrous—so pathetic in their transparent innocency, that they touch you to an admiration which is of kin with pain. Some day those eyes will be the glory of the face. Now they are almost too much for it.

Thekla is travelling with her father, Sir Richard Ellerslie, her half-sister Marion, and a maid. It is for health's sake that the journey has been undertaken. Ever since Sir Richard lost his second wife he has been ailing, and his doctor has advised him to winter out of England for the next few years. Marion, too, has been delicate lately, and a change, he is persuaded, will do her good; while Thekla, who is robust, as her mother was before she married Sir Richard, and so perversely disappointed him by dying, will be better away from home for a time. Certain of her relations have of late shown a desire to be kind to her, and Sir Richard has reasons of his own for wishing that no one, for the present, should be kind to her but himself. This is how it comes that we find little Thekla Ellerslie on the hurricane-deck of the good ship *Amazon*, eastward bound.

The light has faded from the western horizon, the pale green shores have receded, and the waters, which had been bright for a few moments with the soft warm colours of an autumn sunset, lie dead and silent under a leaden sky. A light breeze is skimming the surface of the sea, and the great sails are spread to catch it. Thekla looks up, and her lips part in a smile. "The wings of the morning," she says to herself.

But someone is speaking to her, so she brings down her eyes hastily from the masthead. Before they have reached the deck they meet another pair of eyes, which are bent down towards her with smiling malice. She answers the smile readily, for she likes the owner of the eyes. He is much older than she is, and he belongs to an order of beings that have been hitherto outside the sphere of her experience. She has seen them flutter about Marion, and she has occasionally had the opportunity of hearing their conversation and watching their ways, and she has not been favourably impressed by them. I am afraid she would have classified them as satirical, and therefore alarming, or silly, and of course uninteresting. But Mr. Hinton, although he is a young man, does not fall under either of these categories. He is tall and delightfully strong-looking, and he carries himself with a trifle of self-assertion which is not at all unbecoming, and he has the pleasantest way of talking and laughing. Then his eyes are brown and merry, and his face has a boyish expression, and although he is so perfectly grown-up—ages older than Thekla—he is not in the least satirical. He is the sort of person, in fact, that she would have liked for a brother.

Her eyes answer the smile in his, and then the colour springs to her face. "Oh! Mr. Hinton, did you speak?" she says.

"I spoke twice," he says.

"I am so sorry I didn't hear you. I was dreaming. Won't you tell me what you said?"

"I asked if you wouldn't like a turn before dinner."

"Indeed I should," says Thekla, springing up, and thinking it "so kind" of him to ask her.

They fall into the stream of promenaders. Thekla, who is ignorant of how young men like to be talked to—Marion does all that kind of thing at home—is at first rather silent and reserved; but the frank geniality

of his manner thaws her, and after a few moments she feels as much at ease with him as if he were really the big brother of whom she sometimes dreams. Ronald is pleased too. The large grey eyes fixed earnestly upon his face as he tells, with a little pardonable exaggeration, of his Indian experiences; her eager comments—does he really live in a tent? how delightful that must be; and to see all the poor dark people flocking to him for judgment: it is wonderful! Then to think that he understands their language as well as he does his own—that is wonderful too! And don't they love him? They must!—This, with the mantling of colour in the sweet, childish face, though what our friend Ronald would probably call "quite delightfully amusing," was also very agreeable. He liked to be appreciated; besides, if we must confess the truth, he had a particular desire that this little girl should like him. So most amicably their talk ran on.

Suddenly, when, in Ronald's opinion, it was at its most interesting point—he was telling her how he had prevented a disturbance of the peace by some infatuated Hindus in his station, who wished to stop a Mahommedan procession—Thekla's attention was diverted. A solitary promenader had passed them by slowly. "Oh!" she cried in an eager whisper. "Forgive me for interrupting you; but *who* is that?"

"The person who has just passed us?" said Ronald. There was a little irritation in his manner which did not escape Thekla. Not being used to the ways of young men, she did not know how much even the nicest of them object to be interrupted when they are telling anecdotes about themselves, and the change of manner puzzled her.

"I asked you because I saw him at dinner, and I wanted to know who he was," she said, looking up at Ronald with a charming infantile smile of apology. "He has such a beautiful face—just like a picture—don't you think so?"

"Do you mean the man with the fur collar to his coat?" asked Ronald.

"Yes; he is going down to the main-deck now—the man with rather a dark complexion, and a tall, graceful figure. Surely you think him good-looking?"

"Well, if you put it to me—no," said Ronald. "We see rather too much of that kind of thing out in India."

"That kind of thing!" echoed Thekla blankly. "I don't understand."

"The fellow is almost a native."

"A what? I beg your pardon," said Thekla very humbly. "I am afraid I am asking you silly questions. But——"

"No, no: I beg yours," answered Hinton. "I forgot that you didn't understand our jargon, which is really rather absurd. He is—how shall I put it?—well, half an Asiatic."

"And is that wrong?" asked Thekla seriously.

This was too much for Hinton, who broke into a peal of laughter. But he repressed it almost immediately, for Thekla, who was sensitive to the fingertips, flushed up to the roots of her hair, while the big grey eyes that had been fixed on his face with such keen and inspiriting interest looked perplexed and angry. "I beg your pardon a hundred thousand times," he said; "it was really too bad of me to laugh, but I assure you it was too funny to resist. You can't, of course, see how funny it was. Let us change the subject. I was just telling you——" And now he entered upon a full account of that one of his executive triumphs upon which he looks back with the greatest complacency. But it was of no use. The pleasant flavour of the conversation had gone. His story was not so well told as it would have been before the interruption, and his little friend listened to it with an effort. Her mind kept wandering away to girlish speculations about the mysterious person who was half an Asiatic.

CHAPTER II.—ABOUT THE MAN WHO WAS HALF AN ASIATIC.



ALTHOUGH Ronald Hinton was interested in Thekla—patronisingly interested: as a young man may be in a child—it was not altogether for her own sake that he had sought her out. He was in love, for the first time in his life. After holding out for years; after laughing with good-humoured scorn at others; after declaring repeatedly, in the presence of the stricken, that, for his own part, he never intended either to make a fool of himself, or to permit anyone else to make a fool of him—the magnificent Ronald, as his cronies called him, had at last fallen a prey to the inevitable. He was as far gone—as deeply, as hopelessly entangled—as any of the moonstruck youths whom he had carelessly bantered in the days when his own heart had never known a wound. Since a certain fateful evening in the month of June, when he spent a day and night at a friend's house in the country, and met her, with other fair English maidens, at afternoon tea under a willow, on the softest green lawn that was ever spread for dainty feet, the round world had contained but one "she" for him; and she—but here we must leave Ronald behind us, for if we were to attempt to describe what he saw that day, we should become hopelessly embarrassed.

As a fact, she was pretty exceedingly, and pretty in a bewitching sort of way that older men than Ronald were apt to find irresistible. Soft, delicate, and fair, caressing in manner and gentle of speech, with large brown eyes, whose long silken lashes gave them a curiously pathetic expression, a mouth like a Cupid's bow for its lovely curves, and a slender willowy figure, she won, wherever she went, the hearts both of men and of women.

Ronald, triply armed, as he considered himself, against enchantment, fell in love with her at once. But they moved in different worlds, and had they never met again, he might have forgotten his brief midsummer madness. Fate, however, had decreed that they should meet, for when Ronald, who was returning to his post in India after his six months' holiday, went on board the *Amazon* and looked over the passenger list, the first name he saw was *hers*.

At first he could not believe it. She on board! It was impossible. Before that day was out he found that it was not only possible, but true. Pretty Marion Ellerslie was actually amongst them. For four long, happy weeks he could see her, talk to her, prevent her every wish, and surround her with such observance as should wait upon queens. But Ronald, naturally, was not the only one on board who found Marion enchanting. Already the little world of the *Amazon* had bowed down before the royalty of beauty, and Ronald, who was burning to serve his queen, found occasions for service few. This is one reason, no doubt, why he was glad to fall back upon Thekla.

That young lady, when she went below, found her sister in the music-saloon, surrounded by a little crowd, comprising all the officers who were off duty and several of the passengers, and making the officers tell her "everything about everybody."

Thekla whispered a word in her ear.

"Oh yes!" she said, addressing the doctor—a tall, grim-looking man—"you will know about him, Doctor, for he sits near you at table—the man with a distinguished foreign-looking face, and rather a dark complexion."

"Dark? Black!" laughed one of the bystanders.

"Don't interrupt," said Marion. "Is it a secret, Doctor?"

"Not at all, Miss Ellerslie. My friend's name is Grierson."

"Is he English?"

"He is the son of an English father and a Persian mother. Thirty years ago his father was a well-known man in India: a great friend, I believe, of Sir Henry Lawrence's. He was supposed to have been rich, but he died poor; and his son, my friend Michael, is travelling for an East Indian firm."

There were little chuckles round the circle as the doctor concluded. "I told you so!" from one. "Half a native, and a prig!" from another. "All he's good for! I know the type!" from a third. The doctor drew himself up, and, while he pretended not to hear the comments, answered them defiantly—"Mr. Grierson," he said, "is one of the best men I know: a gentleman and a scholar. If," addressing himself pointedly to the sisters, "you want to know anything worth knowing about the East, I advise you to cultivate him."

"Oh! thank you," said Marion, with one of her most charming smiles. "You must be kind enough to introduce us to Mr. Grierson. My father loves to talk to people who understand things really, don't you know? So do I. But there is the dinner-bell, Thekla, and I must go and dress."

This scrap of information about the curious person whom Ronald Hinton had spoken of as "almost an Asiatic" interested Thekla deeply. An hour or two later she heard of him again. She was walking with Lady Lucy Leveridge, after dinner, up and down the main-deck, under the pale light of a wintry moon. Lady Lucy had taken one of her enthusiastic fancies to the little Ellerslie girl, and Thekla returned her admiration with interest. She was talking rapidly, telling her new friend about her home in the country, and dear old Anna, her nurse, when a light pressure from Lady Lucy's hand, which rested on her arm, checked her for a moment.

In that moment she saw a picture which for years upon years would haunt her. It was the man with the face that, a few hours before, she had called beautiful. He stood alone in one of the gangways, his arms folded across his breast, and his eyes looking out seawards. Involuntarily she trembled. They were such strange, sad eyes, and what did they see that he should stand there so silently? Was he lost to what went on around him? Did he know, or did he not know, the unkind, the mysterious, things that were said about him? These were some of the questions which rushed through Thekla's mind as, in that moment's pause, she looked at the tall, slender figure in the gangway; and suddenly, for no reason that she could have given to anyone, her eyes filled with tears.

They moved on, and Lady Lucy said lightly that her friend Michael was dreaming, and she would not disturb him. "I meant to make him talk to us," she said; "but perhaps it's better not. He may be meditating a poem—trying to coin rhymes. Have you ever tried to coin rhymes, Thekla? It's the most absorbing work—maddening, when you get hold of a difficult word. But you must hear him talk some day. He is wonderful!"

"Is he—is he—a poet?" faltered Thekla.

"My dear child, he is everything: poet, philosopher, politician—saint, I was going to say, but that is a word most grievously taken in vain nowadays. What I mean is that he is as good and unselfish as he is talented. A few such men—with money, of course, which means influence—would regenerate the East." It was very curious. Thekla had only seen him twice, and had not so much as spoken to him; but as Lady Lucy, who was nothing if not thorough, poured out these unmeasured praises, her heart began to bound, and the glad girlish colour sprang to her cheeks. She had known it, she said to herself: she was certain of it. All these foolish people, how could they judge? Because they were petty themselves, they could not recognise genius and goodness. Bound down by prejudice, they were blind to what was really excellent. But Lady Lucy was neither petty of mind nor prejudiced. She had seen the world. Her judgment was to be depended upon. And she knew—she knew. So that little bird which, if we could only listen to it, would continually be telling us secrets, sang over and over again in her heart.

Lady Lucy went on talking. It was all about Michael. She had heard some of the foolish remarks of the gossips on board, and they had made her angry, so that it was a relief to her to pour herself out, and of course she could not know what a deep impression her little rhapsody was making on the mind of her young companion.

When, an hour later, Thekla turned into her berth, with the throbbing of the mighty engines in her ears, and the deep, deep starlit sky peeping in at her through her porthole, she repeated it all to herself. And then the picture she had seen returned to her. The still, inscrutable face, the dark eyes, the folded arms: she

saw it up there amongst the stars, remote, lonely, unapproachable. Was this the hero: the great man of whom she had dreamed since she first began to con poetry and to read history and romance? She had been certain that she would meet him somewhere in the world. But so soon? Ah, how strange it was! And then, in the midst of her wonder, she fell asleep, and all through her dreams the heroic face haunted her.

That was the last of the quiet nights. Up to this the sea had been perfectly smooth, but early the next morning, when they were running into the Bay of Biscay, a heavy swell came rushing in from the Atlantic, and the *Amazon* took to dipping and rolling after a fashion that was highly disagreeable to most of the passengers. A grand morning it was, though few were on deck to enjoy it. The sun shone gloriously from a broken sky, the blue above the heaped-up clouds was marvellously deep and pure, and a fresh south-west wind came rattling through the rigging, and breaking the white foam on the crests of the waves into sheets of sun-illumined mist. Lady Lucy Leveridge, who was an old Anglo-Indian, and had made the voyage "scores of times," according to her own account, was almost the only lady out. She lay on a long chair that had been lashed to the rail round the cuddy. Ronald Hinton, and Michael Grierson, and young Wilkinson, fresh from Sandhurst, and on his way to join an Indian regiment, were amongst the men who were trying laboriously to keep their feet, standing being so much more dignified than sitting.

"Why don't you give it up?" said Lady Lucy to Grierson, who had stopped to speak to her. "Here's a chair; sit down and talk."

"Do you think we can hear our own voices?" said Michael, smiling.

"I think I can hear yours. Come, you are a poet, you know; interpret! I want to know what it's all about."

"This racket, you mean?"

"Yes. It *looks* like much ado about nothing. But I believe there's a sense in it, if we could only find it out."

"That's what the poets have been trying to do from the beginning," said Michael, "from Homer to Tennyson and Browning."

"It is not surprising," said Lady Lucy. "The sea bewitches one. Old traveller as I am, I feel its power—and more, I think, every voyage. How grand it is to-day! The wind so strong and sweet! and those waves! Ah, what a monster! Hold on, Michael, or you'll be bowled over. Who is that in the companion?"

"Little Miss Ellerslie, I think. Shall I bring her here?"

"Yes, do. No; Mr. Hinton is before you. So much the better," said Lady Lucy, with a meaning smile. "She is not the rose, but she lives near enough to that queen of all flowers to share its sweetness."

It was Janet, the Ellerslies' maid—she had been the daughter and often the fellow-traveller of an old sea-captain, and she knew how to meet the initial difficulties of a sea-voyage—who had persuaded her young mistress to dress and go up out of her hot cabin, and the first giddiness having passed, Thekla was beginning to revive in the fresh strong air.

Meanwhile she was amusing Ronald almost as much as she had done the day before.

"Is there any danger, really?" she said. "It's not that I'm frightened; but I want to know."

"So that you may make up your mind to the worst?" said Ronald. "Well, I really believe there's no need yet for any such desperate proceeding. The old *Amazon* rather likes this kind of thing. See, what a splendid wave! And how grandly she shakes it off! We shall let you know soon enough if there's danger. What do you say, Mr. Larkin?"

This was to the first officer, a short, bluff-looking man, with face like a full moon for breadth, and merry blue eyes, who had stopped to ask after Thekla's health.

"I say," he answered with mock seriousness, "that in cases of emergency, the first thing we do is to warn the ladies; then when they're ordered to the boats they have their trinkets on, don't you see, and everything ship-shape for a hurried move. But take things easily. We'll not want the boats yet awhile. The old ship has faced much uglier seas than this. She's a tough old customer, I can tell you."

"Like her chief," said Ronald, with a laugh.

They went on to Lady Lucy, with whom he left his little friend, his own business to-day being to wait about the companion, in the chance of seeing Thekla's sister. He was a good fellow, and he had taken a brotherly liking to the quaint little girl with the large grey eyes, and before he went he called a quartermaster to lash her chair into its place, and wrapped her up warmly in the fur cloak and woollen shawl which Janet had brought out. Then Lady Lucy advised her to shut her eyes and keep quite still for a few minutes, till she became accustomed to the wind and the movement of the ship. Thekla, who had seen that her hero of the night before was sitting beside Lady Lucy, and who thought that if she kept quiet she might hear him speaking, obeyed gladly. At first the roaring of the winds and waves and the novelty of her position prevented her from hearing anything clearly. But after a few moments there was a brief lull, and then Michael's voice, thrilled with passionate fervour, came towards her. He and Lady Lucy were talking on their favourite topic—the East—and much of what they said was as enigmatical to Thekla as it would have been to almost any other English girl. Our present curriculum of things necessary to a liberal education does not include the history and literature of England's greatest dependency. But she heard and understood something, and whenever Michael spoke, she felt in his words the true heroic flavour.

This day is typical of several that followed. The sea continued to run high, and squalls of wind and rain came rushing up every now and then, flattening down the water for a few minutes, but making the decks impassable. The passengers of the *Amazon* were exceedingly wretched. Some few tried to keep about, but even they looked woe-begone; and many a sad and dreary story was exchanged by the little

groups who sat huddled together in the companions and music saloon.

It was owing, no doubt, to the depressed state of the ship's company that the exaggerated rumours which worked so much mischief later got about. Someone had seen a wild-looking person on the lower deck. Someone else had heard a curious story about him. Another person—he was a perfect boon to the circle which he joined on one of those stormy forenoons—had been in the second-class saloon, happening to have a friend there, who, from eccentricity merely, had chosen to travel second-class. He reported, to the open-eyed terror and amazement of the little flock in the companion, that the peculiar-looking young man was much more than peculiar. He was certainly out of his mind. His story was so extraordinary that it would scarcely be believed, and of course everyone was sorry for him. Still, a ship was a small place, and if he should do anything dreadful—— ! Whereupon terrible visions—of murder, suicide, and, worse still, fire at sea—rose before the minds of that troubled ship's company. But when it came to Lady Lucy's ears she smiled in her superior way.

"Of course they must have their little bit of sensation," she said to Thekla; "but I wish it had taken another form. If this poor young fellow happened to be in a depressed state of mind, and if he heard what was said, there is no saying what effect it might have upon him."

"Couldn't they be stopped?" said Thekla indignantly.

"Stopped talking! I am afraid not, my little Thekla. The tongue is just the one living thing in the world that no one has been able to tame."

One day, when Thekla was helping a fair little maiden of tender years, whose nurse and mother were too ill to take care of her, to make her way to that interesting part of the ship where the beautiful horse, which was on its way to the stable of an Indian Maharajah, and the cow and the sheep, and the cocks and hens and dogs were kept, she saw the passenger of whom everyone was talking. He was a tall, slender man, who had a face like a girl's for delicacy, dark violet eyes, with a curiously haggard expression in them, and a beautifully formed mouth, so sensitive that it was almost painful to watch it. He was stroking the glossy neck of the poor imprisoned horse when Thekla and her little companion came up, and it was pleasant to see how, at his gentle touch and low, caressing words, the creature's wild terror died down, so that presently it stood quite still, and answered his caresses with a grateful whinny.

"Lift me up! lift me up!" cried the child. "I want to stroke him too."

"Will *you?*" said Thekla timidly to the young man. She had an instinctive feeling that he would like to hold the pretty child in his arms and to talk to them.

His delicate face flushed like a girl's. "Will I? of course I will," he said. "Now then, little girlie! I don't know your name, you know."

"I'm Mabel," said the child, half shyly.

"You'll trust yourself to me, won't you?"

"Yes, please, if I may kiss Prince. Oh! *isn't* he lovely!" said Mab, pressing her soft little cheek against the pretty creature's glossy neck.

"Prince seems to like being taken notice of," said Thekla.

"Yes, poor old boy!" said the young man. "He is as sensitive as a lady, and he doesn't like this sensational sort of existence. His box got loose in the hurricane last night, and his terror was pitiable. His groom—do you see him? that Indian there, with the dark face and sparkling eyes—well, he could do nothing with him. But I heard the commotion, and, guessing what it was about, I came out to speak to him, and dear old Prince was as quiet as a sheep in a few moments."

"Then he knows you?"

"Yes; we are the greatest chums. He is my only friend just now—aren't you, Prince, old boy?"

"Oh! but I think you have made another friend," said Thekla. "Mab won't forget your kindness to her; nor will I."

These last words were spoken timidly, but she was glad she had been courageous enough to say them when she saw his face brighten.

"Thank you," he said gently. "If I may think that I have three friends on board, I shall feel very rich indeed."

After that they chatted together for a few moments, and watched the waves breaking over the poop; and when the wind and sea rose, making it impossible for them to stand where they were, he carried little Queen Mab down to the children's saloon, and found a sheltered corner on the upper deck for Thekla.

That was the first, but not the last, of Thekla's talks with Murchison.

One day she told Lady Lucy, blushingly, that she had made his acquaintance. "I am sure he is not so bad as they say," she protested. "He talks quite naturally and pleasantly to Mab and me. And Prince is so fond of him. You should see them together!"

"Yes, Mr. Grierson has told me," said Lady Lucy, with a sigh. "Poor fellow! His is not an uncommon case. I am glad you have made friends with him, dear. He will not do either you or Mab any harm."

This was during the rough weather in the Bay of Biscay, when all the little world of the *Amazon* were miserable. On the evening of the third day the wind fell suddenly: and then, what a changed world it was! The ladies put on pretty evening dresses, and came flocking out into the saloons, and the girls who could sing and play came shyly forward, and merry childish games, post, proverbs, hunt-the-slipper: no matter what, so that they made people laugh—were organised.

The fun was at its height, when Thekla, who wished to see what the outside world was like, ran up to the hurricane-deck alone.

It was a fascinating scene. The moon had not risen, and the sky was covered thinly with ink-black clouds, through whose ragged skirts peeped a few stars faintly. Eastwards there was a pale shining, and this was reflected from the sea in a ghostly glimmer of silver light. Then, gradually, the clouds thinned away westwards, and in the east the horizon-line became so mixed—the whiteness of the sky meeting the whiteness of the sea—that the

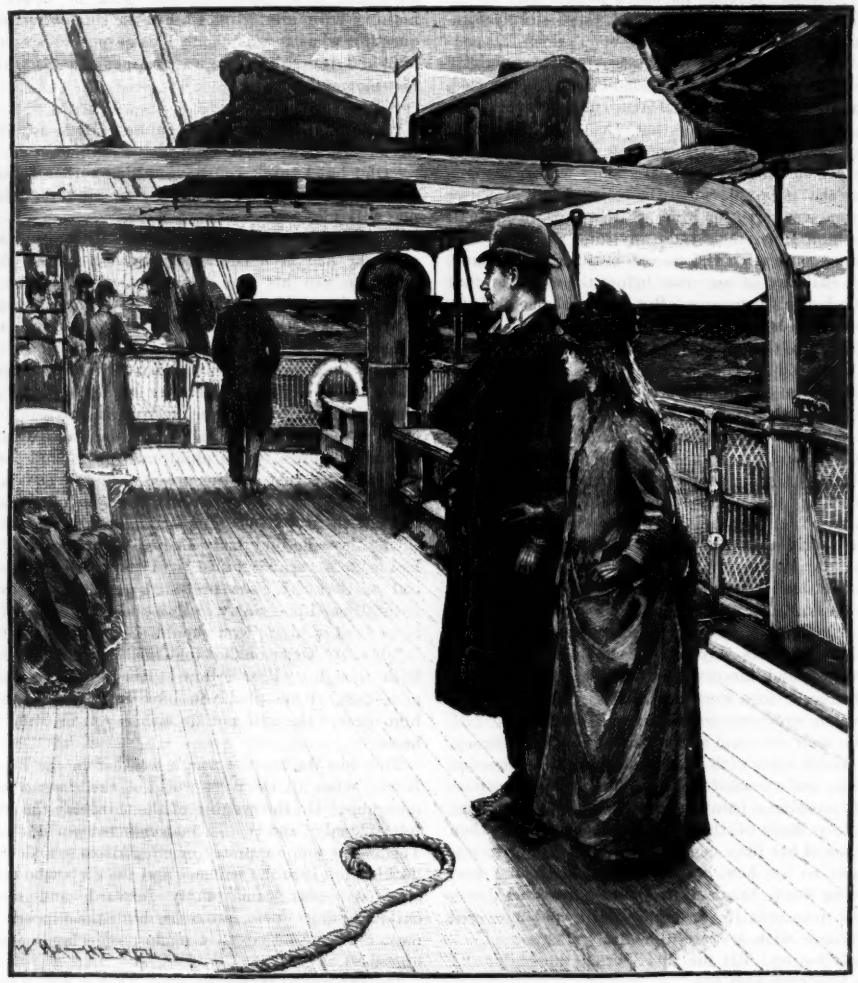
ship seemed to be driving straight upon some unknown mysterious land of shadows.

While Thekla was gazing out, all manner of strange fancies coming and going through her mind, she heard a voice behind her. "Are you not cold?" it said. "Lady Lucy thought you would be, and she has sent me up with your shawl."

The girl turned round hastily, and, dark as it was, recognised Michael Grierson. "Oh, thank you; how very, very kind of Lady Lucy and of you!" she said. "It *is* a little cold; but I had not thought of it. I suppose I may stay up a little longer?"

"Lady Lucy did not tell me to bring you down," said Michael smilingly. "But you should be careful. We are not in the tropics yet."

"The tropics!" she said, with a deep-drawn sigh. "It seems like a dream that we are going there. Are we going quickly now?"



"A solitary promenader had passed them by slowly."—*p.* 44.

"Yes; we are going at a pretty good rate. We passed Cape Finisterre about an hour ago."

"Do you know when we shall be at Gibraltar?"

"The day after to-morrow, very early in the morning."

"And then we shall be in the Mediterranean, and there will be no more storms?"

"I should be sorry to answer for the Mediterranean,"

said Michael, with a smile. "It is a very treacherous sea, for all its good report. But do you dislike rough weather so much? You have been getting about very well these last few days."

"I? Oh yes; I am becoming a good sailor. But Marion and poor father hate it. And father says that if we get out safely, he will never tempt the seas again."

"You want to go back to England?" said Michael, looking down at her with friendly interest.

"Oh yes, yes," her voice trembling. "My home is there, and I left my dear old nurse behind me. She was my mother's nurse as well as mine, and she had never been away from me for a day in all my life. Poor old Anna! She cried so when I came away. She said she was my only true friend—which was absurd, of course, when I have my father and Marion; and then, the very last night we were together she gave me a sealed-up parcel—— Oh! but I promised not to tell anyone about that."—Thekla interrupted herself, experiencing, as she did so, a shock of surprise. She was talking to this man—who was a wise man, moreover, and a hero—as if she had known him all her life. Hero as he was, however, he seemed to like her talk, for he asked her all sorts of questions—not inquisitive questions, such as some of the people on board ship had put to her, but quick with a living interest that drew out her words.

She told Michael about her home, which was the sweetest place in all the world: an old hall that had once been part of an abbey, and that was surrounded with as delicious a garden as ever was seen—a garden where beautiful oak and elm-trees threw their sheltering arms round soft wide lawns, and where dear old-fashioned flowers—cloves, and sweet-williams, and pinks, and carnations, and mignonette, and honeysuckle, and glorious cream-coloured roses—grew in profusion. "And I will tell you a secret," said the child. "It was my mother's own, own place. She had it when she was quite a little girl, and she lived there like a queen, Anna says; and then father came like the prince in the 'Sleeping Beauty.' It was such a pretty story; but Anna says that father doesn't care to hear it talked about. He had a fall from his horse just at the Hall gates, and he was brought in, and mother's old aunt and Anna nursed him. You know, father is handsome now, and Anna says that then he was just like a picture. So mother saw him, and she was beautiful too, and they fell in love with one another, and were married."

So Thekla poured out her confidences. They delighted the grave Michael, and feeling his interest real, she told him more. He heard about the cottages that were grouped round the abbey, and where Thekla was always a welcome guest, and about Anna's old cronies who had known and loved "my own mother when she was a little girl"; about the little men and maidens of the school, dressed out in smocks and pinafores which Anna and Thekla had made for them; about large sunny strawberry-beds under peach and cherry walls, and solitary wanderings in enchanted woods; and as he listened, putting in a remark now and then, which to Thekla had the true heroic flavour, he felt as if he were standing on the threshold of a morning world, full of freshness and beauty, whose portals had never opened to him before.

Long before he was tired of listening or Thekla was tired of talking, Janet came in search of her; and when left alone to resume his walk under the stars, he said to himself, "That is one of the most charming little girls I have ever met."

CHAPTER III.—LANDING AT GIBRALTAR.

TO one other person on board ship we must give a few words. He was a young man, large-nosed, pale-complexioned, and endowed with a quantity of sandy hair and a pair of shrewd grey eyes, who, though he looked a mere boy, bore himself with the self-confidence and assurance of a man of forty at least. This manner of his puzzled and repelled his fellow-passengers until it came to be known who he was. Then the mystery was solved. He was the son and heir of Isaacson—known a short time since as "the great Isaacson"—who, when he had achieved fame and vast fortune by the mysterious processes attendant upon financing companies, died suddenly of heart or brain disease, leaving his son to reign in his place. The son, feeling himself rich enough for the moment, determined on a tour of the world, and selected as his companion a man much older than himself, who had business connections in several widely separated capitals. Even when Isaacson's position came to be known, he was not liked on board the *Amazon*. He did his best to be agreeable; he set his friend to talk of his wealth; he threw out hints himself about his perfect freedom from the minor annoyances that afflict other men: but still those conceited Indian civilians and military men held aloof from him.

"Jealous, no doubt," he used to say to his friend. "Besides, India spoils people, don't you know!"

Lady Lucy Leveridge and the Ellerslies were, in his opinion, far and away the best people on board, and he did his best to cultivate them. Lady Lucy tried to repress him, but she tried in vain. Every day he came up smiling to the group of which she formed the principal figure, and every day he received the same rebuffs with the same sublime serenity. Now it happened, on several of these occasions, that Thekla Ellerslie was sitting near her friend. Once, when Isaacson had been particularly persistent, and Lady Lucy even more proud and distant than usual, Thekla lifted her eyes and looked at him. There was nothing in the cold keen face, with its self-satisfied smile, to encourage her sympathy, and she dropped her eyes at once; but the momentary glance had a definite and very curious effect upon the young millionnaire.

He went off to the hurricane-deck, lighted up a cheroot, and began to meditate after his fashion. "What eyes the girl has! I've never seen the like of them before. She's not much to look at yet, but she'll be a stunner some of these days. Comes of a

good stock, too; and if what they say is true, that dry old stick, Sir Richard, won't be sorry to have a rich husband for her. I'd take her without a penny—without a stiver——." There is no need to follow his musings further, for they were neither pretty nor profitable. Their result, however, appeared very shortly. Isaacson began to be exceedingly attentive to Sir Richard Ellerslie, and Sir Richard received his attentions kindly. "I find him a frank, pleasant young fellow," he used to say to Lady Lucy; "and if he is a little unformed, what matters? The world will form him soon enough."

So they came on to the first great sensation of the voyage—putting in at Gibraltar.

Thekla was too much excited to sleep late that morning, and when, looming out mysteriously from amber-coloured mists, the sloping, knife-like edge of the great rock cut the sky, she was on the hurricane-deck. Wilkinson, the young soldier, was out too, and as the outlines of the rock changed, and the chain of the Sierra Nevada came into sight, they talked—like the children they were—about dear old England and her victories.

An hour later, and everyone else was on deck, and arrangements were being made on all hands for parties to shore.

Lady Lucy claimed Thekla. "I want a good walk," she said; "and perhaps your father and sister will drive."

"I don't know about landing at all," said Marion, who, dressed in a bewitching morning costume, was standing close by. "It looks like rain."

"There will be a downpour presently; I am certain of it," said Sir Richard. "I shall stay where I am."

"So shall I. Silly-looking place! All up-hill and down-hill," said Isaacson.

"Did you expect to find Gibraltar a plain?" said the doctor.

Hinton, meanwhile, was pressing Marion to make one of the party to shore. "You can drive, you know, if you can't walk," he said. "Do come! It won't be half fun without you."

"What do you say, father?" said Marion.

"I say that you must judge for yourself. Never mind me. Isaacson and I will entertain one another."

There was a merry breakfast, and then they all started for the shore, where the walking party, on Lady Lucy's suggestion, set out for Europa Point.

Through the public gardens, where geraniums and heliotrope, datura and sunflowers, bloomed in the midst of tropical foliage, they went on gaily. Wilkinson was walking with Lady Lucy, Marion and Hinton drove, and Thekla, greatly to her delight, fell to Grierson's share. She liked him better every time she met him. He knew so much, she used to say to Lady Lucy; and he never seemed to think it a trouble to answer people's questions.

There is a wonderful sense of freedom in a first walk on shore after days of life on ship-board. This little company of travellers felt it; and as they wound up the steep road that leads to the Point, they laughed and chattered like so many children. How wonderful it all was—the heavily fortified sea-wall beneath them, and the scarped rock, riddled with wicked-looking holes for cannon above; and, here and there they looked down into a green glen, which reached deep into the heart of the rock, and as they went they saw in every rock and angle sentry-boxes hung up like wild birds' nests above the sea; and there were white terraces of soldiers' houses, and pyramids of cannon-balls; while the familiar sound of the soldiers' bugle-call echoing from rock to rock, and the sight of red-coats on many an eminence, reminded them continually that they were on an English camping-ground. "And oh! how strange it is!" breathed Thekla, who was full of excitement. "How could they ever have taken it?"

"There were giants in those days," said Lady Lucy.

"Old England will always find giants when she wants them," said the young soldier, with dignity.

"Well, I hope so," said Lady Lucy.

"But hasn't she always?" protested Wilkinson. "You don't mean to say that you think we are in our decadence?"

"We will discuss that presently," said Lady Lucy, smiling. "I can't argue and climb at the same time, you know. Ah! there is the Point."

"And there are Marion and Mr. Hinton waiting for us," said Thekla.

Near the Governor's country-house, which, with its little rock-garden, is situated at a giddy height above the sea, the walking party paused and took breath. It was a fine and inspiriting scene. For all the severity of their climb, they were not more than midway up the rock, which rose frowningly above them, a mighty fortress of Nature's handiwork; and when they looked down—sheer down to a depth that made Thekla shudder—they saw it rent near the sea-level into black caverns, through which the waves rushed perpetually, the hollow sound of thunderous reverberations rising to where they stood. "Listen! do listen!" cried Thekla, who—with flushed face and glowing eyes, and looking, Lady Lucy thought, as fresh and pretty a picture of youth and gladness as could be seen—stood near the edge, looking down. "What a boom! like thunder. Is that the sea?"

"The waves in close quarters," said Lady Lucy.

"And how large the sea looks from here; and how lonely!" said Thekla, with a little shiver. "And why is it that dull grey colour? The sky is blue."

"But clouds are coming up from the west. Look: a whole host of them!" said Michael. Then, with an impulsiveness which was unusual in him, "excuse me, Miss Ellerslie, you really mustn't stand so close to the edge."

"Hold me!" said the young girl, giving him her hand. "I *must* see down. There!" as his hand closed over hers. "I am all right now; I can't slip. Do those clouds mean storms?"

"They mean squalls. We shall have more tossing presently."

"Why do you talk to Miss Ellerslie about storms? Let her enjoy herself while she can," said Wilkinson.

"Oh! thank you. I think I am beginning rather to enjoy storms," said little Miss Superior demurely.

"Wait till we give you a touch of a cyclone," said Lady Lucy, laughing.

By this time Marion and Hinton had joined them. They, too, were in the best of spirits: Hinton, who was happier than he had ever been in all his life, rather more silent than usual, and Marion pouring out herself in little enthusiastic tributes to the sea and the sky, and "that wonderful old rock that has seen so much."

It was all very pleasant, and they would willingly have lingered, but Lady Lucy declared that the clouds meant mischief, and that if they wished to reach the ship with dry clothes they must be on the move. Marion was amiable enough to offer her place in the carriage to anyone who might happen to be tired, but no one accepted her offer; and Hinton could not even propose to relinquish his place. So they went down as they came, chatting and laughing merrily, the clouds, meanwhile, gathering up behind them in battalions, and the wind howling dismally, and the ancient rock that towered over their heads looking as gloomy as Dante's prison-house of spirits.

Lady Lucy's prediction came true, for Marion and Hinton, who went off in the first boat, were the only two of the party who escaped a wetting. All in a moment, when the second boat was midway between the ship and the shore, the storm broke. Large drops of rain came rattling down: the waters of the harbour rose to meet the waters of the sky: the wind raged about them like a wild beast in chains, and the little boat shivered from stem to stern. Then Wilkinson's voice was heard above the tumult. He assured everyone that there was no danger, but there was an agitated ring in his words that made Thekla tremble. She was thinking—poor child!—that each dip of the boat's head into one of those long green waves must positively be the last. She happened to be sitting near Michael Grierson. In her excitement she clutched at his hand, and as she felt his strong firm grasp, her terror all at once died down.

Later that day Thekla asked Lady Lucy why it was. "What is it about Mr. Grierson?" she said; "one can't feel afraid where he is."

"I suppose it is because he is never afraid himself," said Lady Lucy. "He has the power that comes of a perfect faith"—an answer that set the young girl thinking.

She had gone through an experience in the meantime that was not quite so pleasant.

The usual number of curiosity-sellers had come on board the *Amazon*, and when the storm in a tea-cup had cleared, they spread out their wares—fans and shells and embroideries—under the awnings on the main-deck, which was converted into a bazaar.

Thekla was going curiously from stall to stall, when she saw her father and Isaacson walking arm-in-arm. Sir Richard beckoned to her, and she joined them. "Well," he said, "do you see anything that you like?"

"I don't know. There are so many things. Do you think of buying something, father?"

"*I* do. Will you help me to choose, Miss Thekla?" said Isaacson.

She did not answer, for the rich young man was no favourite of hers; and the sound of her Christian name, although he had prefaced it with "Miss," was curiously offensive to her.

"Did you hear what Mr. Isaacson said, Thekla?" Sir Richard spoke, and there was an irritated ring in his voice.

Thekla turned red. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Isaacson," she said.

"I beg yours," he said jauntily. "I was asking you to advise me. I want to make a purchase."

"The fans are pretty," suggested Thekla.

"Pretty? yes; but they 're common, aren't they? I want something good."

"I believe there are embroidered stuffs further on."

"Ah! that sounds better. Come along and show them to me. You like these sort of things, don't you?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Thekla.

"Come now, you must have an opinion. Girls always know what they like and what they dislike. You needn't be shy with me, you know."

"I am not," said Thekla, colouring angrily.

"If you are not shy you can surely answer a plain question," said Sir Richard.

"Father!" She turned perfectly pale.

He looked at her with a frown. Isaacson was smiling blandly. "Oh, come!" he said. "This is all nonsense! See here, Miss Thekla!" He picked out the best of the embroideries, and held it up to the light. "Do you think this handsome?"

"Yes."

"Then I 'll invest in it." He threw down the price, and turned to her. "You 'll understand now why I bothered you for advice," he said. "I've bought this thing for you."

"For me!" cried Thekla, her large eyes blazing. "Thank you; I 'd much rather not."

"Why? Don't you like it? I 'll get something else."

"No, indeed you mustn't," interposed Sir Richard. —"I can't have you so fickle, Thekla. You said you liked this."

"But, father, I didn't know——"

"You know enough, I hope, to enable you to behave like a young lady," said Sir Richard, in a low, stern voice.

"Now, please don't scold her," began Isaacson; but Thekla heard no more, for she was running off to hide her obnoxious present and herself in her father's cabin.

He apologised for her in his grand manner. "My daughter is only a little school-girl yet," he said; "when she knows the world better, she will be more grateful for the notice of a man like you."

Thekla, in the meantime, was weeping her anger away. And the anger with Mr. Isaacson having gone, she began to be angry with herself. He liked her father, and wanted to give him a present, and that he should do it through her was perfectly natural. Her cheeks grew red until they tingled, as she thought it all over. What a little goose she had been! She did not wonder in the least that her father was angry with her. She had deserved it quite, and she would tell him so as soon as she could.

It was near the dinner-hour, and she waited on in

her father's cabin, where she had hidden herself, until he came in to dress, when she apologised to him in the prettiest way. "I was just what you called me, father," she said: "a silly little school-girl; but I won't be so stupid again."

Never, in all her life, had Thekla seen her father look so kind and benignant as he did at that moment. He was not often affectionate to her, and the memory of the caress with which he received her apology, and his gentle hand upon her head, and the wise words of counsel in which he pointed out so clearly that the difficulty had arisen from her forgetting for a moment that he was wiser and more experienced than she was, lingered with her for many a day.

"I'll trust you another time, father; indeed I will," she said, half crying, when he stooped to kiss her. "I think I should to-day if Mr. Isaacson hadn't been so——"

"Well, go on, Thekla. Don't be afraid."

"I think Marion would have called him familiar."

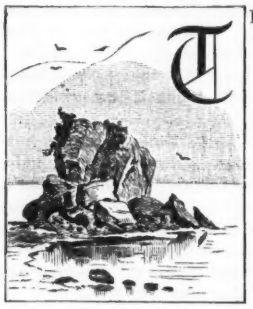
Sir Richard smiled in a superior sort of way that cut Thekla to the quick. "Marion and you are different, my poor little Thekla," he said. "You are much younger, and you have neither her appearance nor her style. Not, of course, that you should tolerate impertinence any more than Marion; but you must discriminate. Until you can do that" (smiling again) "you must rely upon the judgment of others. Isaacson looks upon you as a child. I can't help that, can I?"

"Of course not, father."

"Well, then, look upon his attentions to you as attentions to me. I like the young fellow; and, to be frank with you, I think he may be useful to us. Don't be disagreeable to him."

"Indeed I won't, father; and I am very sorry I was just now," said Thekla earnestly.

CHAPTER IV.—THE SEA OF THE POETS.



THAT same evening Marion and her father had a little talk. "What do you think of Mr. Isaacson?" he asked.

"I scarcely know, dear," she answered—"except that he's not pretty."

"Girls never think of anything but a man's appearance," said Sir Richard. "However, so far as you are concerned, it doesn't matter. It is to Thekla that he seems to have taken a fancy, and I wish him encouraged. It would be the best thing that could happen—best for us all."

"Very well," said Marion. "But mind, father: he mustn't be allowed to fall in love with me."

"There's no danger of that. He would see the uselessness himself. You must marry well, however, Marion. You would be miserable in a life of poverty; and remember"—a bitter expression crossed Sir Richard's face—"that *I* can do nothing for you."

"My dear, dearest old dad!" said Marion very softly, "do you take me for a goose?"

"No, indeed I don't, Marion. But I know what young people are, and——"

"Hush, dearest!" she interrupted, stopping his mouth with a kiss; "you're not at all nice when you lecture. Now, please don't look serious, or I shall be miserable; you know I must have a little fun!"

"You are certain it is only fun?"

"Positive! Now" (dropping a curtsey), "may I go?"

"Go and amuse yourself," said Sir Richard, smiling benignantly; for this bewitching little creature was the one thing in the world that he loved unselfishly.

That night they ran out into the Mediterranean. It was not the ideal sea, so beautifully blue, to which poets have devoted their rhapsodies, for in the night the darkness was as of fabled Erebus, and when in the morning the sad passengers opened their eyes, they saw a sea dark and sullen—the livid patches of foam on the crests of the waves making the blue-blackness beneath more awful—as it rolled on under sunless skies.

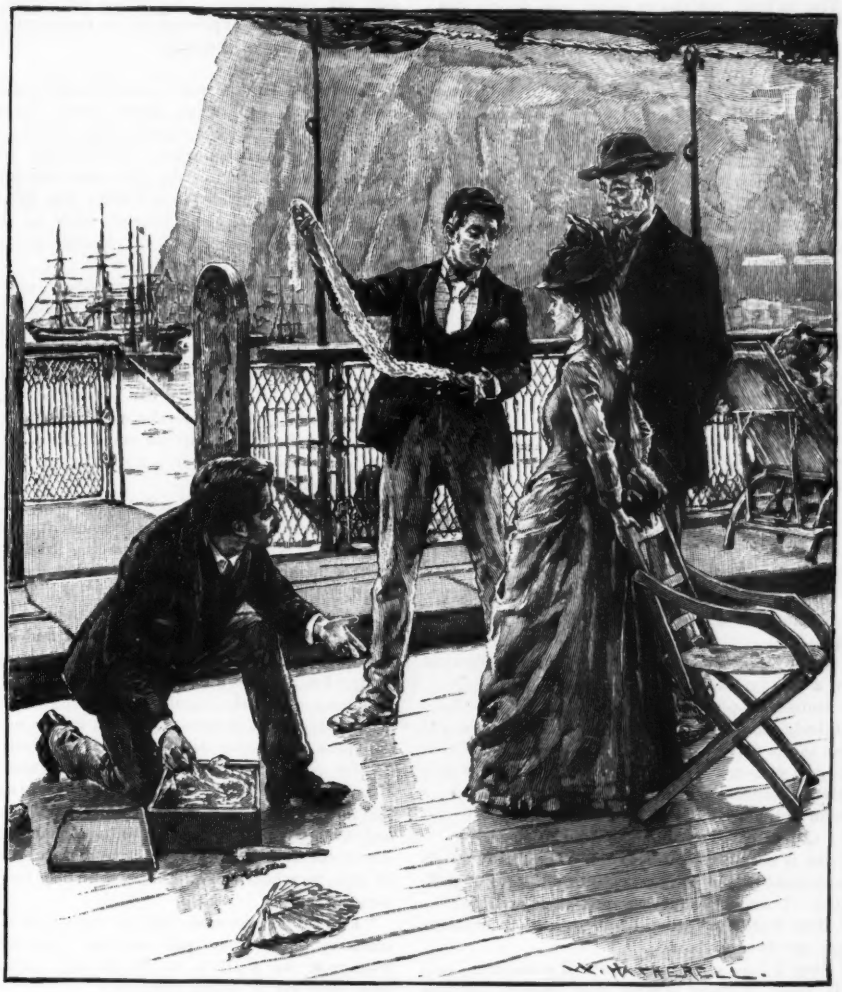
The next day was more dreary still. Few were about, and those who did appear in the saloons were all suffering from home-sickness, or some other form of depression. Lady Lucy talked of entertainments; but no one would listen to her. She had made Ronald Hinton her lieutenant. He returned from his first effort to beat up recruits unsuccessful. "No one will think of doing anything until the weather moderates," he said.

The misery reached its climax when, on the second night out from Gibraltar, they encountered a hurricane, which beat the ship about mercilessly. The racket was awful—creaking timbers, rattling yard-arms, smashing pottery, and the screw racing and plunging like a mad horse. Several on board felt perfectly convinced that their last hour had come. But morning came, and, finding themselves still alive, they plucked up heart and took courage.

The morning brought another misery, for the green water, which, no one seemed to know how, had found its way into the saloon, dashed into several cabins, and bitter were the wailings over the destruction that ensued. Marion Ellerslie was amongst the unfortunate. Over her little dainty slippers, and her crimson plush tea-gown, and a satin-lined travelling-bag that had been the pride of her heart, the water dashed, and she was so angry to see her pretty things destroyed that she began to cry helplessly. "This is only the beginning. We shall all be drowned," she wailed.

"Not a bit of it, miss," said Janet. "This is nothing, as you'll say yourself when you know the ways of the sea. Why, I've seen father's ship just heeling over till you'd think it couldn't rise; and mother and me not minding the least. Look at Miss Thekla, now! She's quite a good sailor."

"Darling, you mustn't mind," said Thekla, throwing her arms round her sister's neck. "It is getting better every moment."



"He picked out the best of the embroideries, and held it up to the light."—*p.* 51.

"Yes; that was the last wave that destroyed my poor pretty things," said Marion, sobbing. "It might have gone next door."

"Father will get you more, if you ask him."

"Oh yes, when the voyage is over and I haven't the least use for them. Thekla, get dressed, and go into the saloon. You are teasing me."

The long saloon, with its scattered groups of passengers—fiddles on the table to keep the plates and dishes in place, and pallid-looking stewards moving to and fro—looked anything but cheerful in the storm-darkness of the morning.

Thekla, when she went in, looked for her father, who was not to be seen, and then Lady Lucy beckoned to her, and Michael Grierson jumped up to help her along the saloon.

"Come along; I see you are a brave little sailor!" said Lady Lucy. "Sit here beside me. I know *my* neighbours won't appear. And how did you get through the night?"

"Very well, thank you," said Thekla. "But poor Marion is dreadfully unhappy. We had the sea in"—her great eyes dilating as she spoke—"right into our cabin."

"That's not an unheard-of accident on board ship," said Lady Lucy, laughing.

Hinton was sitting at the opposite side of the table; being greedy for news about Marion, he had listened to Thekla's report. He leaned over and said, in a voice full of concern—

"I am so sorry to hear of the water in your cabin. Was your sister much alarmed?"

"Yes, at first, but she is better now, thank you."

The ship gave a tremendous lurch.

"Take care, I beg of you," cried Lady Lucy. "You will be over here presently."

Hinton grasped the table with both hands and kept silence until Thekla had finished her breakfast, when he asked her if she would not like to have a look out at the sea.

"Oh, yes," she cried; and they went off together to the companion.

With a sigh and an ejaculation of pity, Lady Lucy looked after them.

"Do you know," she said to her companion, Michael, "I am sorry for them both. He is such a good, honest fellow, and I am sure he is loving hopelessly; and she——"

"Surely you don't pity little Miss Ellerslie?" said Michael. "To me she seems one of the brightest and happiest of human beings."

"Yes; but will it last?"

"Why not?"

"I don't know; but I fear she is too unselfish to be strong. She will be trampled upon."

"Do you call unselfishness weak?" asked Michael. "I call it strong—the strongest thing in all the universe."

"Oh! if you take it in its large sense."

"Does not the little follow the type of the large?"

"Amiability and unselfishness, then, run in couples."

"No, no," said Michael, smiling; "there is often not even a family likeness between them."

"Amiable people are sometimes surprisingly selfish," said Lady Lucy. "But we have wrangled enough. Come to the music-saloon, and try to sing that Greek ode—you remember—I heard you sing it first at Mrs. Ogilvie's classical *fête* in the spring. By-the-bye, a case in point—she is unselfish."

"I should call her amiable," said Michael.

"She is certainly self-denying. The funny people she pets and patronises get her into all sorts of difficulties. I wonder what her next craze will be?"

"There were signs when I left town of Orientalism being in the ascendant."

"Then I hope something else will come first," said Lady Lucy. "There is more than enough nonsense talked about the East—or, at least, about India."

"And not one in a thousand has any real knowledge of the subject," said Michael.

"You are quite right. English people look upon India as a great dark continent, inhabited by heathens, whom, for subtle reasons of our own, we keep in their primeval darkness. That is one view. Others see in it a rising nation thirsting for light, and ground down under the heel of the oppressor. Subtle purposes come in here again," said Lady Lucy, her keen dark eyes flashing, and her fine lips curling with scorn. "They are everywhere, those subtle purposes. I confess I am getting a little tired of them."

"Many of us feel as you do," said Michael; "but foolish and unworthy clamour about a subject cannot affect its importance. While they talk and agitate we can work."

"Yes; but this is a holiday. You can't help yourself, my good Michael. Come and sing," said Lady Lucy, the scornful expression of her face giving place to its usual genial serenity.

Thekla and Hinton were in the meantime standing together in the companion, gazing out at the restless waters and the dark, storm-swollen clouds. They were talking about Marion. Thekla, who was beginning to understand why this new acquaintance took so deep an interest in her sister, was filled with the keenest sympathy and interest, while he thought her affectionate enthusiasm for Marion one of the prettiest things he had ever met.

The sea became calmer as they talked, and silver rays of sunlight tipped the bank of blue-grey cloud in the west with a vivid radiance. He begged her earnestly to persuade her sister to get up.

"I am sure the air will do her good," he said. "Tell her that I will help her up the ladder, and I know a cosy corner where she will scarcely feel the wind; and I will see that no one disturbs her. She can be as quiet there as in her own cabin. Will you be kind, and tell her?"

"Indeed I will. I will tell her every word," said Thekla, smiling in her sweet, confident, infantile fashion, as, with his heart thumping like a blacksmith's hammer, the big young fellow helped her down the companion.

She was as good as her word; but Marion was disappointing. She was better, indeed, and she professed her readiness to go out on deck when she was ready; but at Hinton's message and Thekla's fervent rendering of it, she would do nothing but laugh, declaring over and over again that it was as pretty and quite as amusing as a comedy. What she meant Thekla could not so much as guess, and when Hinton, who had a dozen eager questions to ask, met her in the companion-way, she answered him briefly and seriously, passing on then into the music-saloon, where she found Lady Lucy surrounded by a knot of men, to whom she was talking in her lively, imperative way.

"I do think," she said, "we are the stupidest ship's company that ever set sail together. The day after to-morrow we shall be at Malta, and nothing has been done yet to amuse anybody."

"What can we do in this weather?" asked Wilkinson.

"We can make arrangements. You sing, I know."

"A little; but only at home."

"You are at home here; and you, Mr. Grierson—you can recite."

"No one would care for a recitation from me."

"Try us. I can answer for several. Two performers already!" said Lady Lucy, triumphantly.

"Marion sings to the guitar beautifully," said Thekla.

"Charming! And you?"

"I can sing a very little."

"What is your voice; soprano?"

"No: contralto."

"Then you shall sing a duet with me. My portfolio is on the piano; come and look it over, and try something with me; and then, Mr. Wilkinson, we must see what you can do."

There followed an impromptu concert, made all the merrier by its attendant difficulties, the efforts of the singers to preserve a perpendicular position, and the involuntary wanderings of the player's fingers over the keys when some heavier lurch than usual surprised them. The lunch-bell rang after a forenoon that had been unusually lively, and Thekla set off in search of her father and Marion.

Outside she met Isaacson, who looked miserable. Sir Richard was in his cabin, he said, suffering from a severe headache, and he was looking for one of those lazy stewards to get them something to eat.

"Give father my love, and say we are getting on nicely," said Thekla.

She went on a little further, and there was Marion, buried in cushions and furs, and looking soft and smiling. "Mr. Hinton has been so nice," she reported to her sister.

"Oh!" cried Thekla, "I knew you would like him."

Marion put her finger on her lips; for here was Hinton behind them, carrying with extreme precaution a steaming bowl of broth.

"Landed safely!" he said. "And I really consider myself clever. This was going into Mr. Larkin's cabin. I carried it off from under his very nose."

"Thank you! thank you! how kind everyone is to poor little me!" said Marion.

"Kind to ourselves," said Hinton, who was radiant. "And I declare you are looking better already."

Thekla went down to her lunch happy, being convinced now that Marion had only been teasing her, and that she did really like Ronald almost as much as he liked her.

(To be continued.)



"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(New Series of Questions bearing on the International Scripture Lessons.)

QUESTIONS.

1. For what special act of faithfulness to God did Moses commend the tribe of Levi?

2. In what way does the prophet Isaiah illustrate the peaceful effects of the Gospel on the world?

3. What apostle specially sets forth the manner of life of a true minister of God, and what example of such do we find in the Old Testament?

4. What special title is given to King David which shows that in his own time he was looked upon as a great poet?

5. Quote a proverb which, written as representing Wisdom, is now mostly used in reference to God Himself.

6. What illustration is given by our Blessed Lord to help us in realising the love of God to us?

7. Quote a passage in which St. John sets forth the duty of intercessory prayer.

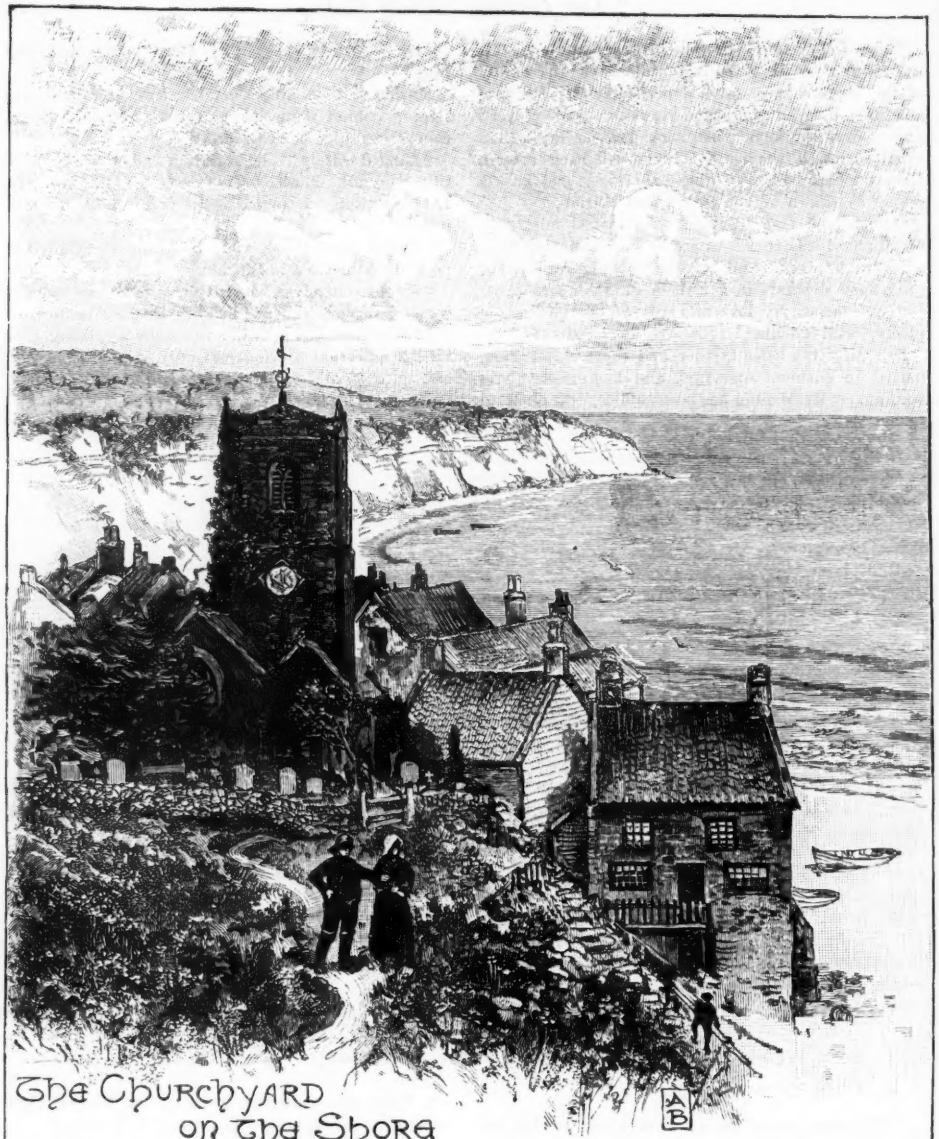
8. What precious stone seems to have been held in the highest estimation by the ancients?

9. In what way did God manifest His presence at the consecration of the Temple?

10. In what way was the glory of the second Temple greater than that of Solomon?

11. What Psalm of David was a prophecy concerning his son Solomon?

12. Quote some words of our Blessed Lord in which He shows that He was the manifestation of God to man.



The Churchyard on the Shore

THEY sleep beside the restless wave,
And from the hungry ocean crave
A few short feet of earth, a consecrated grave.

The lichened stones that, stained with age,
Have faced the ocean's mightiest rage,
Are crumbling in the war that time and tempest wage.

The little ivied belfry grey
Rings out its call to beach and bay,
And thither o'er the moor come fisher-folk to pray.

They pray the Lord of life that He
Will guard their homes eternally;
And like a grand response resounds the mighty sea.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., VICAR OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, HIGHBURY, AND PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."—ST. MATTHEW ii. 10.



OU will remember, of course, that the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—I mean, those persons who gazed upon Him after He had risen from the dead—were few in number, and were all of them disciples. God judged it best not to allow the risen Christ to be seen by the world at large. He "manifested" Him to a certain body of people prepared for the purpose, and it was to be their business to report to others what they themselves had seen and heard.

An arrangement of the same kind may be noticed in that other manifestation or "showing" which we are accustomed to call emphatically "the Epiphany." The great event, to which the lines of every other event had converged—the coming of the Son of God amongst men—had actually taken place; the Christ had been born in Bethlehem of Judæa. But with the fact—incomparable as was its importance to the human race—very few indeed had been made acquainted. A little handful of Jewish shepherds, godly men, keeping watch over their flocks by night on the breezy uplands in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, had had an intimation conveyed to them by a choir of angels. Old Simeon and old Anna were taken into the secret whilst they worshipped in the Temple; and a little later on, some Eastern sages, led by a star, came to pay their homage to the infant Saviour, as He lay in a cradle in the cottage at Bethlehem. That was all! With the exception of scarcely more than a score of persons, the whole world was in profound ignorance of the most astounding event that had ever occurred in the annals of mankind.

Such was the character of the first of the Epiphanies. Some of them we may, perhaps, be able to consider by-and-bye. But on the present occasion I wish to direct your attention to the first of them: that in which the Gentiles appeared. Let us devote ourselves, then, to the visit of the wise men to the cradle in Bethlehem. The subject is certainly interesting from its very picturesqueness, and I think it will be found to supply us with what is of more importance than interest—I mean, practical instruction in the things which concern our everlasting peace.

I. Now, it cannot be decided with certainty from what country these wise men, or Magi, came; but in all probability they came from Persia. That there were in Persia men of such a class as we may well suppose these Magi to have belonged to—men influential in the State, and combining with the discharge of their political duties the study of astronomical and possibly of other sciences—is a matter sufficiently notorious. And if we suppose the visitors to Bethlehem to have been dwellers in that part of the world, we shall be the better able to understand why they should take an interest in a King of the Jews, and why they should be influenced by the appearance of a star. Their knowledge about Cyrus, King of Persia, who was so strangely and so intimately bound up, centuries before, with the history of the chosen people, would suffice to account for the one circumstance; and their recollection of the famous prophecy of the soothsayer Balaam, who had spoken of the "Star that came out of Jacob, and the Sceptre that should rise out of Israel," would sufficiently account for the other.

Let us, then, take for granted (of course under correction) that these men came from Persia; that they were inhabitants of the country; that they were held in high honour and esteem amongst their fellow-countrymen for learning, for intellectual power, as well as for the fact that they were amongst the most important advisers of the Throne itself.

Some two years, as it would seem, before the Nativity occurred, the Magi—probably whilst engaged in their characteristic occupation of watching the movements of the heavenly bodies—saw a remarkable and unusual star appear in the midnight sky. They did not recognise it as belonging to any of the constellations they knew. In fact, it must have been—though star-like—essentially different from a star. It must have been larger; it must have hung lower in the sky; it must have been more movable, so to speak, than any other of the bright denizens of the heavens. It must have been more of a meteor than of a star. And the philosophers were led by Divine intimation to connect it with the rise of some great and mysterious Personage, who was to be the Governor, the Shepherd of the people of Israel. Probably it did not occur to them, in the first instance, that they were to go to offer homage to this King. But presently they understood that the duty was laid upon them. And so, some time after the first appearance of the star, they set out, accompanied, as we suppose, by a considerable retinue, for the land of Judæa. They would have before them a journey of considerable length, and perhaps of no inconsiderable danger. Crossing first the Tigris, and then the broad and sluggish Euphrates, there would stretch before them the vast wastes of the Syrian desert. And when these had been traversed in safety, they would arrive on the banks of the river Jordan; and, passing over by the fords, make their way to

the metropolis of the country and the residence of the reigning monarch.

What a stir their arrival would produce, we can easily imagine. The strange dresses; the foreign ways; the camels, with their trappings and golden ornaments; the escort of soldiers, armed with sword and spear and shield; the appearance of wealth; the hint of treasures brought with them; the grave and stately demeanour of the sages, who were obviously the centre of this singular and unexpected *cortège*—all these things would attract the curiosity of at least a very large part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and draw large crowds in the train of the newly arrived visitors. And then the question which they asked, how remarkable it was!—"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" It added, of course, to the excitement, and before long the news had reached the Palace of Herod, and the lecture-rooms of the scribes and doctors of the law, and the whole city was stirred and troubled to its very depths. You remember what followed. The king gathers the chief priests and scribes together, to inquire of them where the Christ should be born; and, on receiving their reply, holds a final interview with the Persian philosophers, and sends them off to Bethlehem.

We see them then, as in a second picture, proceeding to the little village. As far as we can gather, no one has the curiosity to accompany them; but on they march, when lo! the star which they had seen in the East so long time ago, and which had been withdrawn from their view, suddenly flashes into the sky, and heralds them on their way, and they greatly rejoice at this proof of the fulfilment of their expectations, at this token of the goodness of God.

The star moves slowly before them, meteor-like, and at last it hangs poised over the part of the village—perhaps over the very house—in which the young child lies. And now they know that the object of their long and laborious journey is attained. Entering into the lowly habitation, they see the child, with Mary His mother. It is He whom they have been sent to find. It is the newly born King of the Jews; and falling down and worshipping Him they present unto Him gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

II. We have thus accomplished the first part of our task by giving a sketch of the sacred narrative. Let us pass on to consider, in the second place, the lessons which the narrative may be intended and calculated to convey. It is interesting then, I think, to reflect that the men whose journey from Persia we have been watching, must have been very earnest seekers after God. Living as they did outside the borders of the chosen people, and therefore destitute of the help of a Divine revelation, they had peculiar difficulties to contend with. They were not idolaters, it is true, but the religious views of their country were exceedingly erroneous, and would of necessity confuse their minds. And in addition to this, their temptations to pride of intellect (seeing that they were scholarly, thoughtful, inquiring men) must have been neither few nor slight; and pride of intellect is one of the most serious hindrances that can possibly be imagined to the simple reception of the truths of God. But, in spite of their disadvantageous circumstances, these Magi were bent, above all things, upon knowing and serving God.

It is possible for men, as we know—at least, it is possible for men at a certain period of this world's history—to look up to the starry heavens, and when they behold the wondrous mechanism, the splendid constellations wheeling silently and majestically through space, the stars hanging out their bright lamps in the sky—when they observe the undeviating regularity, the unchanging order, each huge mass keeping its own place, and moving in its own appointed orbit, without the slightest approximation to jostling or confusion—it has been found possible, I say, for some persons calmly to believe that there is no need for the hypothesis of a God in order to account for the beauty and the grandeur, for the unutterable magnificence and wonder of the scene.

But so it was not with these ancient dwellers on the Persian plains. By the steps of Nature they mounted up to the footstool of the Eternal Throne. To them, as to the sweet Psalmist of Israel, the voiceless heavens proclaimed the glory of God, and the firmament showed His handiwork. Nor did they rest there. The Book of Creation revealed something, revealed much, but it did not reveal enough. And they gathered together, and pondered over the fragments of tradition that had floated down to them on the stream of time. They gazed with intense eagerness on the gleams and flashes that fell upon them through the parted clouds, from the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Need I say that to searchers like these God unveiled some at least of the glories of His face? In every nation, in every age, God seeketh such to worship Him, and He has always such to worship Him. And the Magi were ready, when the fulness of time had arrived, to spring forth at the Divine bidding, and fall before the feet of the new-born King of the Jews, who was—although as yet they knew it not—the Incarnate Son of God.

What, then, was the meaning of this coming of the philosophers and statesmen from Persia? It was an intimation of the future sovereignty of Jesus Christ over the entire human race. To the lowly in station—to the Jewish shepherd—is granted the earliest manifestation of the purpose of God. I think it has always been so, and perhaps always will be so. "Not many mighty, not many wise, not many noble, are called," said the Apostle Paul. Christianity rises upward from the lower to the higher strata of society. The poor man enters first; then follows the rich man, flinging aside the trammels of his self-indulgence; and with him the learned man, breaking through the meshes of his intellectual difficulties. But no one has a monopoly of Jesus Christ. He is

XUM

the common property, the common blessing, of all—of Jew and Gentile, of wise and unwise, of rich and poor, of learned and unlearned; all barriers fall, all divisions disappear, before Him; and the time is ever hastening on (God grant it may come soon!) when the peoples of every clime and race and tongue shall bow down before Him, and call Him Lord.

We gather next from the narrative that these men—the leading men of science of their day—were characterised by a true and profound humility. Whilst in Persia they had their difficult problems to solve. It might have appeared to them, for instance, doubtful—perhaps very doubtful—whether it was a true voice of God, or only a delusion, which impelled them to journey across the pathless desert to the land of Israel. On the road misgivings of the same kind might have seized upon them. Certainly, when they arrived at Jerusalem, it must have been with a tremendous shock that they learned that no one knew—or, indeed, seemed to care much to know—about the new-born King of the Jews. "What! the very people to whom this King has come, to be ignorant of His existence?" And yet, once more, although the reappearance of the star did somewhat encourage them, they must have been perplexed to find that the palace of this great monarch had dwindled down to a little hut in a little Jewish village; and that the parents of the Monarch were a peasant man and a peasant woman, simple in their ways, and, to all outward appearance, in nowise different from the rest of the homely people by whom they were surrounded.

To us, now, these things are no difficulties; but difficulties they must have been to the Persian sages. And yet they believed; believed, in spite of appearances. They broke through their problems, their doubts, their difficulties, their misgivings, by the simple might of a simple faith; and they received the reward which those always obtain who hold themselves prepared to trust in the Word of the living God.

We mark, then, their humility. And why humility should not be always characteristic of men like these Magi—men of thought and science—it is somewhat hard to understand. The thinkers, who strive to push forward the boundaries of human knowledge, must feel, one would suppose, more keenly than anyone else does that a veil hangs between them and a mystery which they cannot solve, and they will bow their heads reverently in its awful presence.

Might it not be expected, then, that this conviction would fit them for the reception of Divine truth, because it would impart the child-like spirit to which alone Divine truth is to be revealed? Certainly it was so with these travellers from distant Persia, who bent the knee round the lowly cradle in which the infant Redeemer was laid.

I would notice lastly the character of their homage, and the gifts that accompanied it. By the gift of gold, it is said they recognise the dignity of the King; by that of frankincense, the mysterious nature of Him who was Divine (and Divine at that moment) as well as human; by that of myrrh—the recognised symbol of dissolution—the suffering, the death which that Child would be called upon to undergo. We may believe it to have been so. That the Magi knew the precise significance of their act is not, indeed, to be supposed. Their views about Christ were true and correct so far as they went, but they must have been inadequate and indistinct. We are quite at liberty, however, to believe that the men were Divinely guided in the selection of such offerings as should afterwards shadow forth, when the period of full intelligence had arrived, the true character of Him to whom they were offered.

It seems to be thus always that God works in matters of the Faith. One generation lays the foundation for the better and higher spiritual knowledge of another. We understand more than those who preceded us, and those who come after our day will have a wider survey of the Divine purpose, and a clearer comprehension of it than is, or can be, granted to us. St. Peter, as you will remember, describes the prophets as men with imperfect eyesight, who were led by a strange and irresistible impulse to paint a picture of the coming Christ. Their minds were filled with a grand idea; their hands were guided to move the pencil; but the results of their work they could only dimly and partially discern. Something they saw of the wonderful figure as it grew up on the canvas—enough for their own purposes, for their own spiritual wants; but it was for those who were to succeed them that they painted; it was "not unto themselves, but unto us—their successors—that they did minister these things." Yes; the Church of Christ at any one period of her existence holds a treasure in her hands which is perfectly sufficient for her own present necessities, but which has much more in it than she understands or even imagines. It is the Church of another period which discovers the secret beauty, the hidden value. And when the Church of the one period has done with it, she leaves much more to be discovered, much more to be used and enjoyed, by those who are to come after.

See this displayed in the history of these Persian Magi! To them, the opening of the treasure was just a natural and customary act of homage to the new-born King. To us, the opening of the treasure is the proclamation and announcement of the mysterious character of the transcendent glories of the eternal Son of God.
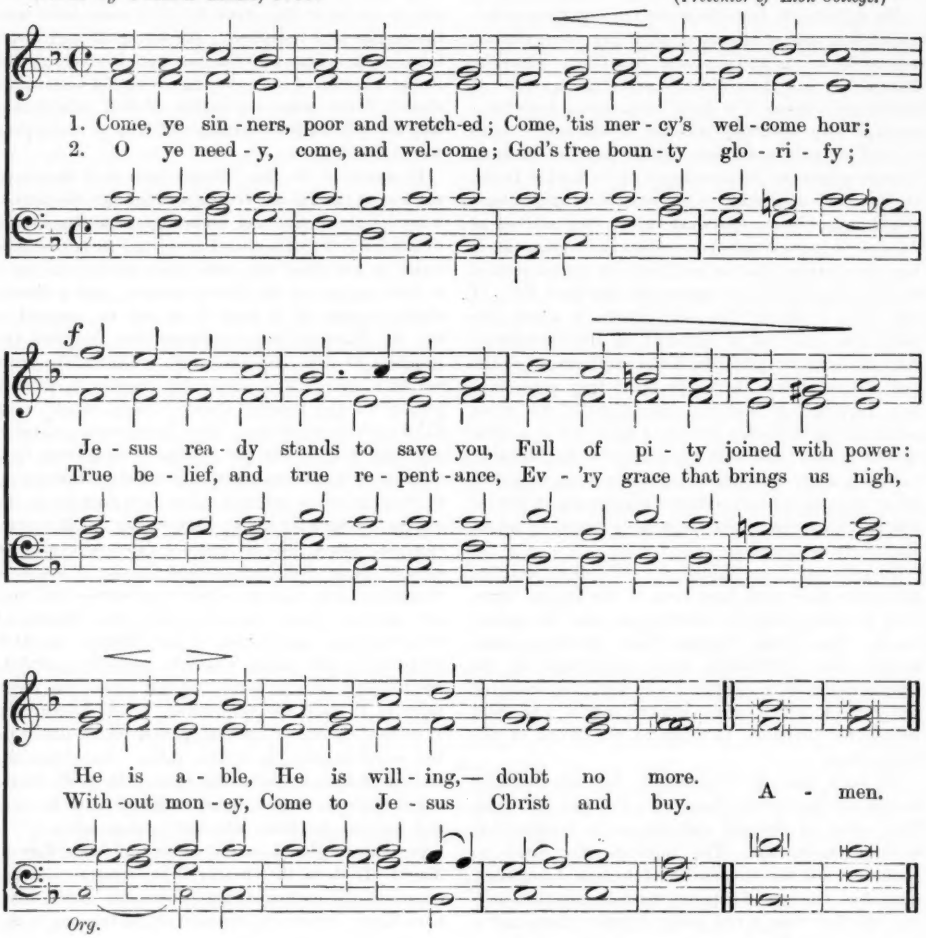
What, then, is the practical result of our discussion of this subject of the first Epiphany? Is it not this?—That our thoughts are lifted up to the mystery of the Divine-human Person of our Blessed Lord, to the wonder of His sufferings and of His atoning death, and that through these contemplations we are led to a more hearty self-surrender, to a more entire consecration, to a truer submission of ourselves to Him whom we know to be now seated as King at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

XUM

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched.

Words by JOSEPH HART, 1759.

Music by JOSEPH BARNBY.
(Precentor of Eton College.)



3. Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
Bruised and mangled by the fall!
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all:
Not the righteous—
Sinners Jesus came to call.

4. Saints and angels, joined in concert,
Sing the praises of the Lamb,
While the blissful seats of heaven
Sweetly echo with His name:
Hallelujah!
Sinners here may sing the name.

TERRIE'S TWO COATS.

I.



TERRIE TARBOX lay on his back on the nursery floor. His two feet were propped up against the cupboard door, and his arms were raised to hold a book in a horizontal position before his eyes. Not a very comfortable attitude for study, one would think; but Terrie was a boy, and boys, as everybody knows, are creatures who do things that no other being under the sun would dream of. Besides, Terrie used to say he cou'd always think better when his heels were higher than his head, and he really was thinking hard just now.

"'He that hath two coats,'" he repeated to himself in an undertone, "'let him i-m, im, p-a-r-t, impart' (that must be the same as 'give'—all the rest's easy!) 'to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do l-i-likewise.'"

"It must *mean* it," reflected Terrie, after a pause, and rolling over on to his side because his arms ached, "else it wouldn't be put here. I've got more 'n two coats. I've got this velvet one, that 's one; and the 'reefer' with the brass buttons, that 's two; and my new great-coat, and the old great-coat, and the one I had at the sea-side——"

"Master Terrie, get up this minute!" commanded nurse sharply. "A nice mess you'll be in with your velvet suit picking up the cat's hairs off the carpet! And got the Testament on the floor, too!" she continued, in a scandalised tone. "I 'm ashamed of you, Master Terence!"

Terrie did as he was told, but slowly, and poring all the while over the passage that had fascinated him.

"Nursie," he began presently, while his hair was being brushed to go out, "do you think there 's anybody in the world that hasn't got a coat—not a single one?"

"Scores and hundreds, no doubt, my dear!" answered nurse, as if it were a matter of course.

"And I've got *seven!*" exclaimed Terrie, raising his face so suddenly that he received a stroke from the scratchy bristles, on his little nose. "I've been counting up. There 's the new great-coat, and the old great-coat, and the one with the brass buttons——"

"That 's nothing at all to do with it," said nurse. "You have got them because your papa can afford to buy them. Everybody would have plenty of clothes if they could afford it, specially such weather as this."

"Why can't the other people afford it?"

"Because they are too poor. There, find your gloves."

"What makes them be too poor?" pursued Terrie, as he carefully guided his rebellious fingers into the apertures intended for them. His very fingers had got a little coat apiece, and yet some *people* hadn't!

"Drink, mostly," replied nurse, tying her bonnet-strings. "They spend their money on beer, and then they haven't got it to buy clothes."

"Do the little boys spend money on beer?"

"Why, no, of course not. But their fathers do, and then the children have to go short. Come along now; I'm ready!"

It was a keen, bright winter morning. Every leaf and twig and railing was encrusted with a transparent icy bloom, like the sugar on crystallised fruit; the horses' hoofs rang merrily on the white, frost-bound roads; the sky overhead was a clear, pale blue, and the golden sun was fast dissolving the hoary morning mist.

"Now, run with your hoop," said nurse, "and warm your feet."

Terrie did run a little way, but soon found himself walking again. The problem of the "two coats" and the "none" was weighing him down from head to foot. He wished his father or mother were at home, so that he could talk it over with them. But they had gone on a visit somewhere, and would not be back till next week.

Presently they came to a large sweetmeat shop. Instinctively Terrie pulled up, for he was never tired of gazing at the goodies within. Terrie had permission to buy a pennyworth of barley-sugar, which you may be sure he did not hesitate to avail himself of.

He was coming out of the shop, gravely considering whether the two long sticks he had just received would amount to quite as much as the three short ones and a little bit which he purchased for a penny a few days before, when he was confronted by the face of a boy about his own size that peered round the glass-paned corner of the doorway. It was a dirty face, surmounted by a perfect mop of curly red hair; the owner eyed Terrie's sweets longingly, and Terrie could not help looking rather hard at him, for he had on neither jacket nor vest, and the broken braces crossed over his checked cotton shirt had been supplemented by bits of string.

"I wish I 'd brought one of those other coats out with me!" thought Terrie; "then he could have had it. I wonder whether 'meat' means '*sweet*meat' as well? Anyhow, he 's got none.—Have a bit?" he concluded aloud, offering the coatless boy one of his sugar-sticks.

It was snatched at eagerly by a grimy paw, and the recipient instantly darted out of Terrie's reach, as though he expected that the prize would be reclaimed. For a moment then he stood still to stare in evident wonder at the giver, and, with his cheek already bulging with an enormous bite, sped round a corner and out of sight.

"He might have said 'Thank you!'" was Terrie's inward comment, as he rejoined nurse, who had been absorbed in looking at the bonnet-shop next door.

"But perhaps he's never been taught. I *wish* I'd brought out that other great-coat of mine, that I do! He must be one of those that 's got none."

They went into the park; most of the children there were well dressed and comfortable-looking, yet none the less did Terrie's text, illustrated, as it were, by the chilly cotton-covered shoulders of the red-haired boy, haunt his mind.

Presently nurse met a friend, and wanting a little quiet chat out of Terrie's hearing, she bade him bowl his hoop as far as the fountain and back again.

He did so several times, and was just pausing near a large clump of bushes, some distance from where nurse stood, to refresh himself with the last of his barley-sugar, when a voice at his elbow said, "I say! give us a bit more!"

It was the red-haired boy again.

"Haven't got any!" returned Terrie, crushing the empty paper in his hand and throwing it away. But the youngster lingered.

"Haven't you got a coat to wear?" asked Terrie, in a tone of sympathy.

The red head was shaken so energetically that every individual curl bobbed.

"Don't you ever have one?" he further queried.

"It's gone up the spout!" replied his jacketless acquaintance; "ever so long ago."

"What spout?" questioned Terrie, as an array of teapots, watering-cans, and pumps passed bewilderingly through his mind.

"At the top of our court," the boy informed him, not aware of any necessity for explaining that this was the common slang term for a pawnbroker's shop.

"It's a *very* funny place to put it," said Terrie; but look here! I've got on two; I guess I ought to be able to spare one of them, as you've got none at all. Which will you have?"

He unbuttoned his fur-trimmed over-coat rapidly as he spoke, and revealed the black velvet one underneath. "Which do you like best?"

"Go on! You're a-chaffin' me!" responded red-head, in derisive unbelief.

"I'm not! I mean it. We can go behind these trees and take it off. Nurse mightn't quite like it, but I'm sure mamma wouldn't mind; because it says so in the Bible, and she always tells me to do what the Bible says. She'd be pleased, I know. Now you can just have which you like."

The indoors jacket was adorned with beautiful gilt buttons, each bearing a glittering anchor on a plain ground; the ragamuffin silently pointed to these, his eyes and teeth shining with ecstasy.

The little velvet coat was soon stripped off and handed over to its new owner. Red-head, however, did not immediately put it on, as Terrie had expected and hoped. He rolled it up hurriedly into as small a bundle as it would make, stuffed it into the bosom of his shirt, and ran off as fast as his legs would carry him.

Terrie gazed after him with a blank countenance, and buttoned up his own great-coat again over his vest with a feeling of disappointment, not unmingled with regret.

"Anyhow, I've done what the Testament said," he told himself. "I've imparted—and mother's sure to be pleased!"

These thoughts and the word together brought him some consolation.

II.

THE red-haired boy scuttled off, I have said, as fast as he could go. Out of the park by a small side-gate, across the road, down a street, round a corner, down a narrower street, and round by the three gilt balls of the pawnbroker's, into a dingy flagged court.

Cold as was the day, most of the doors stood open. That of the third house on the left-hand side had a bit of board put across it to limit the wanderings of a baby inside. The boy jumped over the baby and board together, and rushed up the dirty dark stairs.

"Mother! mother!" he cried, bursting into a small back room on the second floor, "just you look here!"

He pulled out the little velvet coat with its shining buttons, and held it up to the gaze of a worn-looking woman, who sat stitching away at some white calico work with the contracted brow and feverish energy of one to whom every moment is of value.

But precious as was the time, she could not help pausing to glance at the garment her boy exhibited, and her hands dropped as if paralysed into her lap.

"Oh! Jimmy, Jimmy, what *have* you been doing?" she gasped, with trembling lips. "How did you come by that?"

"A boy—a young swell—gave it to me," returned the child. "He ast me which I'd have, that or the one he wore atop of it; 'cos he'd got on two, you see, and didn't want 'em both. And I ses 'This,' like a shot, 'cos o' the real gold buttons. Why, it'll fetch a bob—p'raps two!"

Forgetting for the time being the work which must be taken in at a certain hour, the poor woman questioned her son closely as to the circumstances connected with this remarkable transference of property, and the conclusion she arrived at was: "It's not ours! You'd no business to 'a took it, Jimmy! You oughter known better, if the little gentleman didn't. He meant it kind, I've no doubt; but he'd no right to go givin' his clothes away without his pa 'n' ma's knowledge. Whatever we shall do about it, I don't know."

"We must keep it now, anyhow!" said Jimmy. "We don't know his name, nor where he lives, nor nothin'."

"Here's his little handkerchief in the pocket—that may tell something. Here's a mark in the corner. Jer—Ter—*what* is it?" continued the woman, taking the small square of pink-bordered cambric to the dim light of the window. "'Terence Tarbox,' it looks like to me. Dear me, now! I've seen that name on a doorplate somewhere about here."

"You'd never go and take it back, mother!" cried Jimmy, in dismay. "P'raps they'd think you'd thieved it, and send for the bobby!"

"I shall, though, if I can find the house," returned his mother, stitching away again as if for dear life, to make up for lost time. "If we keep what we know

people don't mean us to have, it's all the same as if we *had* thieved it!"

Poor Jimmy, on hearing this decision, sat down on the floor and howled dolorously. Such visions of hot beef and carrots for dinner, of "plum duff" and saveloys, of oranges and bread and cheese, had floated before his imagination as he hugged that gold-buttoned coat, that the disappointment, not to speak of some apprehension as to future retribution, was bitter indeed.

Terrie Tarbox, beneath the snowy curtains of his own pretty bed, was also crying quite as heart-brokenly at much about the same time. He had been consigned to this place of seclusion for the rest of that day, partly as punishment for his naughtiness, partly as a preventive measure against the "death of cold" he had presumably caught in consequence.

"A bad, wicked boy," nurse had called him, on discovering what he had done—"to go and give away what didn't belong to him. Didn't he know that all his clothes, and everything he had, belonged to his pa?"

"B-but I 've got so many!" sobbed Terrie, in protest. "And—and that boy hadn't got none! There's the new gr-reat-coat, and th-the old great-coat, and the co-oat with the brass buttons——!"



"It was snatched at eagerly by a grimy paw."—*p.* 61.

"Don't talk to me, if you please, sir!" interrupted nurse with severity. She was the more angry that she knew she ought not to have allowed her charge long enough out of her sight for the transaction to be effected, and expected a reprimand in consequence.

"I th-ought mother would be pleased!" blurted out poor Terrie, half-choked with tears, and thus inadequately expressing one of the notions that had been uppermost in his mind.

"Don't tell me that wicked story!" snapped nurse. "How *could* you think she 'd be pleased? Go to bed at once, sir, and remember Ananias and Sapphira!"

So Terrie wriggled and writhed in anguish of mind between the sheets, and soaked his pillow with tears, and got the bedclothes twisted up like a rope, and sobbed so convulsively that he bit his tongue, and was "plunged in a gulf of dark despair" indeed!

But he could not cry all day, and after an hour or so he grew quieter, and ate his dinner with calmness, if not enjoyment. Then he lay and watched the red afternoon sunshine creep along the wall and across the painted text, till it illuminated the lovely face of the "Good Shepherd" carrying a little lamb.

"He doesn't look as if He'd be angry with me for giving such a poor boy one of my coats on a cold, cold day!" thought Terrie. "I s'pose it was a 'stake. I didn't think about it 's not being all my own. But if I could get and cuddle as close up to Him as that weeny lamb, I'd whisper to Him all about it, and I do b'lieve He'd und'stand."

While gazing, Terrie fell asleep; and he had a dream. It was a very vague sort of dream, and he could not on awaking remember much of it but the feeling it gave him, and that was beautiful. He thought that he was being carried like the little lamb, snuggling as close as possible to the Shepherd's breast, and putting his arms tightly round His neck. Terrie could not recall the Shepherd's face, nor anything He said; he only felt his own heart full of love, and knew that the Shepherd knew all about the coat, and that it was all set right, and that he was just as happy as ever he could be.

* * * * * *

It was nearly a week before Jimmy's mother, think as hard as she would, could remember where it was that she had seen that brass plate with the name of Tarbox on it. Then it came to her all at once. The very same evening she knocked at the door of the house where Terrie lived, with a parcel in her hand.

Terrie's mamma was at home by that time, and the poor woman, whose strange errand the servants could not comprehend, was taken in to speak to her.

In the conversation that followed, Mrs. Tarbox recognised in Jimmy's mother a former housemaid of her sister's, who had left service to get married. The story of how the once trim and respectable girl had sunk, and sunk, as the wife of a drunkard, is too sad to tell here, but kind Mrs. Tarbox was actually wiping her eyes before it was finished. When Jimmy's mother left, she was carrying a big bundle of clothes for herself and her little boy, and a basket of food; and Jimmy himself was sent later on for some more.

Mrs. Tarbox was both able and willing to assist the poor woman in many ways, and never lost sight of her or her child again.

"It was the beginning of a good time for us," Jimmy's mother often said. "But it wouldn't 'a been, you know, Jimmy, if we'd 'a been dishonest, and never 'ad took back that jacket, though the lady was kind enough to say we might keep it, after all."

* * * * * *

"So, you see, Terrie," said Mrs. Tarbox, "it did all come right, as you thought the Good Shepherd said. May He keep your little heart always tender and obedient to His Word, and willing to give wherever you see a need. Only, darling, while you are young, and don't know what is best, always consult papa or me in whatever you want to do, that the good you desire may be done in a right and wise way, and then nothing but good shall come of it." JENNIE CHAPPELL.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

NOV. 17TH. DAVID'S LAST WORDS.

To read—2 *Sam. xxii.* 47.; *xxiii.* 7. *Golden Text*—2 *Sam. xxiii.* 5.

I.  HEAVENLY KING. (47—51.)—David's life and reign drawing to a close. As a religious man he reviews God's dealings with him. As a wise king he lays down some maxims for the benefit of his successor. These the two parts of this lesson. These verses end of a long psalm of praise to God (found also as Ps. xviii.), showing God's powerful help as a great and heavenly King to David His servant. These five verses a kind of summary of whole Psalm. Notice these points—

1. *God lives.* A present, not an absent God—always able to help. (Ps. xlvi. 1.)

2. *God is a rock, i.e.* protection against storms of troubles. also shadow from heat of persecution. (Is. xxxii. 2.)

3. *God is an Avenger.* Had subdued Absalom's rebellion.

4. *God is deliverer from enemies.* Had kept David safe from Saul. Given him victory over Philistines (2 Sam. viii. 12), Moabites (2 Sam. viii. 2), and Syrians. (2 Sam. viii. 13.)

Protected him from lion and bear, giant Goliath, and all his enemies.

What does this demand from him?

(*a*) *Praises* for all God's mercies.

(*b*) *Acknowledgment* among all the nations.

LESSONS. These two points to be insisted on.

1. *God's power* still exists for us. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (Heb. xiii. 8.)

(*a*) Power in *nature.* Sun, food, etc., providing for wants. (St. Matt. vi. 31, 32.)

(*b*) Power in *grace.* Can deliver from temptation. (2 Pet. ii. 9.)

Can put down Satan. (Rom. xvi. 20.)

2. *Our duty* to praise as David did. (*a*) *In words,* with heart and voice.

(*b*) *In lives,* by living to His service.

II. An Earthly King. The last inspired words of David.

1. *The Man.* (*a*) David, youngest son of Jesse.

(*b*) Raised from sheepfolds to be king over Israel.

(*c*) Anointed with oil for his office.

(*d*) Anointed with God's Spirit in his heart.

(*e*) Sweet Psalmist of Israel.

(*f*) Prophet as taught by God's Spirit.

2. *The King.* His character declared by God's Spirit must show—

(*a*) *Justice*—above taking bribes, must be impartial.

(*b*) *Piety*—ruling in God's fear.

(*c*) *Clearness*—like the light of day.

(*d*) *Freshness*—like new grass after rain.

His household. (*a*) In covenant with God. (Josh. xxiv. 15.)

(*b*) Well-ordered and peaceable. (Ps. ci. 6—8.)

(*c*) The ungodly put away. (Ps. ci. 8.)

Lesson. David an example to all.

1. Feared God both in private and public life.

2. Did his duty to his fellow-creatures.

Was respected, honoured, and loved. See his epitaph in Acts xiii. 36. May this be ours!

Nov. 24th. Solomon's Wise Choice.

To read—1 *Kings iii.* 3—15. *Golden Text*—*Prov. viii.* 11.

I. A Good Beginning. (3, 4.) Well begun, half done. How did Solomon begin his reign?

(*a*) He loved the Lord, *i.e.* His ways, statutes, etc.

(*b*) He followed his father's good example.

(*c*) He attended to public worship.

(*d*) He made a large offering—1,000 burnt-offerings in one day.

Find from 2 Chron. i. 3, that this was a public and state occasion.

All heads of tribes and public officers met at Tabernacle at Gibeon.

There Solomon made public and solemn act of worship.

What did he desire to show?

1. His own profession as a God-fearing king from the first.

2. His desire that all the nation too should serve God.

II. A Wise Prayer. (5—10.) Now follow young king to his own house.

Service at Tabernacle ended. Captains, etc., dispersed.

King finished evening meal, has lain down to rest.

Of what would he think? His great kingdom—his wise father—his own inexperience.

At last drops off to sleep. Hears God's voice in a dream speaking to him.

Hears the wide offer, "Ask what I shall give thee."

What might he be disposed to want?

(*a*) *Victory* over his enemies and to extend his dominions.

(*b*) *Wealth* for his own comfort or to make a display.

(*c*) *Long life* of ease and pleasure.

None of these. What did he most earnestly ask for? (Golden Text.)

(*a*) *Wisdom* for his great work of governing the people.

(*b*) *Faithfulness* to the trust given him.

What does this request show on his part?

(*a*) *Humility*, thinking little of himself and his powers.

(*b*) *Faith* in God as Giver of all good things.

What a wise young king!

III. A Full Answer. (11—15.) Solomon's prayer pleased God.

God gave him all he asked, and more.

He asked for spiritual gifts, God gave also temporal gifts. What was he to have?

(*a*) *Wisdom* to rule and judge the people right. How was it shown?

His judgment about the two babies.

His Proverbs and wise sayings.

His government of the country.

His alliance with Hiram, King of Tyre, and others.

(*b*) *Riches* used for building his palace and the Temple.

(*c*) *Honour* amongst all at home and far off.

These given at once—another gift conditional, viz. length of days *if* he continued walking in God's ways.

Lo! it was a dream—but one which came true.

So Solomon went once more to worship.

Burnt-offerings for sin—peace-offerings for thanksgiving.

He and his servants rejoiced together.

Lessons. 1. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

2. "God giveth liberally and upbraideth not."

Dec. 1st. The Temple Dedicated.

To read—1 *Kings viii.* 12—16; 54—63. *Golden Text*—*Hab. ii.* 20.

I. God's House Built. (12—16.) Till now no fixed place for Temple.

Noah built altar on leaving Ark.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars at each place in their journeys. (Gen. xxvi. 25; xxxv. 14, etc.)

The Tabernacle was moved with the Israelites.

The Ark was often moved from place to place.

At last David designed to build a permanent temple.

Not allowed because of his many wars.

He collected materials and designed plans—ordered the courses of Priests, Levites, singers, etc., to leave all in readiness for Solomon.

The Temple seven years being built. At last all ready, and this day dedicated to God's service.

Notice Solomon's words—

(*a*) God had said He would dwell in Jerusalem (another rendering of *thick darkness;* or "thick darkness" may refer to "Holy of Holies," where was the Mercy-seat).

(*b*) Solomon has now built Him an House there.

(*c*) Blessed be God.

The following points may be noticed about the Temple—

1. No sound of any tool was allowed within the building. (1 Kings vi. 7.)

2. Hiram, King of Tyre, supplied most of the wood from cedar trees of Lebanon. Repaid by wheat from Canaan.

3. The Temple followed the same plan as the Tabernacle, of which God gave Moses the plan. (Heb. viii. 5.)

4. It was the king's and people's willing offering to God. (1 Chron. xxix. 6—9.)

5. It was exceedingly rich and beautiful.

6. It was accepted by God. His glory filled it this day. (Ver. 11.)

II. THE PEOPLE BLESSED. (54—63.) Solomon's prayer and supplication over.

Had prayed *humbly*, kneeling on his knees.

Had prayed *earnestly*, people all keeping silence. (Golden Text.)

Had prayed *fully* for all the sins and wants of the people.

Now he stands and blesses the people as follows—

(*a*) God has been true to His promise.

(*b*) Therefore let all cleave faithfully to Him.

(*c*) Pray that God would incline their hearts to Him.

(*d*) Then shall all the world be turned to God. (Ps. lxvii. 7.)

And now a solemn peace-offering is made; 22,000 oxen, 120,000 sheep.

Burnt-offering first made for sin. (Ver. 5.)

Then peace-offering for thanksgiving followed by a feast. (Ver. 65.)

Thus the Temple was dedicated or set apart for God's worship for ever.

LESSONS. 1. God comes to His house of prayer. (Ps. cxxxii. 14.)

2. Worship consists of prayer, praise, and thank-offerings.

3. God speaks—let all keep silence and listen. (Golden Text.)

DEC. 8TH. SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

To read—1 *Kings* x. 1—13. *Golden Text*—*St. Matt.* xii. 42.

I. THE QUEEN'S VISIT. (1—9.) (*a*) *Who she was*—Queen of Sheba, S.W. of Arabia, on borders of Red Sea.

(*b*) *Why she came.* Heard of Solomon's fame probably through merchant traders. Remind of Ishmaelites trading between Egypt and Canaan in Joseph's time. (Gen. xxxvii. 28.) Desired to see and hear for herself.

(*c*) *How she came.* Long train of camels bearing gold and precious stones.

(*d*) *Where she came.* Straight to the king at Jerusalem.

(*e*) *What she saw.* Solomon's palace, which took thirteen years to build. (Chap. vii. 1.)

The Temple and all its wonders.

His servants in their gorgeous robes.

(*f*) *What she heard.* The king's Proverbs, songs, and wise judgment.

(*g*) *What she felt.* Overawed and delighted at it all.

(*h*) *What she said.* The half had not been told her.

She praised God for His goodness to the king.

(*j*) *What she did.* Gave the king gold, spices, and precious stones in abundance.

II. THE QUEEN'S RETURN. (11—13.) During her visit Solomon's fleet also returned from Tyre. What did that bring?

Gold from Ophir, noted for its purity.

Almug, or sandal wood, noted for scent.

Precious stones of great beauty.

So Solomon gave presents to the queen with unsparing hand.

She returned home, richer, wiser, better.

III. LESSONS. Notice these points about the queen.

1. *Her spirit of inquiry.* Having heard from others of this wise king who could teach her, was anxious to hear for herself.

"A greater than Solomon is here." "Learn of Me."

2. *Her eagerness.* Took long, dangerous journey to obtain what she wanted.

"So run that ye may obtain." "Ye must with much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God."

3. *Her satisfaction.* Found all she wanted, and more. Received knowledge, wisdom, riches.

So with all who seek the "greater than Solomon." They will be taught (Prov. iii. 5, 6), satisfied (Prov. iii. 18.)

"The diligent soul shall be made fat."

None shall be sent empty away.

THE PARSONAGE GARDEN.

(*See Frontispiece.*)

IS the garden fair?
The north wind came with its searching breath,
And the snow with its treasures in drift and wreath;
The spring was lavish in silver showers
Through the gleam and gloom of her April hours;
And when the summer with crowning gold
Yielded her treasures manifold,
All that was pure and all that was sweet
Clustered around the gardener's feet;
From glowing calyx and chalice rare
Beauty and fragrance blessed her care.

Is the garden fair?—
The garden kept by a Viewless Hand,
And loved by the Lord of the fruitful land?
What hath the tempest of sorrow wrought,—
What hath the joy of sunshine brought?
Rooted and grounded in depths of grace,
Cedar and palm-tree should grow apace.
The Lord of the garden claims each hour
Richest clusters of fruit and flower,
From the dawn of day to the evening dim
Shall not His Garden be fair to Him?

CLARA THWAITES.



"MY GOD SENDS THEE HIS LOVE."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

ONE bright Sunday morning I passed in with a stream of people to a large hall in London. Very soon the crowd filled the place, waiting—all with different needs, different cares—for a message from the God and Father of us all. And the message came; the preacher—the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse—told of Him who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all His works. "Would He feed insects, fishes, birds, and care for the trees and flowers, and forget you?" asked the preacher. "Nay, dear heart, He thinks of you, cares for you, provides for you." And to every lonely one, everyone sad in spirit, disappointed, or perplexed, there came a message which I pass on to you now, for it is living, glorious truth, "*My God sends thee His love.*"

It did not seem to poor Job in bygone days, perhaps, that he had much share in the love of God, but by-and-bye he understood that the Lord is very pitiful, and of great compassion. Jacob thought everything was against him, and only darkness surrounded him, but all the time the loving Lord was remembering him, leading him on by the right way, and His thoughts towards that aged life were thoughts of good, and not of evil. Perhaps it may seem to you that God sends anything but love just now; He may be sending weakness, infirmity, perhaps even want and pain. All this may be dark reality around you, but the sunlight that breaks through the darkness is even more real: "My God sends thee His love." Could you count the mercies of the past, the good gifts your life has known, the times and seasons when the Lord your Shepherd has come to your aid and tuned your prayers to praise? You could no more count the mercies of the past than you could count the grains of sand washed by the waves; but what about the mercies of the *present?* Do not reckon up your troubles, and forget all about your blessings. Every good gift, every time of prayer, of Bible-reading or Bible-hearing, every text of comfort whispered to your heart by day or by night, proves this message to be true, "My God sends thee His love."

"Cheer up," said a lady, hastening to the bedside of an invalid; "I felt I must come and cheer you directly I heard of your illness, for I was just in the same state myself at one time, and you see I am all right now." The fact that she had gone through the same trouble made her long to cheer the invalid. And our Father wants you to listen to His message of cheer and comfort, for in the person of our Saviour has not God Himself gone through poverty, weariness, sorrow? He knows every need, every trial of life; the Master's eyes have been dewed with tears, His feet have been worn by earth's rough places, and so, in the sympathy which is more than pity, "My God sends thee His love."

"What good is your religion, after all? Could it help me if I lost all my money?" a scoffer asked once of a Christian man.—"Yes, it could," was the reply; "God can help and comfort, whatever may be lost." So you are rich, child of God, whatever else may seem lost, while the love of God remains to you. Think much about His love, and how He has proved it by dying for you, and by rising evermore as your living Lord and King, and in the fulness of that love find your strength, your peace, your rest.

"Lord, Thou knowest how he loves Thee!" cried a good man, praying by the bedside of a pastor laid low by weakness. "Ah, do not plead that," cried the invalid; "my love to Him is not my comfort: it is His love to me. 'Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.'" The same plea may go up to Heaven concerning you; amid all your need and weakness, you are the soul the Master loves, therefore fear no evil evermore.

God's free gift of love to you is worth more than any earthly gift could be, because no change—not even the last great change of all—can ever take it away. He has loved you with an *everlasting* love, which will light up the valley of the shadow, and fill it with heavenly music. *Trust* in God's love, lean hard upon His heart, and even in your feebleness, will you not try to pass on to some other life the heavenly message of hope and cheer, "*My God sends thee His love*"?

M. S. H.

THE HEART OF THOMAS TITT; OR, THE BIG MAN AND THE BIGGER.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," "THE MAN ON THE SLANT," ETC.

"The mind's the measure of the man."—BURNS.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE seen some giants, and some dwarfs too, in my day—such big giants, that one wondered how they got into the caravan; and, if they slept there, how it was that one did not see their great toes sticking out through the sides when they lay down; or that one did not see their heads sticking up through the canvas roof when they stood up.

And I have seen a dwarf or two in my day also—little bits of creatures—and the wonder with regard to them was, how in the world they contrived not to get lost; they were so small that they seemed to be uncommonly sharp even to be able to find themselves.

The giants were very big, and the dwarfs were very small; and there, so far as the caravan went, was an end of them. We paid our penny or twopence, as the case may be, and no doubt anyone of a reflective mind might have come away with a thankful spirit that if he were rather tall and occasionally bumped his head, he was not a giant out and out; and, if he were a little short, he was not trodden upon by anybody, and was not out and out a dwarf. For myself, I like moderation in all things; and if anyone were to ask me which I should like to be, a giant or a dwarf, my answer would be—betwixt and between; a judicious mixture would suit my views best.

Farewell, dear old Blunderbores, great giants of my early days; farewell, dear little men and women, at whose arrival in the yellow caravan I opened wide my callow eyes and mouth. I no longer shiver at the thought of the Rawheads and Bloodybones who ate a baby for breakfast, with unlimited buttered toast, and who liked the forequarter or the saddle of a little boy of about my own age for lunch. Farewell, dear little men and women; the time has long gone by since I believed that you were real generals or admirals of the fleet, or perhaps distant relations of the royal family, by reason of the enormous size of your epaulets, and the wonderful buckles in your shoes; yes, dear little women, and it is long since I blushed when you offered anyone of the company a kiss, and I was handed up to the platform for the dainty, for which one penny extra had to be paid. Your spangles, too, dear little ladies, no longer disturb me at night, and make me feel that I was ill-used by being obliged to live in a mouse-coloured suit of very unpoetic cut. I don't believe now that the stars got themselves somehow stitched on to your petticoats. I have grown old, and, I hope, wise; and though I don't wear spectacles (which at my age is so wonderful that I might almost ask the giants and the dwarfs to let me go about with them in the caravan), still I am able to see a great deal which I used not to see in those far-back days. I see a great many giants who, when I look at them with the eyes I now use a good deal, seem very small; and I see a good many dwarfs who, when I look at them with those same eyes, seem, some of them, a very respectable height, and—would you believe it?—some of them actually very tall.

There are the eyes of the head, and the eyes of the mind, and it is since I took to looking at people and things with these latter that I have seen giants dwindle, dwindle—oh, you great creatures, how small you got!—and dwarfs grow, grow—oh, you dear little creatures, how big you got)!

And so, good reader, you must take me as you find me; and when I write of dwarfs or giants, of big men and of bigger, you must please let me stand outside the caravan—out in the open world. We must leave the giants and dwarfs which the *young* eyes saw, and the pink-eyed lady and the alligator with three heads (two of which were stitched on with waxed thread), and all the other wonders; and we must have a look at the giants and the dwarfs which older eyes have seen—and do see; great big fellows, who might, so to speak, almost look in at the first-floor windows as they walked along; and poor, contemptible little creatures, who are worth no more than so many mites in a bit of cheese.

When Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford condescended to come into this little world of ours, he was pronounced to be "a very fine baby—an unusually fine child." He was sixteen inches long and ten inches broad—*i.e.*, measured round the chest—and he turned the scale at ten pounds one ounce. Moreover, he opened his eyes very wide, and stretched out his fingers very wide too. Fond parents and foolish nurses make all sorts of things out of babies and their doings; and much was made out of Master Augustus Roundabut Swellingford's.

"He'll keep his eyes wide open, I'll be bound," said Mr. Swellingford, senior. "There's nothing like beginning young, my dear," said he to his wife. "I thank you for presenting me with a Swellingford who knows what's what, as that child evidently means to do. He might have been a sleepy, heavy child" ("I wish, from the bottom of my heart, you were, you little wretch," said the old nurse to herself; "I can hardly get two winks at a time with you"); "his eyes are a little bit hazy—fishy, I might say; but they'll clear. We can't have everything at once."

"Bless you, no, sir," said the old nurse. "Children's eyes ain't passed through jelly-bags afore they're

born: you can't clear them like coffee with an egg."

"If there were some means, now, of filtering children's eyes——!" said Mr. Swellingford, senior. "What do you think, Mrs. Rouse?"

"I thinks, sir, that if it could be done it would be a very bad speculation—very bad for such as follows the life I have to lead. It would be very pleasant, no doubt, for pas and mas that their little offspring should know them all in a moment, as soon as they are born; and, though they couldn't speak, for them to look as much as to say, 'That 's my dear pa—that 's my dear ma. Has any little baby got such a pa or such a ma?' But, Mr. Swellingford, if I may be bold to say it here and now, while I am in your employment, and in the service of this blessed new-born child, and in the presence of its mother, who is running over with the joys of a first baby, it wouldn't do for folk, who gets their bread in my way, if babies were to come into the world with their blessed eyes cleared with jelly-bags, or white of eggs, or filtered so as to make them as clear as running water. My ideas of babies is, that, they sees quite enough already; there 'd be no standing them if they could see much more—there 's that to be done to these blessed little ones as would make them very troub'esome in trying to get away from you when they seed what you wanted to be at; there 'd be no turning them over, or putting them to rights at all. This here little blessed new-born one of yours would be like an eel, out of that 'ere crib, and under the bed in no time; and if the eyes were very clear, in my opinion he wouldn't come out again, unless they fetched him. Nor would I," said Mrs. Rouse, candidly, "if I were in its place. It 's well for us in after life, Mr. Swellingford, that we forget what we went through when we were babies, or it might be too much for us. I 'm sure I never could have been a nurse, and do to this blessed baby what I do—and must do, if I do my duties—supposing I remembered all that was done to me. 'Do unto others as you would be done by,' would be too much for me—that is, looking at it from the baby's point of view. But though we can't mend its eyes—or leastways, make them clear before their time—we may take notice of its hands. That baby has a wonderful grip; when once it takes hold, it does not know the meaning of the words 'Let go'—the like by the



"'If there were some means, now, of filtering children's eyes——!'"

bottle. And I 'll tell you the meaning of that, Mr. Swellingford. I 'm no fortune-teller, but I knows the meaning of some things—anyhow, as regards babies. It means—for I 've seen it in my own first baby—that, whatever it gets a grip of in life it will keep—and that 's the way to become rich; and this here Master Augustus Roundabut Swellingford, as you 're going to call him, will be a rich man. He opens his hands wide—that means he 'll *get;* and he shuts them tight—that means he 'll *keep;* and if you get and keep, how can you help but you must be rich?"

I forget at the present moment who it is that says that "The boy is father of the man,"* thereby implying in figurative language that as we are in our youth, so, more or less, shall we be in our maturer years.

Whoever says this, it is true anyhow in this—that the disposition and tendencies of our earliest days we find clinging to us as a part of ourselves, as we grow up through manhood to old age. If these be bad, we might have fought against them, and that, by the goodness of God, with success; but there is the old disposition—there the old tendency which showed itself in one way in the boy, trying to show itself (still itself), only in another way, in the man of maturer life.

I remember perfectly well some of the naughty things of youth; and I can find them trying to do me harm in one way and another, now that youth in volumes one and two has passed.

Therefore it might be said to be only according to the laws of human nature that the early proclivities of Master Augustus Roundabut Swellingford should accompany him, and develop themselves in his maturer years. But like all ordinary mortals, Master Augustus Roundabut Swellingford had to go through a process of development—he had to expand; he had, so to speak, to blossom and flower before he could fruit. Accordingly, our young friend passed in due time out of the filmy-eye stage into having his eyes very wide open, and very clear, and knowing exactly in his small way what was what. For example, he would clutch at a big lump of sugar in the sugar-basin when his mamma offered him a small one; he was known to pull the whole of the citron off the top of a cake of which he was offered a small slice, and to appropriate it so rapidly and so effectually that, even if it could have been recovered, it would not have been of much use to anyone else; and once he got hold of anything he liked, it was much better to leave it with him for the time, trusting to the chapter of accidents to recover it again, for out of his grip would it come only in shreds, which it would be very difficult to piece together again.

Arrived at the knickerbocker stage, to which he came in due course, our young friend became great in getting together slate-pencils, and marbles, and the spoil generally of the school to which he went. There he first felt the truth that

"The proper study of mankind is man;"

and, bringing this within the practical range of his own experience, there did he feel that

"The proper study of a boy is boy."

To this study did Master Augustus apply himself with such diligence and success that there wasn't a boy in the school whom he did not know how to approach, if he wanted to get from him anything that he had.

And all the while Master Augustus was growing big—big in body, big in position amongst his fellows, big in his own estimation, big every way. His very bulk gave him importance; and though he condescended to do some very small things, still, somehow or other, the boys did not think them so small when they were done by so big a personage as he.

For Augustus Roundabut Swellingford was a personage at school. "Personage" is a relative term—that is, you might be a "personage" in one place, when you are scarce even a "person" in another.

Jeames, the footman, is scarce a "person" in the drawing-room, but you should see him in the servants' hall. He is a "personage" then. The boy in buttons trembles before him; the under-housemaid curtseys to him; the vegetable-maid ventures only to look furtively at him, while the scullery-maid absolutely hides herself when she sees him coming. Each calf of his leg swells proudly, as though it knew what it was helping to uphold—the body, the head, the self of it may be indeed only a "person" up-stairs, but a "personage" below.

Likewise is the parish beadle a "personage;" at least, when he has on his laced coat and cocked hat. He may be only a "person," and that a very ordinary one, at home, to Mrs. Beadle. Indeed, I am sorry to say she has been known to speak to him as though he were no more; but he avenges himself on all such occasions on all small boys when he goes abroad, and woe betide the one skedaddling round the church pillars, on whom he can then lay hold, bringing into as close contact as may be the tip of that youth's ear and the points of his own forefinger and thumb.

I remember a small boy who enlisted, and his colonel made a "personage" of him at once. He was to be in the band of a cavalry regiment; and his colonel told him "to put his cap on one side and walk through Canterbury as if the whole town belonged to him." I daresay our youth did just as he was told, though he was a nice modest lad in himself; and I can see him now, jingling his spurs and flourishing his whip, and with his cap on one side, marching through the streets of Canterbury, a spectacle enough to frighten St. Thomas à Becket if he could rise from his grave and see what the nineteenth century had brought forth in the way of boys.

* Wordsworth.

What boys are in this nineteenth century I do know; at least, I know a little about it; but what they will be in the twentieth, what living man can tell? I defy even Old Moore's Almanack to prognosticate; at least, old Moore, if you do, I am almost certain that you will be wrong, unless you can gather together some words of fearful import, which will contain ever so much more within them than anyone ever knew they had before. If I might make a suggestion, it would be that dynamite in some form, or as much of it as possible, be got into the word which is to describe the coming boy.

Well, our young friend Swellingford was a personage at school; and, while he lived in school life, acted out his young character in a way suitable thereto. That was as much as could reasonably have been expected of him, even by pa and ma, who encouraged him in his idea that he was "someone" even then; and that he would be someone much more by-and-bye.

That was what our friend always kept before his eyes: to be "someone"—to be a "big person" in whatever sphere of life he happened to be. He wished to be big in his own estimation, and in that of his neighbours too; and to do, and to be, anything, or everything, which would conduce to that desirable end.

Time passed on, and, from being a boy, Augustus Roundabut Swellingford became a man. A young man in due course of nature first; even as afterwards, from having been a young man, he became an old one. The process was quite natural, and he might be said to have slipped from the one to the other without exactly feeling it. He was not like those unhappy crabs, which had to draw or drag themselves painfully out of one shell, before they might be said to be quite ready for another; but he, so to speak, swelled out naturally. He was a kind of elastic; and so, though he grew bigger and bigger, he was always the same Augustus Roundabut Swellingford that had vexed Mrs. Rouse, the monthly nurse, in his early youth—that had diddled the little boys of Cumberland Hall out of slate-pencils and marbles—that had made the lesser humanities of that establishment shake in their shoes, and wish either that they had not been so small, or that Augustus had not been so big.

It was never Augustus Roundabut Swellingford's intention to go back. "Forward!" was his motto in life. He had, indeed, several mottoes; but none giving a hint of falling off in any direction. "Grip and get" was a favourite one; only he kept it to himself. What had the public to do with it—except, unknown to themselves, to help him to put it into execution? And "Bigger and Bigger," that was another; which, if Augustus Roundabut Swellingford had been a frog, and spoken in frog language, would have read, "Always swelling." Aye, and which, if Augustus Roundabut Swellingford had been a frog in the flesh, would have probably ended in an explosive catastrophe, seriously affecting Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford's cuticle and general welfare in the flesh.

You must not suppose that our friend would have ever been satisfied with being big only in his own estimation. He was quite aware that there were plenty of other people in the world besides himself, and quite aware also of being big in their eyes; for by the law of attraction great masses draw smaller bodies to themselves, and sometimes they appropriate them and eat them up, as we are assured on very high scientific authority that the sun will; for, as regards this world, we are to be eaten up by the sun eventually, because the sun is much bigger than we are, and is to draw us in to himself; and we must go, as the little bird is said to hop into the snake's mouth, whether we like it or not. It won't be in my day; but I am sure that, whenever it occurs, whoever may happen to be looking at it from some distant planet will say that there is something very unusual going on.

"I know myself what I am," thought Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford; "but that is not enough. Others must see me in the same light in which I see myself; and the world will not think me big unless I have what the world values; and what the world values are money and rank. Even if I were ever so great, it will price me, not by what I *am*, but by what I *have*. Therefore, I must get rich; and, moreover, I must become somebody, if I can—and I not only can, but will."

Accordingly, Mr. Augustus Swellingford set-to to make money and to rise in the social scale; and these two he thought he could do together.

The path on which he was to travel to this desired end was a commercial one. Money, he saw, was the great thing with mankind—at least, with the part of mankind that he mixed with or knew anything about; and so he applied himself to turning into cash whatever abilities he had; and very successful he was in the attempts.

Mr. Swellingford seemed so solid, so substantial—such a "presence"—that he was sought after as director to several companies. He looked a man to be depended on; he looked well cared for, and well dressed; he looked like a man that did not trifle with himself, and so would not trifle with others. And it was all quite true. Mr. Swellingford was really a substantial man, and a man of substance also; and the two do not always go together, as they did here.

Mr. Swellingford's business lay with the Stock Exchange—a very risky kind of business in general; but when it goes right, one which is capable of doing almost anything in the way of making a man's fortune.

Some of Mr. Swellingford's operations went wrong—he would be more than human if everything with which he had to do went right—but others went right, and the right ones were right enough to make his fortune in time.



'There wasn't a boy in the school whom he did not know how to approach.'—*p.* 70.

As our friend increased in goods, he steadily kept his eye on increasing in importance; he dearly loved the idea of being a big man; and, to be such, it was worth his while to spend what otherwise he might have been inclined to hoard.

That was why Mr. Swellingford bought a brougham and drove to the station every day, although he lived within three or four, or at the outside five minutes' walk of it. That was why, when he went to buy a horse, he gave his order for a high-stepping one, and that's why he made the poor beast wear a bearing-rein.

Never, after that horse and brougham were bought, did Mr. Swellingford walk those few steps to the station. He thought that it would have been letting himself down so to do; indeed, some of the simpler of his neighbours, notably a little clerk who had been saving for six months out of his wages to try and compass the purchase of a perambulator, would have thought it a great condescension in him to do so. Good little man! He once, when an opportunity offered owing to Mr. Swellingford not having returned by the expected train, ventured to pat that horse's neck, but the effects were very near being serious. Although the coachman had given him leave so to do, and he had said "Poor fellow!" in his most soothing and indeed respectful voice as he did it, he was so impressed with the liberty he had taken, and he conjured up before his affrighted imagination such terrible consequences as possibly coming from it, that he ate very little supper that night, and alarmed his little family by going to bed early, and hinting at the great uncertainties of life. It was not generally understood why, but that little junior clerk in the "Wind Bottling Company, Limited," changed his carriage, and for a week after rode in the one nearest the guard's van, that being the farthest he could get from the one in which the man he feared he had injured rode.

Mr. Swellingford kept always swelling, always increasing, always climbing up, always becoming bigger. He built his own house, he laid out his own grounds, he kept his own bag at the post office; the station close to which he lived ought to have been called "Swellingford" station, or there ought at any rate to have been a board up saying, "Here Mr. Swellingford alights."

There were two directions in which Mr. Swellingford was big. One was in his own direction, another in that of his neighbours. He thought much of himself. His observation in life had been —that, if you don't think much of yourself, and make much of yourself, your fellow-men will, for the most part, not make much of you. If you want them to listen, you must blow your own trumpet. You must make a flourish on it, as much as to

say, "There 's somebody coming—look out!" Perhaps people would be offended if the trumpet could actually say, "Get out of my way;" but practically they knew that it meant, at any rate, what we have said—"There 's somebody coming—look out!"

It isn't everyone that will take you at your own price—that I know very well. There are always quiet, thoughtful people who will take a heavy discount off of you. What I mean to say is—that these pushing people often elbow out more modest and much more worthy men, and by sheer weight of their supposed bigness, throw themselves on this person and that, and this thing and that, and so make their way when others are left behind.

The neighbours all thought much of Mr. Swellingford in a certain way. He had a great name among them as a man who had a great deal, and who could do a great deal. He was looked upon as one who might be almost anything he chose. They were not certain but that the Queen herself would pay him a visit some day. Certainly the Lord Mayor would, in which case he would come, no doubt, with the gentleman with the big fur cap, and also with the mace.

But it wasn't the actualities of Mr. Swellingford that occupied all the attention of the neighbours; it was rather the potentialities; not what Mr. Swellingford did, but what Mr. Swellingford could do if he liked. He could buy up this one, and that one; he could keep a small man-of-war, or a torpedo boat, for a yacht if he wished; he could do no end of good, too, if he pleased—that is, *if* he did.

But herein lay Mr. Swellingford's misfortune (nay, why should I put it down as his misfortune?—herein lay his fault), that he would not do what he could in the way of good. The potentialities, the powers, the possibilities, were all against him—that is, he turned them against himself. In a word, they were so much the worse for him. A man is held accountable for what he hath, and not for what he hath not; and the powers of doing good which lay in Mr. Swellingford being unimproved, and not made anything of, were so much the worse for him.

Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford, I want to tell you something. I would rather be a poor man with a broom, sweeping a crossing, than you. I should have less to account for—not but that I should have something to account for, then, too; but it would be only for one talent, or a bit of a talent, instead of for five or ten, or no one knows how many. I'd rather puff and wheeze all my life with bronchitis on my crossing, than puff and swell in my after-dinner arm-chair as you do, thinking of your bigness, when that bigness will only make you a larger mark to be hit by-and-bye with many stripes. Oh, Augustus! you are so big that it will be impossible to miss you. Oh, Augustus! you are so big that it will be impossible for you to dodge. Every stroke will have a broad back to go upon; you do not know what you were doing for yourself when you made yourself so big. Oh, Augustus! would that something had happened to shrivel you—to boil you down—to make you smaller, somehow or other; but no, on you went with all your potentialities, and nothing coming out of them—nothing but evil for yourself!

I have told you, good reader, some of the points in which Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford was big—very big; now let me tell you some in which he was small—very small.

I must tell you, then, that he was small *personally*, and small *positionally*, and what I mean by these two I shall now proceed to unfold.

I shall have presently to tell you of a neighbour of his, Mr. Thomas Titt—Titt, of Tittsville, at the other side of the line from Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford's; but all my trouble would be wasted if I were to leave Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford here, and did not tell you a little more about him; and I am not a man who likes to take trouble for nothing, unless, if such a thing could be, I know the reason why.

Yes, Augustus, I know I am exposing you—I know that if I were within reach of your big fist it would soon make acquaintance with my poor skull, which, though tolerably thick, would be much the worse for a crack on its crown from you; but I will go ahead for the sake of any other Swellingfords who may be in the world, if only these lines may reach them, and for the sake of the Titts also. Ah, yes! the dear little Titts. You precious little creatures! you are the salt of the earth. There are birds of your name, with which I had acquaintance in my early youth, and I have met with folk of your kind in my maturer years who make Titt almost a hallowed name to me. You deserve to be enshrined, you dear little Titts, in print, and so far as I can do it, so shall you be here.

But your time has not come yet, though it will be here a very few pages farther on; so wait patiently, Tommy, until your turn comes, and I promise you you shall not be done out of any of your rights.

Augustus Roundabut Swellingford, I must return to you, giving you your big name in full, because, Augustus, the power of contrast is one which most affects the human mind, and you—you, Augustus—must now, if you please, come down; and having measured you by the human standard, and found you big—very big—I must now measure you by one which is not human at all, and find you small—very small. Who'd have ever believed it? But measured by the standard of the other world, you are small—very small; you are scarcely even a dwarf. If you were to be put into breeches at all, it would be hard to fit you, hard to get any small enough for you; even a small pair would have to be cut down to suit you.

(To be continued.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.



A STREET IN SHANGHAI.

"HOLDING ON TO JESUS."

SURROUNDED as we are by privileges, some of us of little faith may well adopt for our own the cry of an aged woman, helped by the deaconesses who are working for the Lord in Jerusalem. She told them she was "holding on to Jesus *with both hands;*" if we but do the same, triumphing over half-hearted trust, will not doubts vanish like the mists, and shall we not taste and prove the goodness of our God? Our friends of the "Church of England Women's Missionary Association" ask that these deaconesses and those labouring in Shanghai may be remembered in the prayers of God's people, for there are many hindrances, though already the blessing is great. The village medical work is most hopeful, as women meet with little or no opposition in their efforts, being counted as too insignificant. Well may these earnest Gospel workers exclaim, "Happy insignificance!" To the lepers they sing in Arabic of the Great Physician, and we are told that though the Turkish women object to prayer at the meetings, they join in singing of Him who can bring light and hope to their shadowed lives. The deaconesses at Shanghai are in charge of a school for Eurasian girls. They have only recently undertaken the work, but have received many applications for admission. "We hope," they write, "to have many girls entrusted to us to train up in the right way for His Name's sake, Who died for them." Of a Chinese girls' school worked by the American Mission, we hear that the scholars range from three to eighteen, and are well acquainted with several hymns in "The Christian Choir." Their unbound feet made a pleasing impression on the visitors—may the freedom be typical of the emancipation of these young lives, and through them of many another, from the thraldom of ancient superstition! We may add that the hon. secretary of the Church of England Women's Missionary Association, 143, Clapham Road, invites the help of ladies skilled in nursing or in medical knowledge.

"FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD."

Hard pressure is the tendency of the age; we rush through meals, through work, through pleasure-taking, knowing little of the benedictions of quietude and meditation (that "living principle of wisdom"), till sickness or old age comes to hush surrounding clamour, and we learn what it means to sit awhile at the Master's feet and hearken His voice of calm. In this nineteenth century Marthas are more plentiful than Marys—busy hands, energies overworked to fretfulness and fatigue, are more common in our midst than the peaceful learner, the still, sweet soul that drinks in heavenly teachings, and then in sight of all finds courage to pour out for Christ the devotion and fervour of love thus inspired. Mary could *act*

on occasion as well as listen and meditate. Work has a grandeur of its own, but it loses much if no time be spared or *made* for soul-communion with our Lord, drinking in His spirit, stealing to His feet. When even spiritual duties dethrone the Master, when the Christian teacher or visitor gets no time for new draughts of the Fountain of Life, there is something wrong, there is danger; and unless a change take place, there will be weakness and decay. Not in monasteries or hermitages need we suppose the truly religious life can exist alone—we may be as worldly within the convent as the crowd; but though *in* the world—helpful, busy, energetic, fervent—we are not to be *of* it. This distinction can come forth alone by quiet communion, much prayer, lingering at the Saviour's side. A discussion once took place as to the superiority of Martha or Mary. Some extolled Martha, as the earnest, provident worker; some preferred Mary for her peace, her devoted heart, her docility of soul. It was asked which of the two would make the best wife, and a clergyman quietly remarked, "*I* should choose Martha *before* dinner, and Mary *after* it." There was a good deal of sense in his decision; the characteristics of both sisters are required for completion of character. What we must strive for is to keep the Master *first*, to fill even commonplace duties with the spirit of our religion, and to unite busy hands with adoring receptive hearts—

> "For if I face with courage stout
> The labour and the din,
> Thou, Lord, wilt let my mind go out,
> My heart with Thee stay in."

AN EXPERIMENT WORTH TRYING.

In the "Life and Letters of Mrs. Sewell" (Nisbet and Co.), we note some hints that workers among the poor might find it helpful to bear in mind. The writer of the sweet, homely ballads so well known and loved, remarked that the poetry in a book attracted her poorer neighbours first, and the parents listened with interest to rhymed recitations delivered by their children. Poetry in her opinion was to the toiler an almost needful relaxation from daily drudgery; some of us know by experience that the hymn or little poetic narrative will arrest attention where prose might fail, and, in encouraging our scholars to commit such to memory, we are sending home messages to their parents, sowing seed that may linger in heart and memory with fair and fruitful results. Leaders of mothers' meetings might with advantage try an experiment recorded by Mrs. Bayly, who writes this biography. After the Bible lesson, she would two or three times read a chosen verse of Scripture (telling the women she wanted to make it clear enough for their children to understand), and proceed to give a plain and simple explanation. She advised them to get their husbands or one of the older children to write out the verse, for each child to prick before learning it; then let the mothers choose some quiet time to repeat at home the Bible-class explanation of the text. The mothers often exhibited the verses pricked by the children, and were so anxious to learn for their little ones that though inattentive otherwise at times, the children's verse and lesson secured quiet, patient hearing. The result of this excellent plan was to set parents and older and younger children all thinking over certain Scripture words—a very definite result, and one most hopeful, to succeed the weekly Mothers' Meeting. The children look to "mother" for so much; let us try to aid her who dispenses the bread and clothing to her household, to dispense also the sure provisions of eternal grace, and break to her little ones the Bread of Life.

THE MALAGA ABORIGINAL MISSION.

Fifteen years have been spent by Mr. and Mrs. Matthews in the task of raising a community of mixed native tribes into a state of Christianity and civilisation; for a long time, we are told, the ground was rocky soil indeed, but at last came an outpouring of God's Spirit in answer to prayer, and a great work of conversion resulted. These missionaries, who may now be communicated with at 72, Cornhill, hope to form new mission-stations in New South Wales and Queensland. The Australian continent has a vast Aboriginal population, and efforts will be made to erect training-houses, form and strengthen missions, and establish orphanages and industrial schools for the young. For the furtherance of this work, it is desired to hold drawing-room meetings where practicable, and form branches of helpfulness in connection with schools and societies. Temperance work is carried on and found to be exceedingly necessary, and the people seem fond of music and responsive to musical instruction. Most important have been the patient endeavours carried on in these regions afar to uplift the natives from ignorance and vice to communion with God and the hope of heaven, and many children now growing up in the mission have taken their stand on the Lord's side, and form the hope and the promise of their race.

BREAKING OUR OWN BONDS.

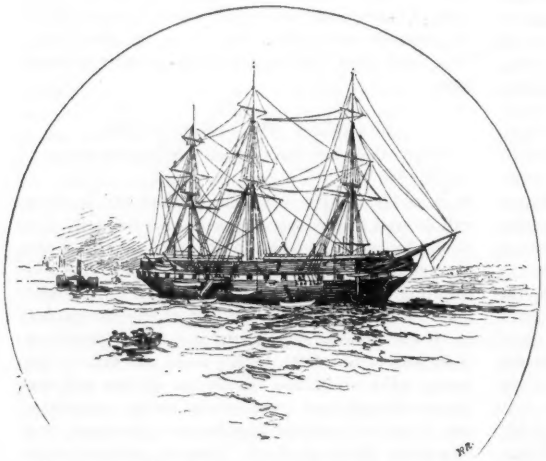
> "When thou dost purpose aught within thy power,
> Be sure to do it."

So says George Herbert, and parents and teachers will do well to pay special heed to his counsel. Let us not be quite so ready to make promises; then our characters will not be weakened by unfaithfulness in fulfilling them. How often we hear threats and promises held out to children, and utterly disregarded by them, because they have proved the words of their seniors unreliable! We must not talk to the young folks about the sanctity of pledges and the beauty of truth and steadfastness, while we indulge the habit of making promiscuous promises, and forgetting all about them. Example speaks louder than precept; the children will more readily copy

our ways than our words. We once deemed it rather hard in a very kindly father to lecture his young son most solemnly about a broken promise, but in Christian and business life he had learnt the value and importance of standing to one's engagements, and he wanted to impress upon the lad that "constancy knits the bones," and is of worth untold in the character. We have known young people, and older ones too, who at the New Year, or at some important epoch, have written out a list of "Resolutions," in fair and beautiful characters, but they have broken their own bonds too often, and the intention and caligraphy form the best part of the resolutions. Then the remembrance comes home to us all of promises made at the Mercy-seat, in God's house, in quiet prayer—promises in trouble and sickness, that with the dawn of prosperity have been forgotten or postponed as to performance. Has the Lord ever broken a promise made to *us?* Has He proved in aught forgetful, uncaring, unfaithful? God is ever as good as His word: what we have vowed to *Him*, that let us perform thankfully, speedily, with full purpose of heart; for God loveth a cheerful giver.

THE TRAINING SHIP "INDEFATIGABLE."

It is a matter of deep regret that one of the great difficulties which our foreign missionaries have to contend with, is the godless and unchristianlike example shown by the British sailor when ashore in a distant port. Any institution, therefore, that seeks to man our ships with God-fearing, Christian seamen, is doing much to further the spread of the Gospel. The training ship *Indefatigable*, for the sons and orphans of sailors and other poor and destitute boys, has been moored in the Mersey for the past twenty-four years, and during that time has sent forth some 1,800 young men, who have enjoyed the benefits of a true Christian training, and are prepared by word and example to advance their great Captain's message among their comrades and fellow-seamen. Many a lad who has, thanks to this noble institution, become a useful member of society, might, but for its sheltering aid, have fallen into the paths of vice and become a social outcast. The boys are under the able command of Captain Bremner, and one has only to look at their bright cheerful faces and frank sailor-like bearing to realise how beneficial is the healthy discipline that obtains on board. Their religious instruction and training is watched over by the Rev. Mr. Bridger, and a more impressive sight than divine service on board the roomy old frigate can hardly be imagined. The devotion and sincerity of the youthful worshippers prove that their religion is no mere lip-service, but the guiding principle in their every-day life. No wonder, then, that *Indefatigable* lads are eagerly sought after by shipowners and masters, such is their character for steadiness, efficiency, sobriety, and *Christian spirit*. We sincerely trust that such an institution as this will never be hampered in its great work by lack of support and subscriptions.



THE "INDEFATIGABLE."

CHRISTIAN WORK IN BILLINGSGATE.

Mr. F. A. Bevan is president of the Christian Mission, 83, Lower Thames Street, which was started about fourteen years ago for the benefit of those connected with Billingsgate Market. For these a day-refuge, reading-room, and library were established, and for the poor waifs of the neighbourhood arrangements have been made for free breakfasts, soup-suppers, night-lodgings, and daily supplies of food at the coffee-stalls. Difficulties occurred in 1886 respecting the mission premises, owing to municipal alterations, but, despite obstacles, the work has continued, and a most valuable site immediately fronting the market has now been secured. In this locality there is a daily attendance of about ten thousand men, to whom the coffee tavern with mission-hall will be of untold value. Assistance towards the building is greatly needed just now. It may be added that the work rendered is gratuitous, a yearly report is provided, and the new undertaking will be vested in the hands of trustees. As illustrations of the kind of work that has been done, the case is given of a barman, who threw up his place because drink had become a temptation to him, and who marched the pavement till nearly starved, when he was directed to the mission-room. Lodging and coffee-stall tickets were given to him, and a

recruiting sergeant for the army of the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to him the message of love and peace. The wanderer was saved from despair, and yielded himself to the Saviour. He worked well, and clearly showed a change of heart, but while giving much promise of usefulness he was attacked by illness, and in full hope to the end he entered into rest. Many cases come under notice of runaways and those who have once been better off. The father of a youth who was induced to return to his home wrote to inform those who had helped his son that he never had any faith in missions, but if they returned foolish boys to their parents, they were "worth something, after all."



THE GUARDS' MISSION.

THE GUARDS' MISSION.

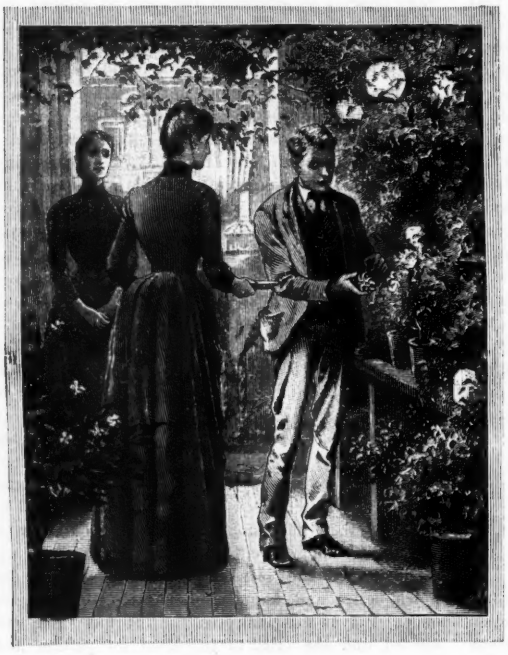
The work carried on by Sergeant George Pullinger (late Grenadier Guards) among his comrades commenced in the year 1863, and he is now employed as missionary in connection with the premises at 58, High Street, Ebury Bridge. Having been for many years in the service, he knows the temptations and difficulties of a soldier's life, and how important it is that special efforts should be put forth for his spiritual welfare. Men are visited in different barracks, tracts and copies of the Scriptures are distributed, and by individual conversations the men are reminded of the truths these Scriptures contain. The Brigade of Guards consists of six thousand men drawn from all parts of the country. What a power is here for Christian service, if these soldiers to fitness of body add, by God's grace fitness, of soul, and enlist under the Captain of salvation! We read that Sergeant Pullinger has received much blessing on his labours, and the mission-room will afford increased facilities for the work. Here are also reading and refreshment rooms, and several meetings are held during the week, some being conducted by Christian soldiers. It has been said that spiritual warriors, even if not always in battle, must ever be on the field; once enlisted, the fight must go on, but God will supply the armour and strength, and we may well urge with Grotius, "Who would not courageously descend into that combat, where there is a certain reward for him who conquers, and a certain conquest for him who fights?"

GOSPEL TRIUMPHS IN PARIS.

Eight missionaries have been earnestly at work, with many proofs of Divine blessing, in connection with the Paris City Mission. In eight low districts the people have been visited, and the pure Gospel has combated infidelity and superstition, while special services have been held in connection with the exhibition. It is sought to engage the services of a special agent to further Sabbath observance in Paris, for many a slave of Sunday trading is chained to counter and workshop, and things would be much more hopeful all around if the need of Sunday rest could be realised. The prevailing religion in Paris is active in its agencies, while infidelity has been in a way officially recognised, for 600,000 francs were paid for a new grammar in which God is not named, and in the hospitals no prayer or religious service is permitted at a funeral. At the annual meeting of the City Mission, the Rev. R. W. McAll testified that two excellent missionaries worked with him, and he hoped all Christians who visited the exhibition would aid these Gospel efforts. In many a lowly home the Word of God is now an open book, giving faith and courage, and leading to family prayer and Bible-study. One of the workers was told by a man whose employment was chair-caning, that he keeps his Bible close at hand when at work, and marks the passages that strike him. "Here is the finest I have found this week," he exclaimed, and pointed to Romans xi., verses 33 and 34. A sister of mercy was led to realise that Christ can give complete and immediate salvation, and she now seeks to tell others the joyful news. A father, mother, and daughter, when changed in life and heart, agreed to pray for the conversion of an aged woman, who said she would be cut in pieces rather than attend one of the services; but, seeing these so much better and happier, she agreed to come for once. Prayer was answered, the heart of stone was melted, and she cried to the Lord for pardon and salvation.

"TO MEET THE DAY."

This is the title which the long popular author of the "Recreations of a Country Parson" gives to a series of very brief meditations intended for daily reading. The meditations, often extending only to a few sentences, are upon a text quoted at their head, and are always concluded with a few lines or verses from some suitable hymn or poem. Messrs. Longmans are the publishers of this little work, which should prove generally helpful.—To their admirable series of "Men of the Bible," Messrs. Nisbet have just added "The Lives and Times of the Kings of Israel and Judah," by Professor George Rawlinson. Though the individual lives may not be so full of detail or of personal interest as those of David and Solomon, to which separate volumes in the series have already been devoted, there is no doubt much that is likely to be helpful alike to student and teacher in the lives which form the subject of the present volume. In Professor Rawlinson's hands, it is almost needless to say that the most useful points are brought before the mind of the reader in a clear and practical manner, and many a useful lesson may be gleaned from the pages of this unpretending volume.—We are glad to note that Messrs. Cassell and Co. announce an illustrated serial issue of Dr. Geikie's admirable work, "The Holy Land and the Bible." Such an edition cannot fail to be helpful as well as attractive to many thousands of Christian readers.



"A little posy for each."

CONSECRATED PARLOURS.

"It was like Fairyland," said some young people, belonging to our toiling classes, of a house kindly opened to them by Christian hospitality for tea, games, and music. What a change after the work-room or the shop! A few fairy-lamps here and there in the conservatory, a little posy for each, gentle faces and tones, and the knowledge that they went and were received in the name of Him who loves us all—these united joys left a memory behind that must for ever bless hostess and guests alike. We English people are naturally home-loving; no other place is quite the same to us as our own fireside, our particular corner, our special arm-chair, but let not the home-love degenerate into selfishness. Even though we may not have grounds and conservatories and rooms large enough to accommodate *many*, there is certainly room in our domicile for those who would value the change, were there only room in our hearts. From personal knowledge we can bear witness to an incorrigible scholar completely changed in behaviour by a tea with "teacher," and a quiet hour or two of social converse. "I never had such a tea in my life," he reported at home, though we noticed his eyes feasting rather than his palate, and the love of the beautiful finding gratification in a flower, a vase, or a picture. Some of us have reached the age when we like a quiet life, and think ruefully of muddy carpets, scratched furniture, unreverenced polish of linoleum, should we this winter try the plan of opening our doors to poorer lives, to working girls and boys, to the Master's aged pilgrims who have known little of brightness this side of the Jordan. We plead for such, and for lives poorer in love than our own, for those who sit by lonely firesides, whether well off as to purse or not. We shall not have lived in vain if we can so use our home-gladness as to make it shine out to a neighbour; thus will our houses own the Master Himself for Guest, and our souls will know the heavenly blessing promised to every life that considers the poor.

"LEAVE ME TO-MORROW."

"Are you not afraid, mother?" asked the kindred of an old body who, during the progress of an earthquake, remained calm, peaceful, and in good spirits. "No," was her answer; "I rejoice to know that I have a God who can shake the world." Some of us are able to realise the power and presence of our Lord in great and overwhelming difficulties, but we do not seem able to trust Him with to-morrow, with its little waiting cares, its daily round of duties, its manifold perplexities. The God who is in the earthquake is in the morrow that nears us so quietly; the Arm that can shake the world can smooth that rough place which causes

us to shrink as we approach. Why are we bearing to-morrow's burden when to do so is to miss the blessing of to-day? The loving Lord will be living to-morrow, and His hand will still be open to supply our every need. We read once of a faithful negro who appeared at intervals before his master (all of whose horses had fled from the pasture) to tell him "de sorrel horse be gone," and then "de mare be gone clean away," and so on till his master began to question him as to whether any were left, when he found the servant had resolved to break his troubles to him bit by bit, instead of letting all come on him at once. We may be certain of this—the tempests at thought of which we shiver will never come *together*. One by one our perplexities will meet us, and one by one we shall overcome them by the unfailing power and tenderness of Him who knoweth our frame and remembereth our infirmities. Not all at once will troubles fall upon us, and it is faithless and un-Christian to permit our souls to be overwhelmed by afflictions that have not arrived. Leave to-morrow with Him who is mighty, compassionate, unerring, and whose love is pleading with each trembling heart—

"Did I not die for thee? Do I not live for thee?
Leave Me to-morrow."

HOW BEST TO USE THE SABBATH.

We have read of an aged Chinese convert that she was much distressed when her memory became treacherous, and she could not bear in mind the regular return of the Lord's Day. What was the remedy that occurred to her? "I will keep every day a Sabbath," said the aged disciple; and so she did till she died. Unless *every* day know something of the spirit of the Sabbath, the days of joy and gladness will have benefited us little; but the tendency of the present age, no less in educated circles than among the masses, is to smile at Sabbath observance as old-fashioned and Puritanical, and to wrest the meaning of the Master's words, "the Sabbath was made for man." We heard recently some powerful remarks on this subject from the pulpit. The preacher reminded his hearers that man consists of body, mind, and soul, and we have to ask what sort of Sabbath will help him best with respect to his diversified nature. To preach to him while he is starving would be cruel, but let us not arrange enjoyment for body alone, or even body and mind, instead of likewise taking into account the needs of the *soul*. Sunday excursioning, Sunday parties, are surely not the best means of helping man's soul. Those who remember what they owe God and what they owe their fellow-men will not want to rob mankind and the Divine Creator of the day He claims as His own; the Scripture promises prosperity and blessing to those who observe the Sabbath, and science adds its witness to the need by humanity of its rest. There seem signs of danger that the Continental Sabbath, which is a grief to many faithful hearts abroad, may in some quarters find a counterpart here. But whatever in the way of Sabbath-breaking may be alluring, cheap, or fashionable, let every soul to whom God's will is dear oppose word and example to the desecration. The Lord of the Sabbath knows the necessity for seasons of calm, refreshing, and strength; we cannot afford to do without them unless our spiritual life is to know decline. Those were solemn words once written by a thoughtful spirit as to this matter of Sabbath observance: "He that remembers not to keep the Christian Sabbath at the beginning of the week is in danger to forget before the week's end that he is a Christian."

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE READING SOCIETY.

BIBLE READINGS TO DECEMBER 8.

November.	Morning.	Evening.
11.	Psalm lxii.	Psalm lxxii., to ver. 12.
12.	2 Samuel vii. 8—19.	Psalm lxxxix. 20—37.
13.	Deuteronomy xxxiii., to ver. 12.	Deuteronomy xxxiii., from ver. 13.
14.	Isaiah xi.	Hebrews i.
15.	1 Samuel xii., to ver. 7; 2 Timothy iv., to ver. 8.	Hebrews vi., from ver. 11.
16.	Isaiah xxv.	Isaiah lv.
17.	2 Samuel xxii. 47—xxiii. 7.	1 Kings iii. 3—15.
18.	Proverbs viii., to ver. 18.	Proverbs viii., from ver. 19.
19.	Luke xi., to ver. 13.	Matthew vii., to ver. 11.
20.	1 John v., from ver. 11.	James iv., to ver. 10.
21.	Job xxviii., from ver. 12.	Proverbs ii., to ver. 13.
22.	Deuteronomy iv., to ver. 14.	Revelation v.
23.	James i., to ver. 17.	Psalm cxi.
24.	1 Kings iii. 3—15.	1 Kings viii. 12—16, 54—63.
25.	2 Chronicles v.	2 Chronicles vi., to ver. 17.
26.	2 Chronicles vi. 18—31.	2 Chronicles vi., from ver. 32.
27.	2 Chronicles vii., to ver. 11.	2 Chronicles vii., from ver. 12.
28.	Malachi iii.	Matthew xii., to ver. 12.
29.	Isaiah lvii., from ver. 15; lviii., to ver. 11.	Acts vii. 44—50; xvii., from ver. 22.
30.	1 Corinthians iii., to ver. 17.	Revelation xxi., from ver. 10.
December.		
1.	1 Kings viii. 12—16, 54—63.	1 Kings x. 1—13.
2.	2 Chronicles ix., to ver. 12.	Psalm xxix.; Revelation xv.
3.	Psalm lxxii.	Isaiah lx., to ver. 14.
4.	Ecclesiastes ii., to ver. 11.	1 Corinthians i., from ver. 19.
5.	Jeremiah vi. 13—20; Hebrews xiii. 13—21.	Zechariah ii.
6.	Ephesians iii., from ver. 8.	John xiv., to ver. 14.
7.	Psalm xlv.	Matthew xii., from ver. 38.
8.	1 Kings x. 1—13.	1 Kings xi. 4—12.

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from August 25th up to and including September 16th, 1889. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—J. W., Camden Town, 7s. 6d.; J. J. E., Govan (23rd donation), 5s.; M. M. H., Edinburgh, 5s.

Dr. Barnardo asks the Editor to acknowledge the receipt of 5s. from "Katie" towards the Homes.

"FIFTEEN MILLIONS!"

"THE QUIVER" FREE GRANT FUND: FOR SUPPLYING FREE COPIES OF "THE QUIVER" TO THE AGED AND SICK POOR.

THE aggregate income of all the readers of this magazine amounts, on the lowest actuarial computation, to about £15,000,000 a year.

FIFTEEN MILLIONS! How much of this is spent on works of mercy and loving-kindness? It is impossible to discover. A tithe, or tenth, of this enormous sum would produce a million and a half per annum—enough to provide an ample income for a large number of charities and missions.

FIFTEEN MILLIONS! It is almost impossible to grasp all the potentialities of this wondrous accumulation of incomes, every penny of which, let us remember, is due alone to the bountiful and provident hand of God. But this we *do* know—that every income, large or small, is a stewardship for which its receiver will have to render an account in the Great Day.

Anyone who is acquainted with our "Short Arrows" will understand how frequently the Editor is applied to for help by all kinds of persons and for all sorts of institutions. We are glad to know that those whose appeals for sympathy and support are exhibited in our pages meet with that frequent and generous response which is the recognised characteristic of the readers of THE QUIVER.

We are encouraged by this experience of their pious solicitude for others to bring before them the following request, which is only one of many. A poor man, stricken with paralysis, asks that he may be charitably provided with some numbers of THE QUIVER, of which, he tells us, he has been a reader since he was a boy. "I cannot endure," he writes, "to be without it, and yet I am too poor to buy it."

Of course, a few isolated cases of request could easily be dealt with in private; but our object in placing the matter before our readers is to organise a fund for the continuous supply of free copies of THE QUIVER to large numbers of sick and aged poor, many of whom have seen "better days," and who now sorely miss those recreations and comforts which, costing so little in themselves, are yet beyond their reach.

We will now point out two ways in which our readers can help forward this work.

The first is, *to send to us the name and address of any poor person* to whom THE QUIVER would be acceptable, but who is really unable to subscribe. This is not necessarily for publication, but for the Editor's due information. Such applications will be attended to in the order in which they are received, subject, of course, to the sufficiency of the Fund to meet the demand.

The second way is, *to subscribe or collect a small sum at regular intervals* for the support of the Fund. The subscriptions may be yearly, half-yearly, or quarterly, at the option of the donor or collector. Collectors residing in towns or large villages will find little difficulty in raising a quarterly subscription of one penny and upwards per person. Collecting cards will be supplied to all who ask for them.

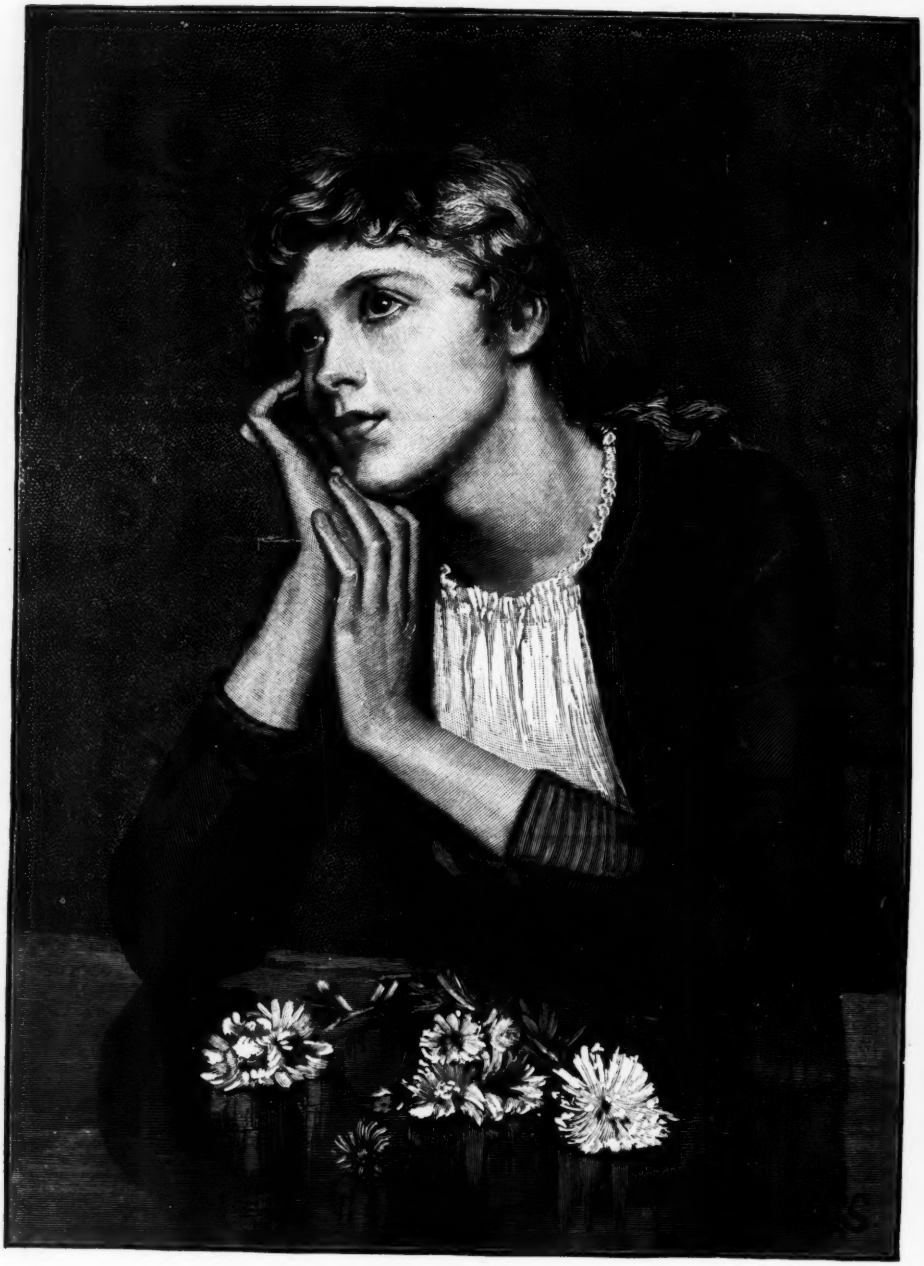
All communications should be addressed: "The Editor of THE QUIVER, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C." Those desiring acknowledgments of their contributions are requested to enclose a stamped directed envelope or postcard for that purpose.

While engaged in writing these lines, we have received a suggestion for the further development of the objects of our "Free Grant Fund." "In these days," we are asked, "when vitiating literature is so plentiful and so industriously circulated amongst every class of society, are there not numbers of cases in which the free distribution of a magazine like THE QUIVER might lead to blessed results?" Our answer is, that anything which can be done to stem the present torrent of bad and unwholesome reading ought most assuredly to be taken in hand, and we, for our part, will gladly take charge of and apply any funds which our readers may send us for this purpose. For ourselves, we will be responsible for the entire working or official expenses of the Fund, so that our readers will have the satisfaction of knowing that every farthing subscribed will be directly and promptly applied to its purpose.

FIFTEEN MILLIONS! Let each shareholder in this vast annual income, however small his particular share may be, do his best, and the success of this movement is assured.

THE EDITOR.





THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

See p. 12 .

MY JEALOUSY.

BY JOHN M. BAMFORD.



"Jennie put her lovely head over my shoulder."

I NEVER knew the value of a parent's love. Jennie and I were little children when father and mother died. I have spent hours in studying my mother's portrait, which was said to be the very image of her. Many a time have I drawn my chair beneath the familiar canvas, and traced the lines of the painter's brush, until her face became so imprinted on my memory that I needed no artist's skill to reproduce her countenance before me.

There was nothing in the portrait to suggest that she was a handsome or a remarkable woman; nevertheless, I never looked at her picture without feeling that there were depths in her nature of which I had no record.

The portrait was so life-like, I could imagine somewhat of her mind and disposition. I could build up, as I thought, a fair fabric of her character; but there was something wanting to complete the ideal, and what it was my fancy could not supply.

One day, when nearly lost in reverie before my mother's picture, Jennie put her lovely head over my shoulder, and playfully remarked—

"Sissie dear, if mother could speak, shall I tell you what she would say?"

"You silly child!" I answered; "no one could tell me that. I would give worlds to know it."

"Yes, I could," she continued; "I have looked at that picture until it has spoken to me, and when I have received my lesson here I always feel constrained to run up to my little room and pray."

"The portrait calls me to watch and work. Tell me what it says to you."

"Well, nothing very new," replied Jennie; "but

something that will never get out of date between you and me: 'True love never dies.'"

And with that she pressed a long kiss upon my lips as the seal of her sisterly affection. It was plain that to my sister the picture was a revelation of the permanency of love. To me it was a revelation of its transientness and loss; yet I had no suspicion that Jennie's heart or mine would need any higher inspiration than our sisterhood to perfect the union between us.

Jennie and I were all in all to each other. We had been educated together, read together, grown up to womanhood together, and interchanged our views of life and work with such unbroken constancy, that our lives blended in a oneness which had never been disturbed. We found such interesting resources in each other's love, that we regarded any society which necessitated our separation as an infliction.

I remember how I held a grudge against the venerable vicar of the parish, who gave us special place in his pastoral care, because he ventured to advise us—for a time, at least—to live apart. He feared the range of our intelligence would be narrowed—that the mental horizon of one would never extend beyond the thoughts and opinions of the other. In his judgment, we were too much under the influence of each other's minds. We should lose our individuality, and sink into a monotony which, in future years, might prove tame and tiresome. "It is," he said, "high time the pastorate of this parish was enlarged by the ministry of another mind. The people are so familiar with my methods of thought and address that they begin to jog in ruts."

"I like ruts," I somewhat rudely interjected. "The fashion nowadays is to spin along on rails; the old ruts are more favourable to reflection."

"Not always," the vicar calmly continued. "The edge of what I say is often lost because my people profess to know what is coming. If another preacher opened up new ground, and let the light in here and there where I have failed to do it, my work would look fresher. There are contrasts in truth which produce the sweetest harmonies, and differences of mind often lead to lasting friendships. I have known a present farewell to lay the firmest foundation for a future welcome."

I never liked the old clergyman so well after that. I felt the force of the argument so far as it concerned him, but not as it concerned me. Jennie and I never wearied of each other. Our hearts were always fresh. Our love was like a fountain. The idea of getting tired of Jennie, or Jennie getting tired of me, was more than I could bear. Jennie was my world, and I cared for very little beyond it.

Shortly after the conversation referred to, it was announced in church that a Fellow of an Oxford college, recently ordained, was engaged as curate, and would commence his duties on the following Sunday. The intelligence somewhat excited the parishioners. All manner of expectations were stirred.

The gossips wondered what he would be like. Staunch old church-goers gravely doubted the wisdom of the new arrangement. They feared that a dual ministry might confuse the hearers—that criticisms and comparisons would disturb prevailing sentiments, and vex the ministers; nevertheless, they loyally resolved to stick by the church. A few who were approaching the fossil stage, said they should never care for anybody but the vicar. He had the "cure of souls," and from him alone could they receive their spiritual aliment; yet these were the persons in whose attachment the good vicar found least encouragement. I was prejudiced against the appointment solely because the vicar had been pleased to use it as an illustration to suggest new relations between Jennie and me.

As the curate entered the reading-desk to conduct his first service, I saw at once that he was no ordinary man. His face affected me in the same way as my mother's picture. It was not so much the intellectual cast of his head or form of his features, as the striking manner in which his countenance expressed an inner life. His sermon was full of vigorous thoughts, presented with a simplicity which helped the humblest hearer to understand his meaning. It was different preaching from the vicar's; yet, somehow, things which the vicar had said came up and intermingled with the impressions made by the new preacher.

"How dids thee like him?" said old Samuel Smith to his friend Simeon, as they walked under the overhanging yew-trees to the churchyard gate.

"Like him, Sam'l! Thou might'st as well ax me how my hosses like a bit o' corn. It wasna a dry mors'l—it wor a good feed; an' summut sweet to wesh it down wi'."

"He beats th' owd parson, Simeon, at th' first innin's."

"I dunna say that, Sam'l. My idee is that when we've getten in th' mill a bit o' th' owd preachin' an' a bit o' th' new, an' grun 'em up together, we shall hev very good vittals."

"Ah! Simeon; but thou knows it tak's a mony sarmons to fill a empty stomach."

"It tak's a appetite to fill it," retorted Simeon; "an' I reckon a mon wunna get much good out o' owd sarmons or new uns if he isna a bit keen for th' Bread of Life. If preachin' is to touch the sperrit, Sam'l, it mun come from the sperrit; an' that's why the new parson's preachin' suits me."

I confess, however, that when I put to my sister an inquiry similar to the one Samuel Smith addressed to Simeon, I was jealous of the answer, which I half-anticipated.

"Did you like the new minister, Jennie?"

"Yes, sissie; he touched my heart."

In that moment the dark brooding foe took possession of me. I settled down to hate the young clergyman, and for the wretched reason that his earnest preaching had reached my sister's heart. In the blindness of my selfish love, I could not discern between the fervency of a pure-minded minister of God and the passion of mere natural affection. I was infatuated enough to think that if my sister yielded to the one she would yield to the other. I steeled my heart against the good influences which to Jennie were so precious, and in a secret way I sought to undermine the impressions which were working in her a real nobleness of character. The fancy grew upon me that the young curate was in love with

XUM

Jennie, and as I could not brook a rival in her affections, I thrust myself between them, in hope of retaining the supreme place in my sister's heart. This unnatural and suppressed excitement began to tell seriously upon my health. I was stricken with brain-fever, and for weeks trembled in the balances between life and death. On opening my eyes for the first lucid interval of my illness, I saw Jennie and the young clergyman kneeling beside my bed. Behind them hung my mother's picture, which a sister's exquisite solicitude had removed to my room. The minister was engaged in prayer for me—that my reason might be restored, my wandering mind calmed to quietness, my health recovered, my heart refined and sanctified by the chastening discipline of God; that if there lingered in my nature any disposition false to the highest service of holy life, it might give place to the childlikeness which our Lord commended as exemplifying greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven. He prayed that my sister, who was grieving over my unconscious state and lamenting the interruption of the life-long fellowship which had never known any failure of trust or love, might be strengthened to honour God in trial; that the cross of suffering on me, and the cross of threatened bereavement on her, might prove but the call of Jesus nearer to Himself.

Had my mother knelt and prayed beside me, I could hardly have been more tenderly commended to the Divine sympathy. The petitions impressed me as coming from the same soul-depths which I had so often imagined in my mother's nature, and as reaching to the same Almighty Helper who was her refuge and strength in time of trouble.

As the prayer ended, I calmly responded, "Amen."

The next moment Jennie's arms were around me, and even tears fell from the manly face beside me. The prayer was answered; but not all at once. God gave me time to search my own heart—to see how vile and offensive was my selfishness—to make confession and restitution to those whom I had so unjustly wronged. Affliction was sanctified to my good. I was forgiven. A truer love enabled me to learn useful lessons of self-denial; and when later on the new minister, with Jennie's full consent, *asked me to be his wife*, I saw how subtle had been my temptation, and how unreasonable had been my jealousy.

CHILD LIFE IN A FOREST HAVEN.



THE INFANT ORPHAN ASYLUM, WANSTEAD.



THE BABY.

FENCHURCH Street Station on a sultry day is not the most enchanting of retreats, and, finding ourselves in that region on an ideal summer afternoon, we were not sorry when we could seat ourselves in the 2.13 p.m. for Snaresbrook, whither we were bound with the hope of visiting the Infant Orphan Asylum at Wanstead, and seeing how it fares with the six hundred fatherless children whom this institution protects. On the way we had a glimpse of Dr. Barnardo's splendid Homes, with the inscription, "No destitute child refused admission." The shelter we were about to visit cares for another class of needy little ones—fatherless children whose friends may have occupied a good position in society, but whose means cannot well provide for support and education now. The children of military and professional people, of clergymen, merchants, and well-to-do tradespeople have been here freely received and thoroughly well educated. What this means to hundreds of care-worn widows perhaps few can realise, but surely such an effort must be dear to the heart of Him who has said,

"Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me."

We have always prided ourselves on the foliage of our own county, sylvan Surrey, but Snaresbrook was part of the ancient forest once, and it still bears charming traces of its high descent. Many a woodland pageantry this district must have known of yore, many a luxuriant vista of beauty, restful to the eye and calming to the heart. But neither Snaresbrook nor Wanstead (which seem conjoined as twin habitations) can ever have boasted anything of truer beauty and worth than this Christian mission on behalf of infant orphans, several of whom were playing in front of the beautiful building with wheel-barrow, cart, and other toys, almost as big as themselves. The senior and junior girls and boys have playgrounds, with swings, etc., at the back; "but the *little* things go where they like, and do pretty much *as* they like," tenderly remarked the secretary, Mr. H. W. Green, who kindly acted as our escort, and whose demeanour evidenced the deepest love and pride as concerns his six hundred charges.

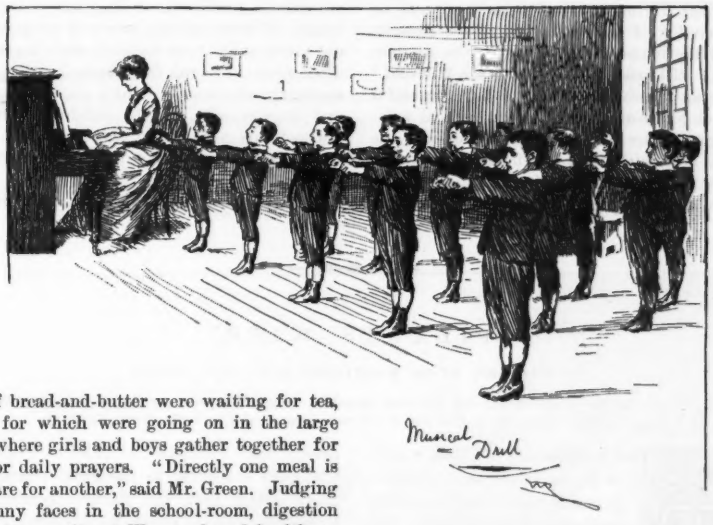


IN THE NURSERY.

The baby of the establishment, a pretty little creature who tolerates ladies, but will have nothing to do with the other sex, was inspected ere we proceeded further on. This is a most sagacious child, we were assured by the matron when later on she regaled us with the cup that cheers—baby will kiss her nurse with readiness, but when asked for "a kiss for mamma" she kisses into the air, as though transferring her greeting for conveyance to the winds. In connection with the "tiny tot" department, we may mention that this is a land of toys; for this purpose a special bequest has been left, and many a parent, whose children have vanished into long dresses and tail-coats, sends the contents of the old nursery to Wanstead to make another generation glad.

Having admired the grounds and the lake, and heard with satisfaction that a swimming-bath is provided for the young folks, several of whom are quite adepts in the water, we passed into the entrance-hall, and our attention was caught by a delicately beautiful piece of sculpture, "The fatherless and the widow," executed by a former pupil, and presented by him to the institution. Old scholars have also placed in the chapel a window illustrative of scenes in the life of Moses, as a Jubilee token of their love and remembrance.

Everything seemed so quiet and orderly in the vast, handsome building, that one inwardly asked, "Where are the children?" The army of juveniles turned out to be in school; we came first upon a throng of junior girls, marching round a large, airy school-room, bounded on one side by dolls' houses. The march being over, a reading-class commenced, and the little things read in turn and with great distinctness a narrative that concerned the fortunes of an ichneumon and a chameleon, afterwards reciting some pretty verses apostrophising the robin. Wherever we went, a small scholar flew before us to open the various doors; evidently the Wanstead curriculum includes good manners. It likewise includes English history, for other little maidens were busy with good Queen Bess and the fortunes of Sir Walter Raleigh. In another school-room the short-haired lassies gave place to girls with longer tresses. Within a year or so of leaving, the hair of the girls is suffered to grow at will, and a very comely aspect they presented, taking their French lesson from an energetic master of whose labours the Government inspector speaks highly. Both girls and boys have indoor playgrounds for exercise in wet weather, and each has a locker wherein to stow away various treasures and belongings, so that nothing is seen lying untidily about. Every girl is taught music for a certain period, and unless taste for music be entirely wanting, this instruction is continued. The difficulty of so many musicians is met by separate compartments, sawdust-lined, each containing a piano, and running down each side of a large room. Shut into one of these compartments, the neighbours are scarcely heard at all. Of course, in the centre of the music-room one's nerves are apt to be tried at times. The dormitories seemed bright, and exceedingly well ventilated; the kitchen department is quite a triumph of ingenuity, every device employed here and in the laundry (where thousands of garments find their way) being calculated to save time and fatigue and bring the results as near perfection as secretary and committee can attain. Piles



upon piles of bread-and-butter were waiting for tea, preparations for which were going on in the large dining-hall, where girls and boys gather together for meals, and for daily prayers. "Directly one meal is over we prepare for another," said Mr. Green. Judging from the bonny faces in the school-room, digestion waits on hearty appetite at Wanstead, and health on both.

All this time we had not seen a boy except among the wee ones in charge of the nurses. We were now conducted to another part of the building, where, to the strains of lively music, a number of bright-eyed little fellows were charging and stamping, and performing all sorts of evolutions calculated to bring every muscle into motion, and ending in a grand march round. A throng of still younger boys, for whom musical drill is still in the future, watched these proceedings with interest from a raised gallery. The learning evidenced among the senior boys, whom we visited next, was quite awe-inspiring. Here were lads restless with geographical knowledge, and stretching forth eager arms in their acquaintance with the capes and headlands demanded by the teacher; here was the head-master covering a blackboard with geometrical signs, and a quiet lad in the corner was pointed out to us as a veritable mathematical genius, to whom Euclid and Algebra were fields of conflict in which he but came, saw, and conquered. "We are proud of our children's handwriting," said Mr. Green, "and many employers are aware how well they write; applications often reach me for suitable lads—sometimes in excess of our power of supply at the time." Mr. Green does not guarantee to find a place for a scholar, who leaves at fourteen or fifteen with a good outfit; but experience proves that he does not seem to be quite content till he has in some way secured their future benefit. Several of the helpers and teachers (including the sick-nurse at the separate infirmary) were once in the Home, and this seems to secure a very kindly, considerate feeling between the juveniles and those in charge of them.



"THE FATHERLESS AND THE WIDOW."
(The work of a former pupil of the Infant Orphan Asylum.)

"Do the children grieve much when they first come here?" we asked the matron, who replied that as a rule they soon took happily to their school-life, but instanced the case of one little fellow who refused to be comforted, and who evidently laboured under the impression that the end of all things had taken place, and that his mother's face was lost to him for evermore. His new

friends sent for his mother, and after her visit he grew quite contented and reconciled; "we thought it best," said the matron, very sensibly, "to let him see his mother still existed, and could reach him still."

The building contains a simple but beautiful chapel; the children are trained on evangelical principles, and Sunday by Sunday the wee ones and the seniors meet here with their attendants, while the chaplain also undertakes their Scripture classes during the week, and conducts prayers. Had time permitted we should gladly have lingered for more than a couple of hours at this haven of refuge in the grand old forest district; it warmed one's heart to see room after room of young faces turned smilingly upon the secretary, who was evidently in favour with seniors and juniors—all but the not-to-be-won-over Baby, "who treats us all alike, chaplain and all," said Mr. Green, and consistently refuses to smile upon the sterner sex.

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

PILATE'S WIFE.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

"When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."—ST. MATT. xxvii. 19.

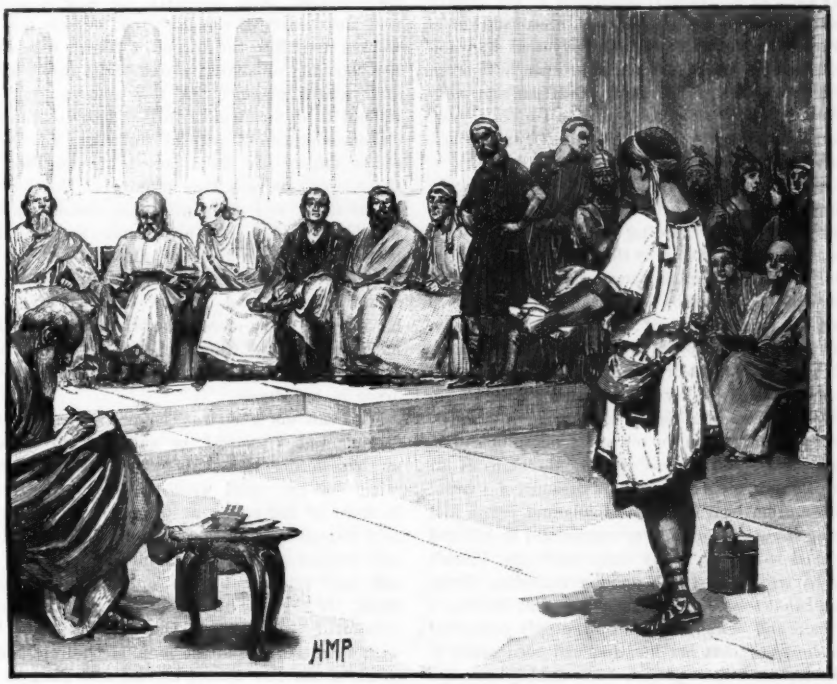


THE interference of Pilate's wife in the judgment scene of Christ is one of the most picturesque incidents in evangelical history. St. Matthew was led by the spirit of inspiration to record it, for it serves a most important purpose in connection with God's over-ruling Providence. It brings out in the most forcible manner the fact that Christ was condemned to death in spite of every warning and hindrance that could be placed in the way. We hear it often said that there was a necessity laid upon those who took part in the great tragedy which they could not escape. They were delivered over by a Divine decree to do these things. The death of Christ was the fulfilment of an eternal purpose. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and all the details of His death were intimated previously by sacred prophecy. There was, therefore, no true responsibility resting upon those who compassed that death. But, in reply, it may be said that though the sacrifice of Christ was thus foreseen and foreordained, there was no fatal necessity compelling those who brought about that death to act as they did. Their individual freedom was not limited in the least degree. Each person acted out spontaneously what was in him. Pilate at any moment could have been true to his own convictions of Christ's innocence, and could have delivered Him. If there had been any Divine compulsion in the case, why should Pilate's wife have been allowed to warn her husband, since the effect of her warning might have proved disastrous to the whole scheme of grace? If Pilate had listened to his wife's remonstrance and released Christ, then God's plan of redemption, so far as we can see, would have been frustrated. We cannot, indeed, understand the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's freedom; we cannot, in the present case, reconcile the freedom with which those who were concerned in the great tragedy of Christ's death acted, with the pre-arrangements of Divine Providence and the prophetic intimations of Scripture. There are metaphysical difficulties implied which we cannot solve. We are assured, however, that those who condemned our Lord to death had not merely the misfortune to play a part, the guilt of which was consequently foreign to them, but they were free agents, acting throughout in character, and therefore responsible for what they did. Christ's death was not merely a necessity in the Divine order, it was an actual result of human sin. Sin was left free to work out what was in it; to blossom and fruit, and thus show its true nature in the culminating crime of the world.

Our curiosity is greatly aroused regarding Pilate's wife. We are told nothing about her in Scripture, except what is mentioned in this one incident. Tradition identifies her as Claudia Procula; and it has been conjectured that, bearing such a name, she must have belonged to the Claudian family—one of the most famous families in Roman history, whose founder, Appius Claudius, was the maker of the great Appian Way, and which gave no less than six emperors to Rome; the emperor who was sitting on the throne at the time of our Lord being Tiberius Claudius. Being thus of high station, it is probable that it was through her influence that her husband, Pontius Pilate, was made procurator of Judea; for Pilate's own birth was comparatively humble, seeing that the name Pilate is derived from the cap which was worn as a distinguishing badge by manumitted slaves, and the epithet marks him out as a freedman, or as descended from one. She accompanied her husband to Palestine; and it is a striking illustration of the truthfulness of the Scripture narrative that it was only during the reign of Tiberius Claudius that the wife of a Roman was allowed to accompany her husband to the Province which he ruled. In early times a law was expressly passed to prevent a

magistrate taking his wife with him to the sphere of his jurisdiction, lest she should meddle with his administration, or unduly influence his public career. And this law was rigorously carried out; but at the time of our Lord the prohibition had fallen into neglect, and though shortly afterwards a proposal had been made to enforce it, it was not successful. Perhaps the wife of Pilate had received a special permission to accompany her husband, on account of her connection with the reigning family; and in any case her presence in Jerusalem at the time of our Lord's judgment indicates that the relationship between herself and her husband must have been one of deep and true affection. Pilate, if he had been an indifferent husband, might have left his wife behind at Rome, in conformity with the law of the empire; and his wife, if she had been less loving and devoted, might have remained at Cæsarea, which was the fixed official residence of the Roman governor, and the headquarters of the Roman army in Palestine, and not have accompanied him to Jerusalem, to which he had to go on the annual feast of the Passover, to preserve order among the great crowds of pilgrims which at that time filled the sacred city.

The voice of tradition further indicates that Pilate's wife had become a proselyte to the Jewish religion. This may have been the case; for many of the noblest Romans, men and women, had been attracted by the purity and elevation of the Jewish faith. We read in the New Testament of several centurions being converts; and Josephus tells us that later on, Poppæa, the wife of the Emperor Nero, had become a proselyte to Judaism, and had in consequence greatly favoured the Jews in Rome. Coming from a land teeming with idolatry, and with the social and individual corruptions to which idolatry invariably led, she must have been struck with the contrast of the Jewish worship of the living and true God, and with the purity of morals which it fostered. She would doubtless read the sacred Scriptures, which were accessible to her in the Greek translation, as Greek was the polite language of society everywhere at the time; and in them she would become acquainted with the marvellous history of the Jews, and with their ardent anticipations of a coming Messiah. Dissatisfied with her own worn-out creed, and unable to do without a religion, it is easy to believe that she found relief to the longings of her soul in the purest faith that was then known in the world. That she knew about Jesus previous to her dream there can be little doubt. For we may reasonably conclude that her assurance of His being "a just man," as she called Him, must



A ROMAN HALL OF JUDGMENT.

have been derived, not from the circumstances of the dream itself, but from previous knowledge of His character and conduct. Pilate, in the course of his administration, must have often heard of the extraordinary man who was the wonder and mystery of His day, who uttered such wise words, and whose astonishing miracles were proclaimed over all the land. He must have made himself familiar with all the doings of One who was followed wherever He went by multitudes, who would gladly place Him at the head of an insurrectionary movement, and who might thus be exceedingly dangerous to the Roman authority. He knew how the chief priests and rulers regarded Him: how it was from envy that they delivered Him into his hands. And he must have often spoken to his wife of the strange Galilean, and wondered with her what manner of man He really was. All this would deeply exercise her mind, and form a subject of profound interest to her.

It is not difficult, therefore, to understand how, in the supreme crisis of Christ's life, she should have a most vivid dream regarding Him. We know that dreams are usually shaped by the circumstances of our waking hours. The phantasmagoria of our nightly visions are conditioned by the things that happened to us, and the surroundings of our life during the day. "A dream," says Solomon wisely, "cometh through much business." Jacob dreamed that the stones around the place where he lay formed themselves into a gigantic staircase, leading up to heaven; and Peter, fasting and hungry on the top of the house of Simon the tanner, whose trade was dressing the skins of all kinds of beasts, clean and unclean, dreamed of a vessel let down from heaven full of fowls and beasts and creeping things, which he was commanded to kill and eat. And so we can easily understand how Pilate's wife, having formed the opinion regarding Jesus, from all that she had seen and heard, that He was a just man, and being, consequently, deeply concerned when she knew that her husband had been asked to try Him, should have projected her anxiety into her sleeping hours, and woven out of it a painful nightmare. Some have said that her dream was a magical device of the devil to hinder Christ's atoning death; and others that it was an inspiration of God. But it is not necessary to have recourse to supernatural causes to account for it; it was simply the natural and necessary result of her waking anxieties. In all likelihood the dream occurred, not at night, but in the early morning of the very day on which Christ was brought before Pilate; for she says, "I have suffered many things *this day* in a dream because of him." And we shall not be far wrong, I think, in attributing the dream to the noise of the crowd that, before the break of day, was carrying Jesus as a prisoner to the magnificent palace where she was sleeping, and where the Hall of Judgment was. We are familiar with the strange effect which a sudden noise in the room where a person is sleeping produces upon the dream that the sleeper may be dreaming at the time; how it calls up new visions and combinations, often of a distressing and alarming nature. At the time that Napoleon Buonaparte threatened to invade our country, a gentleman in Edinburgh dreamed that the landing had taken place, that the volunteers were mustering, that the signal-gun from the castle was fired—and then he awoke. His wife awoke at the same instant, having had a similar dream; and it was discovered that the cause of both dreams was the falling of a pair of tongs in the room—acting upon the thoughts about invasion which were then dominant in their minds. And, similarly, we may well believe that the tumult of the multitude outside may have worked itself into the dreams of Pilate's wife, and led her thoughts of anxiety about Christ into a troubled and painful channel. A few moments may have sufficed to excite dreams full of long-continued and elaborate scenes of painful suffering; for we ourselves, during the short period of transition from sleep to wakefulness, have often gone through many experiences; and there are many dreams on record which appeared long to the dreamers and embraced a multitude of scenes and circumstances, and yet could not have occupied in reality many seconds. The shouts of the crowd that awoke Pilate's wife from her sleep may, therefore, have originated, in that brief moment of passing from unconsciousness to consciousness, the many things which she suffered because of Jesus in her dream.

We know not what was the precise nature of that dream. But it would be sufficient to cause her much suffering if it only reflected in the sensitive mirror of her mind what was actually happening in front of her palace at the moment; if she saw, as a distressing *fata morgana* of the soul, the insults and brutalities that were inflicted upon the meek and holy prisoner by the crowd athirst for His blood. If she saw in her dream the vision of the wonderful Galilean, with his God-like brow bound with cruel thorns, and the large blood-drops trickling slowly down His wasted cheeks, and his eyes filled with a sadness which pierced deeper than reproach, and yet gleaming with a pity that overmastered the utmost rage of evil, and with a love that triumphed over all its wrongs; and if a mysterious voice came to her at the same time and said that these wounds were caused by her husband's hands, that he was even now hastening to the judgment-seat to judge and condemn his God and hers, we can imagine how terrible would be her sufferings, and how she would awake with a start and with a crushing weight of sadness in her heart—a dread presentiment of evil, wrapping the soul in gloom, and chilling the very inmost springs of life.

It was a morning dream; and morning dreams, as poets say, are true. She had an irresistible conviction that it was a Divine warning specially sent to her; and therefore without a moment's delay she sent a messenger direct into court to stay her husband's proceedings, even on the judgment-seat. Her anxiety may have been mainly regarding her husband, lest

he should perpetrate an awful act of guilt, and so bring himself into danger. But we cannot suppose, from what must have been the nature of her dream, and from what must have been her knowledge of the Prisoner, that she was not at the same time most anxious to protect Jesus Himself. The step which she took was a most uncommon one. To the Romans we are indebted for that unrivalled system of jurisprudence which has formed the model of every nation since. Everything connected with their judicial procedure was grave, orderly, and subdued to the majesty of law. A dignified and impartial administration of justice, with which nothing was allowed to interfere, was one of the noblest contributions of the Romans to the civilisation of the world. We can understand, therefore, how exceptionally daring was the conduct of Pilate's wife in venturing to interfere with her husband in the exercise of his magisterial functions. In ordinary circumstances such interference, even by the nearest relation of the presiding judge, would be considered as contempt of court and punished severely. But though she knew all that her act implied, the emergency was too great to allow her to stand on ceremony. As a faithful wife she would risk everything to save her husband from his awful danger.

We cannot imagine any omen more fitted to impress the superstitious mind of Pilate than such a dream, coming to him at such a time, and from such a source. It would vividly remind him of the famous dream of Calpurnia, the wife of Julius Cæsar, who saw the vision of her husband lying murdered in her arms, and who therefore strove to prevent him from going to the fatal meeting of the Senate, at which his death was decreed by Brutus. Its warning knell would ring in strange harmony with the alarm that was already pealing in his own spirit. The confession of the innocence of Jesus which came from his wife tallied with the impression which Jesus had produced upon himself. The noble and dignified bearing of the Sufferer had awakened his superstitious fears that He might be one of the heroes or demi-gods of his own mythology—especially as He was accused of calling Himself the Son of God. And gladly would he have yielded to these fears; gladly would he have followed his own instinct of justice, and resisted the clamour of the fanatical crowd, who, he knew, were thirsting for innocent blood. But his weak and vacillating nature had allowed the opportunity of asserting his authority to pass; and the decision was now taken out of his hands. He was compelled reluctantly to yield what he had not sufficient strength of will to refuse. His wife's solemn warning proved in vain. It only aggravated his guilt. Everything was brought home to him that could give him certainty regarding the sinlessness of Jesus. But even his own susceptibility to the higher feelings of our nature, and all the offered means for the discovery of the truth that were placed in his power, only paved the way to his ruin, since they could not bring him to a just decision. And though he afterwards ostentatiously washed his hands in the open court in the presence of the people, to absolve himself from the guilt of the fatal sentence, the act was a mere farce, as weak as it was unavailing. Nevermore could he free himself from the responsibility of the greatest crime that has been committed since the world began.

But though thus ineffectual as far as her husband was concerned, the dream of Pilate's wife may have been of great use to herself. It delivered her own soul from the guilt; and it is not improbable that by its silent agency—for dreams may bring conceptions of unseen and eternal things which our waking hours could never have formed—she was brought to know that Jesus was truly the Son of God; as was the Roman centurion who beheld the crucifixion, and the African stranger who carried the cross. She was indeed, humanly speaking, a fit subject for Christian conversion; for consider all that her interference implied. She had felt pity for Christ, suffered on account of Him, and her dreams about Him were the result of her waking thoughts. She spoke out boldly for Him when all others were silent, when His own countrymen were fierce in their denunciations, when His own disciples forsook Him, and one of the very inmost three who were nearest and dearest denied Him with oaths and blasphemies. She dared, in the face of the dread tribunal that had excommunicated Him as an impostor and blasphemer, to proclaim Him publicly a just man, righteous as well as innocent, and she bade her husband beware how he meddled with Him. A woman who could have so acted and spoken was not indeed far from the Kingdom of Heaven. Of her Jesus Himself might have said what He actually said of a countryman of hers, that He had not found such faith, no, not in Israel. We cannot believe that such a woman relapsed into the moral death of Paganism, or even remained in the living stagnation of Judaism. Rather do we sympathise with the Greek Church, which has always considered her to be a Christian saint. Perhaps in the case of one whose nature seems to have been so generous, the sorrowful and unjust fate of Jesus may have removed all her previous hesitation to become His follower, and precipitated a decision which in other circumstances might have been of slower growth. Who knows, though the Scriptures are silent on the subject, but she may have been with the women who stood afar off beholding the crucifixion of Jesus to the last, with hearts beating in tenderest sympathy for Him? for a woman like her would not be satisfied till she had seen the end of a tragedy in which she was so profoundly interested. Who knows but she may have been among the noble women who came nearer and—according to the custom among the wealthy ladies of Jerusalem to provide a soothing opiate at their own expense for the benefit of those who were crucified—compassionately offered to Him the wine mingled with myrrh to

stupefy His senses, which he would not receive because He wished to look death in the face till the last? And may we not suppose that the unexampled portents of the Crucifixion, and the extraordinary events of the Resurrection, and of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, with which all the land was ringing, completed in her soul the conviction produced by her dream, that Jesus was all that He claimed to be—not only a just man, but her Lord and her God?

And what an admirable Christian she would make! Her picture is photographed in miniature in a single verse of Scripture by a single ray of light; but what captivating traits of natural character does it reveal! Devotion to her husband, tenderness of sympathy for the suffering, fearlessness in standing up for the truth, and boldness in confessing her faith. The grace of God consecrating and perfecting the beautiful moral portraiture would have achieved one of its greatest triumphs, and enlisted in the service of Christianity one of its noblest supporters. She suffered many things because of Christ. The sword that pierced Jesus pierced through her heart, as it pierced through the heart of her who gave Him birth, and as it pierces through the heart of everyone who takes up the cross and follows Him. And was this fellowship of His sufferings fruitless? Is it not easy to believe that she was a companion in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; that suffering with Him she reigned with Him? And thus while her poor weak Pagan husband, disobedient to the light that was in him, fell into political disaster, was recalled from the Judean governorship which he had disgraced by the perversion of justice, and finally died a suicide's dishonoured death in some obscure place of foreign banishment, his noble wife lived and died a fellow-citizen of the saints and of the household of faith.

We may regard Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, as the pioneer of the remarkable band of Roman ladies who did such signal service to the cause of religion in the earliest years of the Christian Church. Descendants of the oldest patrician families which founded Rome, which had governed her during all her period of splendour and liberty, and which had enabled her to conquer the world, these ladies became in the end the humblest and most devoted servants in the Kingdom of Christ. It is most interesting to think that the last daughters of the Scipios and the Fabii—among the greatest names in Roman history—should have become followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, and thus crowned the long history of their illustrious race with its greatest glory; the star of their earthly splendour fading into the everlasting day of heaven. In those dim dawning years, when the might and the intelligence of the world were against Christianity, not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called; but there *were* a few, and these few were the noblest of all. If they had much to leave for Christ, they glorified Him much. And we must never forget that it is to one who bore the same patrician name as that of Pilate's wife—Claudia, the wife of Pudens, mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, who is supposed to have been a British princess, the *protégée* of Pomponia, the Christian wife of Aulus Plautius, the Roman commander of Britain—that we can trace the introduction of Christianity into our country, ages before the famous landing of St. Augustine and his monks on the shores of Kent.

The lessons which such an incident as that connected with Pilate's wife teaches us are manifold. Though much that I have brought forward concerning this remarkable personage is only conjectural—the conjectures, however, being based upon a strong foundation of probability—yet much is plainly revealed and obvious. She gave her testimony regarding Jesus openly and fearlessly, when there was no one to uphold her and all the world was against her. If there was nothing else true regarding her but that, that one thing has a moral worth which is simply inestimable. Persons of such a strain, be they men or women, are by native right the leaders of the great host of God, and their example inspires others to do and dare the right. There is nothing more striking in connection with the last scenes in the life of our Lord than the devotion of women. It stands out in marked contrast to the cowardice and cruelty of men. If the sin of the world came through the temptation of woman, women nobly redeemed their character in connection with the redemption of the Cross. How the Saviour honoured women throughout His life! And how they strove to repay Him by their love and service! They ministered to Him of their substance; they confessed Him when there was none else to stand by Him; they wept and bewailed Him as pitiless men led Him through the streets to His execution; they were last at His cross and first at His sepulchre. In these days of scientific scepticism and materialism, we sometimes hear it said with a sneer that only women believe in the Christian creed. But this, so far from being a proof of its unreality, is the highest evidence of its power. Would that women everywhere knew and exercised the vast influence which their Christian faith gives them! In the days of chivalry, the armour of the knight was buckled on by his lady's hand; and this, as Ruskin finely says, was "no mere caprice of romantic fashion, but the type of an eternal truth—that the soul's armour is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood falls." Christian wives, seek to win your husbands to Christ when they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear! Daughters and sisters, make your fathers and brothers strong and faithful to confess Christ by the witness-bearing of your own devoted lives! And let each of us, men and women alike, do what we can to save by the grace of God those whom we love and can influence from the guilt of crucifying the Lord of Glory afresh, and from that sin that hath never forgiveness, either in this world, or in that which is to come.

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

BY C. DESPARD, AUTHOR OF "INTO A LARGER ROOM," "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC. ETC.



"They talked about the sea and its wonders."—*p.* 95.

CHAPTER V.—MICHAEL GRIERSON'S QUIXOTIC CRAZE.

THEKLA'S own life was very pleasant during these stormy days. She loved to help people, and all her days were spent in acts of thoughtful kindness. She delighted in being liked, and she was a universal favourite. Everybody praised her, and laughed kindly at her, and quoted her. Little Miss Ellerslie's last amusing speech would always be going the round of the ship. Even the grim old general, the most distinguished and the least approachable person on board, took friendly notice of Thekla.

The blue Mediterranean, meanwhile, gave the *Amazon* no rest. There were fine seas and invigorating breezes, and glorious sunset skies; but day and night the wearisome pitching and tossing continued.

It was early on a morning which followed a stormy night that the worn-out passengers were aware of a delightful change. They were in smooth seas, the keel of the ship was level, and the screw, which all night had been racing mercilessly, had resumed its regular vibrations. One or two—and Thekla was amongst their number—to whom the storm-music of these rough nights had been nothing worse than a lullaby, were awoke by the sudden stillness; and when they looked out they saw a beautiful still sea outspread under a sky of radiant blue, and the cream-coloured stone of the fortifications and churches and houses of what looked, from this distance, like a dream-city, rising from the sea-board, and repeated in soft reflections of gold and sapphire upon the shining waters of a wide and lovely bay.

It was Valetta, the chief city of Malta. They dropped

anchor about half an hour before breakfast, and the decks were immediately converted into curiosity marts, and all the little world of the *Amazon*—their troubles vanished with the darkness—came crowding out to bargain with the dealers in curiosities, and to make arrangements for the day. Lady Lucy and her little circle—the Ellerslies, Ronald Hinton, Wilkinson, and Isaacson, who had become Sir Richard's shadow, were together as usual. Isaacson asked to join Sir Richard's party, if no one objected. Thekla did object; but not venturing to say so, looked pleadingly at Lady Lucy, who said she wanted a companion, and begged Sir Richard to lend her Thekla for the day.

"Certainly," he said courteously. "We shall be a party of—let me see——"

"Four, if I may join you," said Hinton eagerly.

"Of course you may," said Marion, with her most winning smile. "Father wants taking care of as much as I do, and Mr. Isaacson's head is always in the clouds."

"And who will take care of us?" said Lady Lucy.

"I will, I will!" cried Wilkinson, pressing forward. "If," despondently, "I'll do."

"Oh yes, you will do.—He is a good boy generally, isn't he, Thekla?—Now, where, I wonder, is Mr. Grierson?"

Thekla had been wondering too, for Michael was generally out first in the morning.

"Here is the doctor: he will tell us," she said.—"Doctor, have you seen Mr. Grierson this morning?"

The doctor had on his grimmest expression, and it was only a great desire for information that would have induced anyone to speak to him.

"Yes," he answered shortly, "I have seen him."

"Well," said Lady Lucy, "and did he tell you what he was going to do?"

"I told *him*. He is to keep as quiet as he can all day."

"Is he ill?" said Thekla, turning pale.

"He is very much upset; and no wonder."

"What has he been doing?" said Lady Lucy.

"Oh, nothing either extraordinary or new. Poor Murchison was troublesome, and he spent the greater part of the night walking up and down the decks with him. It was bitterly cold, and a cough which I hoped he had left in England has come back."

"What was the matter with Mr. Murchison?" asked Lady Lucy.

"The ordinary thing; only he was a little worse than usual. He threatened to jump overboard. I believe if it hadn't been for Mr. Grierson, we should have seen the last of him in the night."

"Of Mr. Murchison? How terrible! Why?" cried Thekla, who had been listening with pallid cheeks and dilated eyes.

"Because he is a fool. Excuse me, Lady Lucy. I am afraid I have too little sympathy for people of that type. I maintain that a man ought to have backbone enough to bear his calamities, and not make other people's lives a burden to them because he happens to be miserable. Can you guess what our Quixotic friend Michael has done?"

"No; tell me. I believe him capable of anything heroic."

"This is heroic, if ever anything was. He has had the unfortunate fellow transferred to his cabin, paying the extra passage-money himself. He says he believes he can save him. Imagine! a man whose restlessness passes belief! I couldn't live with him for a day."

"And Michael is one of the most sensitive of men. How fine of him!" said Lady Lucy, her eyes glistening.

"I only hope a few more of the first saloon passengers will be of your opinion," said the doctor. "But I have my doubts. Well, I mustn't stand talking; I have work to do."

The day on shore was pleasant, although to Thekla a cloud was thrown over it by the absence of Michael Grierson, and the vague terrible hints which the doctor had thrown out about her friend Murchison. Over and over again they came back to her like the pricking of a pin. Could anyone—anyone in all the world—be so unhappy as to wish to die? The thought made her shudder. And if he had—if no one had been near him when the mad fit came—if last night he had leaped into the dark and stormy sea, what then?

It was almost too terrible to think of, and she tried not to think.

There was enough of novelty and movement about her to divert her thoughts, for the sun was shining and the sky was blue, and the gay island-city was at its best. The long flight of steps that led from the shores of the harbour to the town, and the steep narrow streets which seemed to be slanting right up into the radiant blue atmosphere, and the carved stone balconies and oriel windows, whence dark-eyed Maltese beauties looked down upon them, and the pretty Strada Reale lined with shops, where lace and jewellery, and fine Oriental stuffs were spread out for sale, and the little piazza in the heart of the town, thronged with travellers, and guides, and touters of every description, and Maltese citizens who came and went up and down the wide steps of the Church of the Knights—the men in crimson caps and sashes, and the women in black silk hoods, swollen out behind them with the wind—all these things delighted the young travellers, and they in their frankly expressed pleasure were enchanting to Lady Lucy.

Exploring, and shopping, and driving out into the arid sun-burnt country that lies outside the town, took them all the forenoon. They went then to the hotel where they had agreed to lunch and rest. Marion was there before them. They found her in the hotel drawing-room, looking pretty and radiant, and surrounded with parcels. "Oh dear!" she cried, "what a delightful place this is! Such shops! We have been going in and out of them all the morning."

While Lady Lucy, who was thirsting for news, seized eagerly upon an English paper, she began to open out her treasures. "See! I have Maltese lace enough to last me all my life. A flounce: isn't that a good pattern? and a shawl, and several scarves. And look at these ornaments! Dear old dad would get them. I told him he was very extravagant. And

there are some pretty Oriental stuff. they will help to furnish our rooms in India."

Thekla expressed her admiration warmly, whereupon Marion said, with a meaning smile, "The best shall come last. I have something for you."

"From father?" said Thekla, the happy colour flooding her face.

"No, not from father. There!" opening a casket, and showing an exquisitely wrought necklace and pendant of gold filigree-work.

"How lovely!" cried Thekla. "Did *you* buy this for me? Oh, Marion!"

"I? Why, you silly little goose, don't you know I have no money? It was from—can't you guess?—someone who likes you very much."

"It was for you, Marion, not for me. Please keep it," said Thekla, all her pleasure in the pretty trinket gone.

"I keep it, when it was given to you? What nonsense!"

"But I dislike him, and how can I take his presents?"

"I advise you not to let father hear you say that."

"He gave it to father, and father gives it to me?"

"If you like to have it so! It doesn't really make any difference. He has given me several things, and I wasn't so silly as to make a fuss."

"Must I *thank* him?" said Thekla, holding the obnoxious present doubtfully.

"Not unless you like; father and I can manage that. Ah! there they are—come to tell us lunch is ready. Pray don't behave like a school-girl, Thekla," said Marion in a low voice.

The poor girl had the casket in her hand. Isaacson, who followed Sir Richard into the room, saw her holding it, and looked at her with a benevolent smile.

"It's only a trifle," he said jauntily; "but your father thought you'd like it, and I didn't like the idea of your being out of everything."

"It was very kind of father to think of me," said Thekla, and once more she looked up at him.

There was something new in the eyes—something that interested and puzzled him. "I rather think she has a spice of temper," he said to himself later. "It would be funny if she tried to defy us. Two or three can play at that game, my pretty little Thekla. I wonder if you would be surprised to hear that I like you all the better for those flaming eyes? They are magnificent—there's no question of that."

What would have surprised *him*, had he known it, was that Thekla did not consider for one solitary moment whether he liked her better or worse. She took her golden gift, and she thrust it deep down in her box beside a certain sealed-up packet, of whose existence no one knew but herself and one other, and in a very short time she forgot that she possessed it.

They left Malta in the evening. Early on the following morning, when Thekla ran up to the hurricane-deck to see where they were, she found one of the two of whom she had been thinking so pitifully.

"Oh! Mr. Grierson," she cried, holding out her hand with frank delight, "how glad I am to see you out!"

"Thank you," he said; "and I am glad to be out again. I wanted to go on shore with you yesterday, but Dr. Murray forbade it. You enjoyed the excursion?"

"Yes, I enjoyed it. But it would have been pleasanter if you and Mr. Murchison had been with us. I was so sorry, so very sorry, to hear such a bad account of him. How is he to-day?"

"I left him asleep. But I think he will be better now, and a day like this will do us all good."

"It is delightful," said Thekla fervently. For all the wind had gone, and the air was balmy, and the sea, flattened down to a perfect level, looked like shining oil, soft and wonderful, with opaline reflections where the sunlight smote it, and, under the shadow of the ship, of a dark crystalline blue.

"It is like Coleridge's 'painted ocean,'" said Michael.

"And there—there is the enchanted ship!" cried Thekla, pointing to where a little brigantine lay idly, her sails flapping against the masts, and her black hull reflected in the mirror-like sea. They talked about the sea and its wonders, and the progress they were making, and how they would touch soon upon the coasts of Egypt, which to Thekla was a treasure-house of wonders; and presently, when she had exhausted all her questions, Michael led back the conversation to Murchison, for whom, he said, he wished to enlist her sympathy.

"He has it already," said Thekla. "We have had several talks—he and I, and little Mabel Andrews. The child loves him. He lifts her up to stroke Prince, and you should hear how nicely he talks to her. Oh! Mr. Grierson," her eyes filling with tears, "is there something really wrong about him?"

"You shall hear his story, and then you shall judge," said Michael. "His father was a man of property, who wished him to take up a profession. But he had no literary tastes, and with the view of giving him something to do, his father started him on the Stock Exchange. He was never strong-minded, and the lust for gain seized him. He speculated, and was successful. With golden visions before him, he plunged in again, and again he won. Then he became connected with a well-known and extraordinarily successful financial firm, and he lost. How it came about even he does not seem to know; but *they* went on winning fortune and honour, while *he* lost his money, and his credit too. His father stepped in to save him, lost all he possessed, and died of misery. His mother soon followed, and now he is on his way out to India as clerk to a commercial firm."

"What a sad, sad story! No wonder he is unhappy," said Thekla.

"Yes; but unhappily he has been trying to drown his sorrows in a very ignoble way. Once or twice lately he has been unruly, and frightened the people at the other end. He is painfully sensitive, poor fellow, and their remarks when he was in his sane senses have nearly maddened him. I saw things were going from bad to worse, so I persuaded the purser and doctor to transfer him to the first saloon. I know I am risking something," said Michael, with

a smile; "but if I can persuade one or two of my friends to be tolerant for a few days of any little eccentricities, and not to shun him, I think we may bring him round to more healthy views. You will help me, I know!"

"Oh! yes, yes; he is my friend already, and there will be others," cried Thekla. "Lady Lucy for one, and Mr. Wilkinson: he is quite young, and he has such nice ideas about being chivalrous and that kind of thing; and I will speak to Marion and father; and Lady Lucy, you know, can make the girls do whatever she likes."

"Thank you, thank you," said Michael warmly. "It is very good of you to take so much interest in us. Do you know, I think we shall be quite strong enough to live down opposition?"

"And I am sure of it," said Thekla.

At this moment, when her cheeks were glowing and her eyes were dancing with excitement—she felt it delightful beyond expression that Michael, her wise man, should ask *her* for advice and help—she saw Murchison coming up the ladder. The poor fellow, being very well aware of the talk there had been concerning him the day before, and conscious too that he had only himself to blame for it, felt like a child in disgrace that morning; and when he caught sight of Thekla, looking so radiant and happy, though he wished very much to speak to her, he made only a slight salutation, and was passing on to the other end of the deck.



"'Here is Lady Lucy back.'"—*p.* 103.

But Thekla would not have it so. Blushing in the prettiest way, she darted forward to meet him. "Are you going to see Prince?" she said; "and if so, may I go with you? Mabel and I have been looking for you these two or three days."

"Have you, really? How stupid of me not to have been in the way!" said Murchison. The colour had risen to his pale face, and his eyes had brightened.

and he looked twice the man he had done when he first came out. "And how is my little friend Mabel?" he asked, as the three of them walked together to the poop-deck.

"Ah! poor little Mabel! She was miserable yesterday because her people would not take her on shore, and almost all of her friends had gone. There was such a crying-fit when I left."

"Now, if I had only known!" said Murchison. "I was on board all day long. But I shall see more of her after this, for I am coming to your end of the ship."

"Are you? I am so glad," said Thekla heartily. "Where will you sit at table?"

"Not near you, I am afraid. On the other side."

"Where the doctor and Mr. Grierson and Mr. Isaacson sit?" said Thekla.

"Isaacson?" he echoed.

"Do you know him?"

"I knew one man of the name of Isaacson," said Murchison, his face changing curiously; "but it can't be the same. No, of course. The name is not uncommon."

"It would be curious if it were the same," said Thekla. They were standing under Prince's box, and he was craning his beautiful neck forward to be caressed. "Did you like him—your Isaacson, I mean?"

The question was put carelessly, asked more for something to say than for any other reason, and no sooner were the words out of her lips than she regretted them, for all in a moment the dark colour leapt to his face. "Like him!" he said, in a voice deep with passion. "I hate him! He is my enemy—the cause of my ruin. But for him and his false friendship I should not be as I am now. If that man were on board——"

"Peace!" said Grierson, putting his hand on the excited man's arm. "You are frightening her."

"No, no; only I am sorry I asked. It was a silly question," said Thekla.

"It is I who was silly—silly and wicked!" cried poor Murchison, in his exaggerated way. "I beg your pardon a hundred thousand times."

She assured him that it did not matter in the least, and having talked for a few moments about Prince and his groom, and the ship and the weather, they went back to the saloon for breakfast.

It was as the doctor and Lady Lucy had feared it would be. Considerable annoyance was expressed amongst the first-class passengers when Grierson's proceeding became known, and at the breakfast-table that morning an incident happened which strengthened the hands of the hostile party. Murchison and Grierson had been at the table for some time, when Isaacson, who occupied a seat opposite to them, came bustling in. Up to this Murchison had been so quiet and reasonable—he looked, moreover, so refined and gentleman-like—that those about him wondered what the people at the other end could have found to complain of. No sooner, however, did his eyes light upon the rich young man than his face and manner underwent a change. He rose from his seat abruptly, made as if he would have spoken, and then stood silent, his face as pale as death, and his lips and nostrils quivering. It passed in a moment; but it created a sensation. A tremor of excitement passed through the company, and the sensation-lovers made up their minds to a scene which would give them food for indignant comment for the whole voyage. They were disappointed. The words which were trembling to the lips of the excited man never came. Grierson looked at him, and he left the saloon quietly.

Slight and unsatisfactory as the incident was, it gave food for clamour. Isaacson was particularly indignant. He complained loudly about a madman being brought on board: said that if any mischief were done he would hold the Company responsible, and insisted upon the purser giving him another seat at table.

Several of the passengers backed him up; and disputes about Murchison ran so high that it required all Lady Lucy's tact and talent to set her entertainment going. She triumphed, however. On the second evening after they left Malta the *Amazon* season opened with a concert, which everyone said went off brilliantly. Lady Lucy and Thekla sang together, and were applauded to the echo; Marion evoked the warmest enthusiasm by her graceful rendering of some Spanish love-songs to the guitar, Wilkinson sang a melancholy song to the banjo, provoking uproarious laughter, two of the girls played a duet, and another a brilliant fantasia, and there were merry choruses, in which everyone joined. But the "hit" of the evening was the performance that cost Lady Lucy the greatest trouble to fit in—Michael Grierson's recitation. What he gave was perfectly simple: only a ballad of human love and sorrow, and the faith that conquers death. Yet there were few present who did not feel their cheeks turn pale and their hearts throb more quickly as they listened to it, while there was one little girl who was fain to hide her face in her hands and weep. Michael was triumphant that evening. The ship forgave him even for his late Quixotic craze, and to Thekla he was more of a hero than ever.

The *Amazon* now became a very sociable little world. Friendships progressed, and love-makings went swiftly forward, and needlework, and books, and games were brought out and everyone settled down as if the voyage were to last for years instead of days. There were one or two who wished it might. Of course they were lovers; no one else could form such extravagant desires. That they should, one cannot wonder, for if they live a hundred years, life, it is certain, will bring them nothing sweeter than these sweet love-poems of the sea. They are so delightful and entrancing that we need not be surprised to find the real sometimes simulated by the false: young people who wish to be in love fancying that they are, when actually they are only following the example of others and obeying the gentle influence of the time. So it was with Marion; but Ronald Hinton was in deep, dead earnest. He had not much fear for the result of his wooing, for Marion, who was, he felt sure, the frankest, as well as the sweetest girl in the world, had shown him

in a thousand little ways that she preferred him to others; Sir Richard was friendly, and that charming child Thekla was, he very well knew, only longing for the time when she could openly call him brother. Ronald, too, was perfectly well aware of his own advantages. And yet the days drifted on, and the momentous question remained unspoken.

In the meantime, it happened on the voyage as in the world. His love, absorbing as it was, did not occupy the whole of his time and thoughts. An amusement committee had been formed, and he was its most active member. He beat up musical recruits, discovered dormant talent, wrote out florid notices, devised attractive programmes for entertainments, and was the heart and soul of the athletic sports. A contest took place on the afternoon before the ship touched at Port Said, in which he won distinction. The artful youth would go in for nothing that could have shown him in a ridiculous light. The greased planks, drenching buckets, and dusty wind-sails of the obstacle race he left to meaner mortals; and he would neither run as a wheelbarrow, nor hop in a sack, nor chalk the cock's eye, nor sling the monkey. But he leapt and ran and threw with grace and success, looking so brave, handsome, and happy that everyone applauded him; and when, as would happen now and then, he caught the dark eyes of Marion Ellerslie, full of a dreamy speculativeness that made them more beautiful than ever, fixed upon him, his colour would rise, and his own eyes would shine with a wonderful lustre, and he would look so much the finest fellow there that Marion would sigh to herself the pity it was that he could not be as rich as he was handsome.

The sports were memorable to others besides Hinton. Murchison, who was by this time tolerated, if not liked, by all but Isaacson, had been persuaded to take part in them. He was light and active, and chiefly for Thekla's sake—she was watching him with vivid interest—he threw himself into them heart and soul, and he acquitted himself creditably, coming in a good second in the obstacle race, while in the steeple-chase, which he ran with marvellous ease and neatness, he distanced all competitors. The applause when he came in was deafening, and none cheered him more heartily than Thekla and his little favourite, Queen Mab.

All the same, the exertion was too great for him. Although he did not complain, seeming happier and livelier indeed than ever before, there was a wanness, a spirituality, about his face that touched many to sad forebodings.

To the inexperienced, meanwhile, the voyage had become more interesting than ever, for they were nearing the East — the land of story, the home of mystery.

It was on the evening after the sports that Thekla saw for the first time that soft rose-lilac glow which, when the sun has gone, makes the skies of Egypt for a few moments so entrancingly lovely.

She was standing on the hurricane-deck, talking to Michael Grierson. Down below, dinner was in full swing; but finding it long, she had fallen into the habit of slipping in late, and Grierson was never in with the first course.

"How lovely!" she said, looking up. "What is it?"

"It is the light of the East," said Michael.

She turned and looked at him, and her eyes, full of ardent interest, seemed to draw out his words.

"I can sympathise with you," he said, in a low voice. "It is a strange moment. You are on the threshold of a new world. The world of the East, great, mysterious, dark, unfathomable, is opening out before you. It is like the ocean. We come and we go: we float upon its surface: we are superior, patronising, benevolent—this to-day, that to-morrow; but what do we know of that which lies below the surface? So with the nations of the East. While we come and go, they go on—generations arriving, generations departing—the same, always the same! It is almost terrible to me sometimes, this changelessness. And yet, how strange the contrast is! The highest and grandest thoughts which have ever come to humanity have come to us from the East. It was in the deserts of Arabia, it was on the shores of the Galilean Sea, that the truths which lie at the root of all our Western culture were given to the world."

He paused, and Thekla said timidly, "We have had the light from them. Can we not take it back?"

"We can—we must—we will," said Michael.

Like a prayer his strong words fell upon the silence. Then the young girl looked up, and saw that the rose-purple glow was fading, while, like glittering spear-points twinkling faintly from the zenith, the shining suns of space looked down upon them.

CHAPTER VI.—THEKLA RECEIVES A WARNING.

THEY reached Port Said, that strange little town between desert and sea, late in the evening. Thekla was extraordinarily excited. This was the meeting-place of the nations; these were the portals of the Eastern world. She got away by herself to watch its approach, and saw a wonderful sight. Strange at any time is the narrow sea-highway where East and West touch; but, in the darkness of a moonless night it is fantastic beyond expression. The waters, black as pitch under the vast hulls of the ships that lie crowded in their narrow space, and quick elsewhere with a myriad reflections; the lights—a whole host of them—from the houses and restaurants that line the low shore, from tiers of yellow portholes, from the swinging mastheads of steamers, that, with their white and crimson radiance, seem to pierce the ebon shadows of the upper air, and from the black coal-barges, manned by dusky Egyptians, who, in the fierce flame that beats upon them from flaring torches, bring to one's mind vague memories of classic myths—of Pluto and his servants ferrying the dead over nameless rivers in Hades; the noises—orders shouted, warning cries, wild singing, ringing of steamer-bells, and chattering in harsh, unknown tongues—these and everything else are strange, suggestive of mystery. Thekla finds herself repeating Michael Grierson's words—

"The East—great, mysterious, dark, unfathomable."

She is not allowed to indulge in dreams, for here is Wilkinson at her elbow, talking fast and excitedly.

"You'll come with Lady Lucy, won't you? I am going, and so is Mr. Grierson."

"Where is Lady Lucy?" says Thekla.

"Miss Thekla"—this is in another voice—"Sir Richard has sent me to find you."

"Tell him——" begins Wilkinson.

Isaacson cuts him short. "I believe he wishes particularly to see you."

"Oh! I'll go at once. Ask Lady Lucy to wait for me.—Where is father, Mr. Isaacson?"

"On the main-deck. Take my arm—won't you?"

"No, thank you. I prefer to walk alone."

Sir Richard is standing near the gangway, about to step into a boat. Marion and Hinton are with him. "Come along, Thekla," he says, in an impatient, irritated voice. "What upon earth have you been doing?"

"Mayn't I wait for Lady Lucy, father?"

"Certainly not. We are going to spend the whole evening on shore, and come back late. In with you!"

"Mightn't I just tell them, father? They may be waiting."

"And keep *me* waiting another half-hour! Most decidedly not."

"We must all obey orders, you know," says the voice that Thekla dislikes. It makes her feel desperately inclined to rebel; but she conquers herself, and in the next instant she is in the long rowing-boat, crossing the short interval that separates them from the shore, and looking back with regret at the ship.

The evening proved as dreary as she had anticipated. Port Said was far more romantic at a distance than close at hand; and Isaacson, who kept by her side during their walk through the little sandy roads flanked with lighted shops and restaurants, and who sat near her in the *café chantant* into which they turned for lack of something better to do, irritated her more than ever by his manner and style of talk. For the vexing part of it was that no silence of hers made any difference to him. He never once seemed to doubt his power of amusing her. His self-satisfied smile, his bland expression, the little chuckle with which he would emphasise his wit, and his peals of noisy laughter after some ton-weight jest, made her nearly wild.

She was glad, however, that she had succeeded in being comparatively complaisant when she found that she had pleased her father. He took her for a walk up and down the deck that night, and his manner was so kind that she felt a new love for him springing up in her heart. This little girl had a passion for being loved which had never been adequately gratified.

A curious little incident, which she did not think much of at the time, happened to her that evening. Murchison, who had looked paler and more shadowy than ever since the sports, had been hanging about her in rather a perplexing way all day. Two or three times she thought he had something to say to her, but when she gave him the opportunity of speaking he said nothing of any moment. When she went down to the saloon, which was emp y but for this one figure, she found him close to the passage that led to her cabin. She was passing him with a good-night, when he stopped her. "Miss Ellerslie," he said abruptly, "I want to speak to you."

"Well," she answered, smiling, "what is it?"

He paused for fully five seconds, began to speak, broke off, and then saying brokenly, "I can't to-night; it might spoil your rest," turned and left her.

This was curious and embarrassing, and Thekla began to fear that the poor fellow's brain was affected by his misfortunes. Certainly there could be nothing else.

She went on into her cabin, where further perplexities awaited her. Marion, who was lying alone in her berth, having dismissed Janet for the night, reproved her sharply for being so late.

"I have been walking up and down with father," said Thekla indignantly. "Ask him, and he will tell you."

"Father would never wish you to neglect me, and I mean to speak to him. You must really be less independent, Thekla—amusing yourself all day long with all sorts of people. They are spoiling you, that is what it is, and you never deign to notice where I am or what I am doing. I am left at the mercy of everyone. It has been nothing but a battle lately to prevent that goose, Ronald Hinton, from proposing to me, and I am becoming tired of it."

Thekla stood open-mouthed. "Why," she cried, as soon as she could command herself, "don't you want him to? I thought you liked him?"

"So I do."

"Then why——?"

"Do not ask me. I do wish you wouldn't look at me so, Thekla. With your sentiment and your innocence, you are enough to send a person wild."

"I am very sorry, Marion"—there were tears in the big grey eyes that welled over slowly as she spoke—"I think you are saying it to tease me."

"Indeed, no. So you thought I meant to marry him, did you?"

"You will if he asks you, surely?"

"That indeed I won't. Marry an Anglo-Indian civilian: nothing but his pay, most likely bury myself in some absurd little station, or wander about with a tent and horse! No, thank you."

"But, Marion," cried Thekla wildly, "he *loves* you."

"Well, little innocence? I don't suppose I am the first girl he has liked, and I am quite certain I shall not be the last."

"Oh! but I am sure you are wrong. Marion, you couldn't be so unkind. You have made him love you; he thinks you love him. If you draw back now it will break his heart." And here Thekla pulled up, for Marion had turned as red as fire, and there was an angry light in her eyes.

"Go on," she said haughtily. "What more have you to say about my conduct?"

"Darling, I beg your pardon," said poor little Thekla. "I am afraid I don't understand. He is so good and kind and brave. I haven't met anyone nicer in all my life; and he will be so dreadfully miserable. I have seen how sad he looked when you spoke to other people and wouldn't attend to him. Oh! do think better of it."

"I believe you are half in love with him yourself," said Marion; "and as soon as the voyage is over you

are welcome to him. *You* can marry a pleasant and handsome man, if you like. *I* must marry for riches, or be miserable."

"What do you mean, Marion?"

"Nothing, nothing. You worry me into saying things I hate to say. Now, please don't talk any more. My head is aching so that I can scarcely see out of my eyes."

"Poor darling! I am so sorry. I will fan you, and then you will soon be asleep."

So she sat down and fanned Marion, and in a few moments her eyelids dropped, and then Thekla stooped and kissed her, and thought how pretty she was, and gave a tender regretful thought to poor Ronald, who loved her so—and no wonder!—and said a little prayer by the bed, and went to rest peacefully. Poor little girl! It was the last peaceful night that she would know for some time. But she, happily, could not know this.

She was awake early the next morning by the light of the orange Egyptian dawn, and when she ran up to the hurricane-deck she saw that they were in the narrow riverine road that crosses the desert. It was a delightful morning; the sky high and pale, the sands flushed with a rosy light, and the air that swept them keen and invigorating.

We love the "Earth, fair mother—the sweet, live Earth"—but our love is like that we have for those whom we live with always—a dormant, though ever-present emotion. It needs separation to call out our affection for our own, and it is when we are fresh from the perils and delights of the sea that we realise our deep love for the warm and homely earth. A rapture, such as she had never felt before, was at the heart of this little country maiden that morning. The sight of the earth and the smell of the earth intoxicated her. She longed to leap out of the ship and run along the bank, and bathe her hands, like a child, in the soft clean sands. Everything was novel—everything was enchanting; and yet it was the earth—the dear earth she knew. As, with dancing eyes, she stood gazing out, she saw a long string of camels pacing the sandy shore slowly, each one led by its blue-gowned driver, and they amused her so much that she burst out laughing. They looked, she thought, as if they were trying to be disdainful, and could not quite manage it.

So far, she had the outside world pretty much to herself; but presently she saw little groups of men, barefooted and arrayed in strange, many-coloured garments, gathering on the main-deck; and next came an army of Lascars with streaming hose to wash down the decks. To escape a wetting, Thekla found a quiet corner in front of the chart-room, and gathered herself up upon a bench.

She had scarcely done so before she heard a step behind her. She looked round, expecting to see Mr. Larkin, who often gave her greeting in the morning, and met the wild eye of Murchison. That he should be there was not surprising; but why did he look so? She recalled his words of the evening before, and a vague sense of terror took possession of her. Conquering herself with an effort, she answered his good-morning pleasantly, and made an ordinary remark about the beauty of the day. Then there was a pause. Thekla could not get away, for the decks were streaming with water, and he stood near her like a sentinel, not speaking yet, but looking as if he meant to speak. She felt awkward and uncomfortable. She wished to talk and get rid of her uncomfortable feelings, but she did not know what subject to start; while Murchison, who had worked himself up by uneasy brooding to a passionate excitement that could only find its vent in passionate words, was unfit for ordinary conversation. At last it came, like the first grumbling of a thunderstorm. "Miss Ellerslie, I want to ask you a question."

"Please don't, if it is serious," she said feebly. "Everything is so gay and beautiful this morning. I don't think I could be serious if I tried."

There was a plaintive appealing in her voice that touched him to the heart; but he went on. "Heaven knows," he said wildly, "that I would spare you if I could. But how can I? I put it to yourself. If you saw a friend—one who had been good to you, and whom you loved—standing at the brink of a precipice—if hands—trusted hands—were pushing your friend down—if you saw it—knew it—felt it—what would you do?"

"That is a strange question," said poor little Thekla, her cheek blanching. He was certainly out of his mind. What he said could mean nothing to her. And yet she trembled.

"I entreat you, as you love your own safety and peace, to answer me," he implored.

"But if I don't?" she said, trying to smile.

"I will put it more strongly—if you value your honour."

"What do you mean?" cried the girl, alarmed by his passionate earnestness.

There was a moment's pause. He seemed to be struggling for composure—struggling to say what he had to say calmly; but his feeling was too much for him, and fiercely his words leapt out. "This is what I mean, Thekla Ellerslie. *You* are in that awful position. At this moment your feet are on the brink of a precipice, and hands that you love and trust are pushing you over—a step, and you will go down into depths which you cannot even imagine."

It was not the words alone—it was the force, the passionate conviction, with which they were thrown out that was terrible. He was mad, of course. There could be no meaning in his wild ravings. And yet, if there were——! As, shivering, she turned away from him, a fear such as she had never known before struck cold at Thekla's heart.

"You turn away from me," went on Murchison. "You think me mad. But believe me, I was never saner than I am at the present moment."

"But how dare you speak to me so?" cried Thekla, her breast heaving with childish sobs. "I in danger, when my father and sister are with me! I know it is not true—it can't be. But I wish you hadn't frightened me so!"

"And I wish with all my soul it had not been forced upon me—I, of all people in the world! I have fought against it. I have said, 'Let someone else speak; she will hate me; and if she hates me, I shall die.' You

were the first here to speak to me kindly. Do you remember that day? I was standing beside Prince. You came near me with the pretty child. I looked at you, but I would not speak to you. I knew what they called me on board. I felt myself an outcast. And then you spoke—talked to me as if I were just like others; and the little child trusted me. I saw you again and again, and hope revived in my mind. I said to myself, 'I am not an outcast. I will live like a man.' And then—I could not venture to love you, Thekla Ellerslie," said the poor fellow brokenly; "you were like an angel to me—a white saint; but I felt—ah! how shall I express it, little friend and sister? I would gladly buy your happiness with my life, and how could I grieve or distress you without cause? Listen to me for one more moment. I must say what I have to say now, and then never again, either to you or anyone else, will I mention the subject, for your fate will be in your own hands. The man whom they are forcing upon you——"

"Stop! stop!" cried Thekla passionately. "I will not listen to you."

He looked at her very pitifully.

"Grant that I am wrong, and still listen to me," he said. "I tell you—I who know—that Montague Isaacson is a bad man. He is base: he is cruel: he is selfish. To be allied with him would be degradation. Forgive me; I was bound to tell you this."

"No, you were not," cried Thekla. "What is it to me that he is bad or good? I have nothing to do with him."

"You have received presents from him?"

"I hated them. My father——" and here the poor child stopped, and the red colour flooded her face, and her eyes shone angrily through indignant tears. "What are you making me say? It is all quite natural and right. My father said so. Why do you make things that are natural look dreadful and ugly?"

An expression of bitter pain crossed Murchison's face.

"I may be mistaken," he said; and his low voice, instinct with earnestness, thrilled Thekla to the heart, making her feel for one terrible moment as if everything he had told her were real. "If I am, I beg and entreat you to forgive me. I know, from terrible experience, how we drift into the things that ruin us. With closed eyes and dulled senses we go on, till we awake bound hand and foot to some shameful and miserable fate. This has happened to others. I was afraid it might happen to you. I know now that it will not. Your eyes are open. I have warned you."

"I believe you meant kindly, but you are very, very much mistaken," said Thekla. "And please don't say any more. I know what you mean."

He did not attempt to speak again. He turned away, and left her alone with her sad and troubled thoughts.

What terrible thing was this that she had heard? Her father—but it could not—it should not—be true! The poor fellow meant well, no doubt; but he was a madman. Mr. Grierson, his best friend, had said that his mind was warped by his misfortunes. And yet, it was strange that this idea, of all others, should have come to him. Could it be that there was anything in it? Her limbs trembled so that she could scarcely stand, and her face turned as pale as death. She had left her nook by the chart-room, and she went close to the bulwarks of the ship and leant over, her eyes wandering on and on till they were lost in the boundlessness of the sandy waste. "If I thought so, I would go away. I would lose myself," she said to herself. "It would not be difficult to be lost here."

There was a small black spot in the distance. It grew as they approached it, and she saw that it was an Arab gipsy encampment—a little ragged tent hung on a pole; two or three wild-looking figures squatted in front of it, and in the midst the blue smoke of a fire rising into the air. "It would be better to live so," said the poor child, a wan smile crossing her lips. "Better to die!"

There was movement on the main-deck. Ladies and children in their pretty white dresses, and men in flannels and tweeds, were coming out. The hurricane-deck was a favourite place for observation, and in a few moments she was sure her solitude would be invaded. She made a gallant effort to cast her gloomy thoughts aside. To the rapture of the morning, her childish longing to bathe her hands in the clean warm sands, her vivid interest in the sweet live earth, she could not return just yet. But there were other thoughts. There came to her suddenly something that her friend Michael had said to her in one of their many talks, and she murmured softly, "The secret of a true life is self-giving, and I am thinking only of myself. But," with a little sob, "I will not. I will trust to my Father in heaven, and all will be right for me."

CHAPTER VII.—"RULE BRITANNIA."

LATE that afternoon the *Amazon* steamed into the silver expanse of water that goes by the name of the Bitter Lake, and took up her berth for the night. There were eight large steamers in, and when they all lit their lamps, throwing so many columns of vivid white flame across the water, while the crimson of a fierce Egyptian sunset, narrowed down to a flame of blood-red low down in the west, made the distant sands look like a pavement of fire, and the zenith grew tremulous with suns and planets and star-dust innumerable, the spectacle from her deck was strange and very beautiful. Most of the passengers, however, could only give it a cursory glance, for they were busy. The prize distribution and grand entertainment, which were to form the great event of the voyage, had been announced for that evening, and there were still many preparations to make. Thekla, as usual, was at the service of everybody, and she was kept so hard at work all day that she had no time to think: which was well for her.

The ship dinner that evening was particularly lively. Most of the men were in evening costume or uniform, and all the ladies were as gaily dressed as the resources of their limited toilettes would allow. Dress has a certain effect upon manners, whatever the serious may say, and it is certain that this evening the gentlemen were more entertaining and the ladies readier to be entertained than usual.

Sir Richard Ellerslie, to please Marion, had put on a

Court suit, which became him well. He had been unusually handsome as a young man, and his aristocratic features, his fine figure, and the quiet serenity of his face and manner, made him singularly distinguished still. When, a little later than usual, he took his place at the long table, there was a little repressed buzz of admiration.

As for Thekla, she experienced a curious revulsion of feeling. For the first time in all her life her father's dignity and graciousness awed her. What thoughts she had been having, and how wicked, how shameful, it was of her to have given place to them for a moment! As she looked up at her father, the red colour came tingling to her face, and then it died down, and with a happy smile, which he answered by his most benignant expression—for he liked to be admired, even by his children—she nestled up to him.

"You look lovely, father darling," she whispered—"lovely!"

"Foolish little girl!" he said softly, patting her hand.

That was a happy dinner to Thekla, who, in the casting away of her vague fears and suspicions, felt the world growing beautiful to her once more.

The entertainment was to be held on the main-deck; part of which had been curtained off by a sail from the space about the music-saloon and companions. Mr. Larkin, the first officer, had taken in hand to decorate and light it, and he would admit no one until his own time came. So two of the officers guarded the entrance, while the guests stood grouped in and about the companion, indulging in airy witticisms and criticisms that, weak as many of them were, gave rise to plenty of laughter.

Thekla was in the crowd. As it happened, none of her particular circle were near her. She was thinking of looking for Marion, when she heard a voice behind her. "Miss Thekla!" She started and looked round. "Don't be frightened," said the voice; "it's only me. I wanted to tell you that we're to sit together. Sir Richard asked me to keep seats for him and you."

"Oh, thank you," said Thekla, blushing to the roots of her hair, "I'd rather not. I mean—I have a headache, and I don't think I shall go in."

"Oh, nonsense! that's all gammon! You must, you know," said Isaacson.

"I say, Isaacson," cried a voice from the front. "Come and give a hand, there's a good fellow."

"Coming," he answered; and to Thekla, "Well, we shall meet again presently. I'll keep your seat."

"No, please don't," she said; but he had gone. Her annoyance at his cool appropriation of her was so great that she could have cried; and she went towards the companion-ladder, with the view of keeping out of the way, when Ronald Hinton met her.

"Is anything the matter, little Thekla?" he said kindly.

"Oh no, nothing really; only I don't think I shall go in," said Thekla, trying to fight down her tears.

"Why? Has someone been annoying you?"

"Oh, no, no; they didn't intend to. I mean——"

"I believe it's that popinjay Isaacson again," said Hinton. He had before this noticed and resented the young millionaire's manner to Thekla. "What has he been doing? You may as well tell me, for I shall be sure to find out."

"He said he would keep a seat for me, and when I said I wasn't going, he said I must. You see, it's nothing," said Thekla, "so please don't mind me. I am very silly."

"You are exceedingly sensible, on the contrary, not to like to sit beside that lout. I tell you what"—laughing—"we'll just go in to the prize distribution, and then we'll hide; and after the concert's begun, when he's well wedged in at the front—he'll find a seat exactly under the footlights, of course—you can drop into a chair at the back. How will that do?"

"Delightfully," said Thekla.

At this moment the sail-curtain was lifted, and everyone pressed towards the entrance of the entertainment-room, and exclamations of pleasure and surprise were heard on every side, for the main-deck was so extraordinarily transformed that no one would have known it. Shut in by canvas, which was completely covered with gaily-coloured bunting, and brilliantly lighted with Japanese lanterns and electric lights, it made as fine a concert-room as anyone could have wished.

The little improvised platform, where the singers were to stand, was at the stern. The seats of the audience were piled up round the canvas walls, for the most important part of the proceedings—the distribution of prizes—was to precede the entertainment.

"We'll stand here, out of the way," whispered Hinton to Thekla. "The chief is keeping Isaacson busy."

"Where is Lady Lucy, I wonder?" said Thekla. "She was to give away the prizes."

"I think the chief has a little mystification on foot," said Hinton. "Ah! I thought so. Come this way; you will see them better."

"Who? who?" cried Thekla. "Why, here they come! What fun!"

At a signal from the chief, "Rule Britannia" had been struck up on the piano, and as everyone present shouted the song, the screen of sail was lifted again, and a number of Lascars, guided by two or three officers, drew in a car, on which, in a nest of cushions, Lady Lucy, dressed as Britannia, and Marion, in a pretty costume of ship's flags, as Amazonia, were seated. Very few were in the secret, which had originated with the first officer, and the strains of "Rule Britannia" were merged in deafening cheers, while the two ladies passed, smiling, through the little crowd of their friends and shipmates. Then the car was drawn up into a commanding position, pretty Amazonia descended gracefully, and Britannia proceeded to give away the prizes that had been won in the athletic contests.

Several names were shouted in succession, their owners coming forward to receive their reward.

"Mr. Murchison won something," whispered Thekla. "Have you seen him?"

"No: I don't think he is here."

"Ah! that is his name, and Mr. Grierson is answering for him. I hope he is not ill," said Thekla.

"Probably he didn't want to come up. Murchison

is a queer fellow," said Hinton. "But they are putting up the seats. If we want to escape, now is our time."

"I am ready," said Thekla. "Come!"

When, a few minutes later, Isaacson, who had been making himself busy, looked round to find Thekla, that he might place her in the seat he had secured for her, he found that she had gone.

He supposed that she had executed her threat of staying down below, and he spoke of it with some annoyance to her father. "I don't think myself that she was the least ill," he said; "she took offence about something."

"Offence? Impossible, my dear fellow!" said Sir Richard blandly. "It's not the child's way: and with you, of all people! It would be absurd—so good-natured and kind as you always are to her."

"Well, now, I really do believe I am. I have never taken so much trouble about anyone before: and she isn't the least grateful to me."

"Oh! but she will be. Just you wait a while. Come and see us in India, after she has mixed for a few months in society; she will appreciate you then."

"Will she?" said Isaacson bluntly. "Well, we'll see about that."

"Yes, yes; you are both young," said Sir Richard hurriedly.

On the upper-deck, meanwhile, "away from the madding crowd," Thekla and Hinton were pacing up and down together. He was speaking; she was listening. It was a sad tale he had to tell. He was pouring it out, poor youth, in the hope of receiving comfort, and Thekla's heart was heavy because she had no comfort to give. Ah! how sorry she felt for him! His voice, so sad and tender, penetrated to her very soul. Had he ever spoken to Marion so, and, if he had, could she—could she be cruel still? At this moment Thekla thought that she would have died rather than have given such bitter pain to one like Ronald.

"I am all astray," he said, "and that is why I come to you for advice. Yesterday, at Port Said, it seemed all right between us. To-day she has changed. I am not a lady's man, I know," said the big young fellow humbly. "I've had so many other things to attend to all my life; and perhaps I have offended her in some way. We men are so rough and stupid, and girls have such delicate fancies. If you could just tell me a little what she likes and what she dislikes—give me a few hints, you know—I should bless you all my life."

Poor little Thekla! Tell him what Marion liked and disliked! Give him hints! How could she? Did ever any man ask such unreasonable questions before? In her helplessness and pity she began to cry, which alarmed Hinton dreadfully.

"My poor dear child," he said, "have I vexed you? I am very sorry to have troubled you so."

"Oh! but it isn't trouble," she interrupted. "It is that I don't know how to help you."

"Well, never mind. Try and forget that I ever spoke to you about it. Things generally come right in the end, don't they?"

"But that's not much help when they are going wrong, and the end is a long way off," said Thekla, trying to smile.

"Nearer than some of us think," said Ronald; and then abruptly, "Come down and listen to the singing."

"Yes," she said, but paused for a moment to look at a group at the further end of the deck. "Is that the doctor?" she said. "What is he doing?"

"Bringing up an invalid for air, I suppose. Never mind them," said Hinton.

The entertainment was in full fling when they went down. It began with wax-works, which were exceedingly amusing, and caused plenty of laughter and cheering; and between the exhibition of the groups there were songs and recitations. Most of the audience were seated close in front of the stage; but some were in the background. Amongst these sat Lady Lucy and the General. They saw Thekla and Hinton, and Lady Lucy took them to task smilingly for their disappearance.

"I suppose you have been star-gazing?" she said.

"Yes," answered Ronald. "It is grand up there to-night."

"Did you chance to come across Mr. Grierson?"

"No; isn't he in the audience?"

"I believe not. I have seen nothing of him since the prize distribution, which makes me fear that poor Murchison is very ill. I think I shall go and inquire. Take care of the General till I come back, Thekla."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Thekla.

This was in one of the long intervals between the pieces. Isaacson, bound on a search for Thekla, saw her, and came up to them.

"Why did you run away from me?" he said reproachfully. "I have kept such a good seat for you up there. Come now!"

"I beg your pardon, sir. Miss Ellerslie has promised me the pleasure of her society for the next half-hour," said the General.

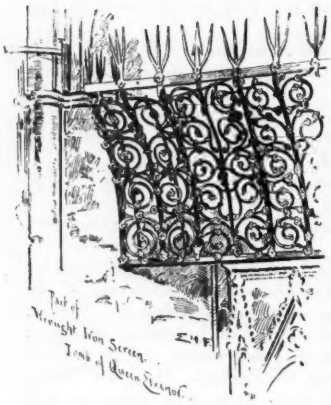
"Thank you," whispered Thekla, as Isaacson, who stood in considerable awe of the General, moved away. "I did not want to sit near him."

"I thought so," said the General grimly. "That young man may have all the treasures of Golconda, but he is in uncommonly bad style, and I don't wonder at a nice girl objecting to him. I shouldn't mind taking him down a peg or two; so if he worries you, just you let me know.—But, dear me! here is Lady Lucy back, and she looks as if something serious has happened.—My dear friend, is anything wrong? Can I help you?"

"No, thank you," said Lady Lucy. "I don't think there is anything to be done. I want Thekla for a few moments. Excuse us, General; you shall hear what it is all about presently."

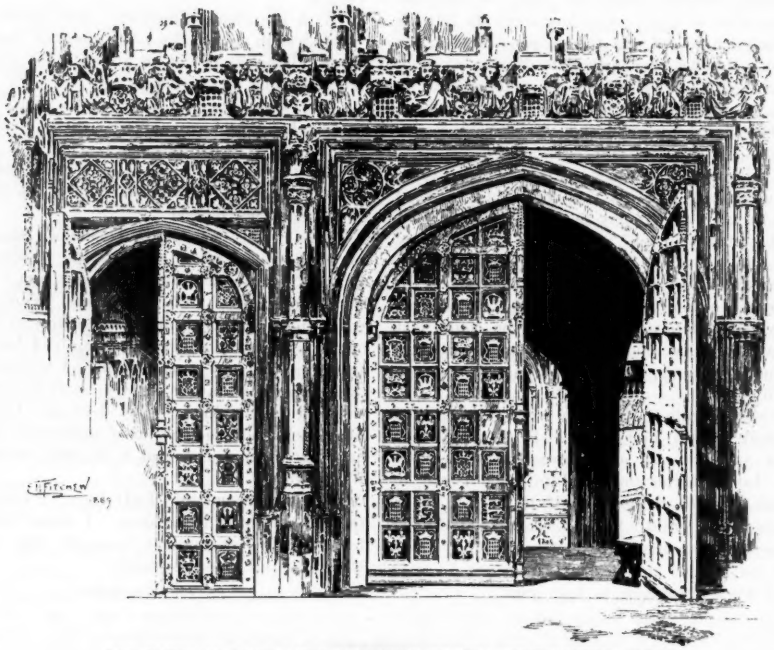
(To be continued.)

ANCIENT CHURCH IRONWORK.



IN the course of the building of our old churches, no sooner was the site marked out, and the mason had lowered his foundations into the ground and begun to pile up his "wondrous work of wall-stones" into a fabric, than the smith was called to give his mighty aid. That is to say, as soon as the masonry on either side of the places where the doorways were to be was a couple of feet or so high, the smith came to put in securely the strong iron crooks in which the hinges of the doors were to revolve afterwards. It was important that these should be imbedded deep in the stonework, and have a particular hold upon it, and so, as has been said, before the carpenter appeared upon the scene with his beams and rafters, strong doors and fittings, or the plumber came with his lead-work, or the glazier with his almost priceless glass-work, the smith was welcomed. His art and skill are more evident, however, in the floriated hinges and intricate locks he eventually placed upon the doors, as well as in other more ornamental work that he wrought when the building had made further progress.

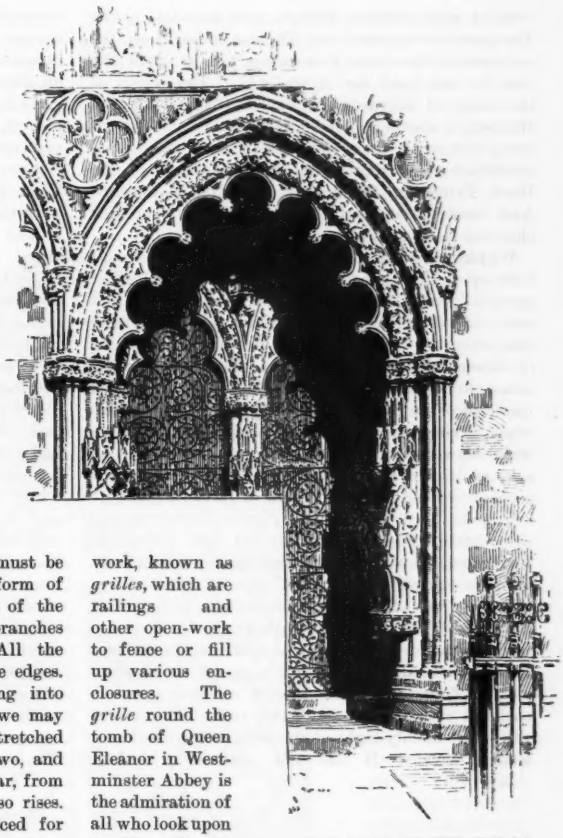
There is a beautiful door on the south side of Turvey Church, in Bedfordshire. It opens in the centre, and has the same pointed, arch-shaped outline as the doorway. Each half of the door has two huge strap-like hinges on it, which diminish in size till they terminate in fleurs-de-lys; and from these straps curve foliated scroll-work, till the door is completely covered from edge to edge with the flowing lines; except on the pointed heading, for which some extra scroll-work of precisely the same character, but not attached to the hinges, has been devised; and the ends of every curve of the scrolls is beaten out into the most graceful flowers and foliage. This intricate ornamentation broadens out in a convenient place to receive two rings for handles, for the purpose of entrance and exit; and below one of the rings is a square 'scutcheon for the lock. All this ironwork stands up in bold relief, and is studded with the nails by which it is fastened to the woodwork. As we look



THE GATES OF HENRY THE SEVENTH'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

at it we may picture the smith beating it all out patiently, till he saw the perfection at which he was aiming. Perhaps he could tell of the frequent mention of iron in the sacred writings, and associated some of the passages with which he was most familiar with his work.

In St. Marie's Church, Norfolk, there is a single-leafed door with similar floriated scroll-work, uncurling and unfolding from the hinges all over the woodwork, which is quite as handsome, though of less size. There are, too, some ancient iron hinges and plates on the door on the south side of the chancel of Morpeth Church, so rusted as to peel at the touch, but still answering the purpose for which they were made. We have many more examples of greater simplicity. The hinges on the door of Hartley Church and Northfleet Church, in Kent, and Tinwell Church, in Rutlandshire, for instance, have ornamental work, but are comparatively plain by the side of these. Dartmouth Church has some very curious ironwork, on a door bearing date 1631, that must be more particularly described. It takes the form of a central tree, passing up the full height of the door, showing its root at its base, vine-like branches on its way upwards, and a leafy top. All the leaves are curiously large, and notched at the edges. Across the door and across the tree, passing into its stem by the way, extend two animals we may suppose are intended for lions, with outstretched limbs and enfolded tails; and between the two, and midway across the door, stretches a wavy bar, from which the same kind of vine-like foliage also rises. There is a ring of twisted ironwork introduced for a handle, and one of the leaves is pierced for a key-hole. The date mentioned is also introduced in iron numerals, and many nails stud the singular work. The most splendid example in this section of the smith's art is perhaps the ironwork on the door of the chapter-house in York Cathedral. We are told King David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates of the Temple he was not permitted to build because he had shed blood and made great wars. We may see, too, iron in abundance was also prepared for this doorway, in like manner. There is a stone column midway in the centre of it, consequently the door is in two leaves, or parts. The ironwork completely covers it, twining and curving, and climbing and winding, and unfolding and uncurling in the most graceful configuration equally all over it, till the beautiful embellishment terminates in the figures of birds at the summit of the design. The western doors of Lichfield Cathedral also present us with a fine specimen of the same kind of light and delicate work. The south door of Durham Cathedral is also covered sumptuously with ancient floriated work. The skill and feeling of the smith are, however, still more apparent in such ornamental ironwork as is independent of any woodwork for a back-ground. We have many specimens of masterly work, known as *grilles*, which are railings and other open-work to fence or fill up various enclosures. The *grille* round the tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey is the admiration of all who look upon it with any knowledge of the subject. Everyone is interested in the effigy of the wifely, virtuous, and beautiful queen who shared her husband's fortunes in the Holy Land and his campaigns in Wales, who tended him so faithfully when wounded, and who, following him to the north, died on her way through Lincolnshire, whence she was brought—we all know with what deep regret and great ceremony—to Westminster. It has lain on the smooth grey marble these six hundred years. The beautiful features, the delicate hands, the folds of her robes are uninjured, and scarcely show the marks of the centuries, save in a certain indescribable mellowness; and around the queenly figure is the same protecting *grille* the clever smith put there at first in the old Plantagenet days. It consists of a series of main concave bars, rising at equal distances from one horizontal bar to another, with terminals of spikes that are as light and sharp as aloe-leaves; and from each of the curved bars to the next, pass tiers and tiers of the most graceful flowing and floriated and intertwining lines of ornamentation. The necessary fastenings, in the way of bolts, rivets, and nails, are all treated as enrichments, and hence the work is



THE DOOR OF THE CHAPEL HOUSE, YORK MINSTER.

studded with rosettes, foliage, and animals' heads. The name of the smith was Thomas de Leghtone, the accounts of the queen's executors tell us; and the sum he was paid for it was £12. The screen of the tomb of Edward IV., in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, is another splendid example of ancient ironwork, rich with tracery, pinnacles, and other ornamentation; and that round the monument of the Black Prince in Canterbury Cathedral is another. And most of our cathedrals and many of our churches have further specimens.

We have also marvellous gates that we may almost look upon as aspirations to depict in metal those mystical doors that signified dominion, or those that were called the gates of righteousness, or those that were bid to lift up their heads that the King of Glory might come in. The brass gates giving access to Henry VII.'s Chapel—to mention another masterpiece in Westminster Abbey—are very handsome. There is a central gate, eight feet six inches wide, between two piers of stone, and one on either side of it five feet wide. Above all three runs a cornice crowded with angels, like a gallery filled with an angelic host. The central gate is eleven feet and three inches high, and is divided into sixty-eight perforated compartments, almost square, in which are wrought various devices, the arms of Westminster, heraldic lions, fleur-de-lys, falcons, the initials H.R. crowned and tied together with knotted cords, roses in combination with a crown, daisies also associated with crowns, all of which have special significance; and the framework encompassing all these panels is enriched with dragons and Tudor roses. The smaller gates have twenty-eight of the same panels filled with similar devices. It has been noticed, in looking narrowly, that the masons left too large a space for the central gates, or the smith made them of insufficient dimensions, for additional stonework has been added on either side of them. There are some curious iron gates leading from the nave to the chancel of Arundel Church, Sussex. These consist, however, only of perpendicular and horizontal bars riveted together.

Some church doors were furnished with knockers. There is a fine ancient bronze knocker, representing a grotesque head, on the door of Durham Cathedral. It was used by the fugitives who sought sanctuary there. There is a French example on the north door of the Cathedral of Puy-en-Velay that is very similar to it, and is allowed to be the work of a smith in the eleventh century. Some ancient knockers were small mallets, and in some cases the handle of a door did duty as a knocker likewise.

Coronæ, candelabra, and brackets for lights in our old churches, in the days of old, also called forth the taste and artistic ingenuity of the smith. We have had very few specimens left to us, for the use of gas has caused them to be displaced in countless instances where they had been preserved until its introduction; and the facility with which they are melted down, and the metal made use of again, has militated against their preservation. Brass was, probably, as frequently made use of as iron for this purpose. There is a brass chandelier now in Wrenthorpe Church, in Yorkshire, which was once in All Saints' Church, Wakefield, and thence, when it was taken down to make room for gas, was removed to East Ardsley Church, where it remained for upwards of twenty years, when it was again taken down, and eventually passed on to Wrenthorpe Church, where it was hung up in the chancel. The central stem of it has a ball at the base and a bird at the top, and in the course of the length of this stem are three tiers of brackets or branches made of scroll-work, some of which curve upwards to hold candles, whilst the others are ornamental only. It is remembered there were several similar chandeliers in the fine old church at Wakefield, but this is the only one of them that has not passed out of all identification. There was, and probably still is, an ancient chandelier in the Temple Church, in Bristol, in which two sets of leaves served as sockets.

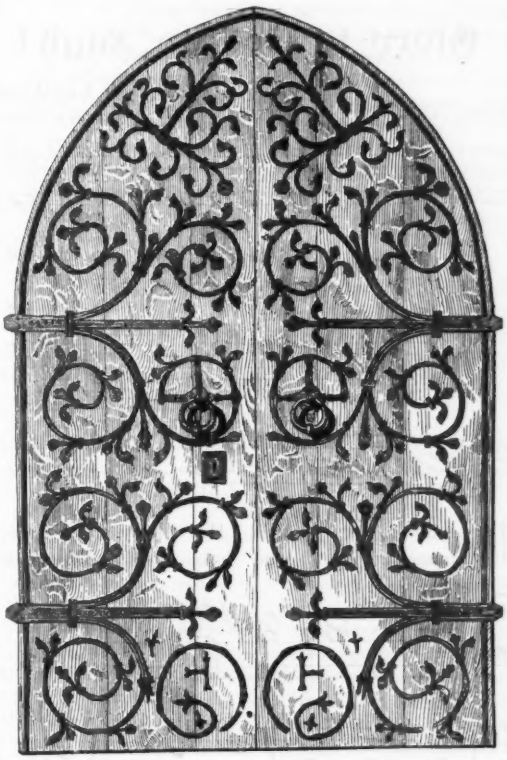


DARTMOUTH CHURCH.

Sometimes it was a smith who was deputed to make the pulpit. There are still some examples of iron pulpits, as at Middleham, in Yorkshire, and we read of others that have been removed, as in Durham Cathedral. The frame of the hour-glass was also his work. The vane, too, was assigned to him, and he also assisted at the hanging of the bells. It was the smith who bound with iron the chest that held the church valuables, and who made the marvellous lock, with plate upon plate of tracery work, till it seemed set deep in mouldings, that was to help to secure its contents, and the key that was fit to hang from the girdle of a prelate. He also made the ironwork that ornamented some of the gables and some of the gablets over bell-turrets. Moreover, the

lectern was frequently also made by him. Many lecterns, or letterns, were made of wood, but there were also many made of metal. Those that were wrought in brass in the form of eagles, with extended wings for the books to rest on, are especially noteworthy. One of the best known examples is that in St. Gregory's Church, Norwich, in which there are three lions on the three feet, as well as the superb eagle at the summit. Who shall say we are not all richer for the work these men have left us to possess?

The first mention of iron in the sacred writings occurs in connection with the appointment of the six cities of refuge for the Israelites, where it is affirmed that if anyone smite another with an instrument of iron he is a murderer. The second time it is mentioned is in the account of the overthrow of Og, King of Bashan, and the demolition of his threescore cities:—"For only Og, King of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron: is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the width of it, after the cubit of a man." Afterwards, it is occasionally spoken of in a figurative way to signify hard conditions, as when the slavery in Egypt is called the iron furnace, and when those who are disobedient are threatened that the heavens over their heads shall be brass and the earth under their feet shall be iron, and reference is made to ruling with a rod of iron, and to yokes of iron. Again, we read that Judah drove out the inhabitants of a certain mountain, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron; and that Sisera had nine hundred chariots of iron. We are told, too, Goliath's spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron, and that when David took Rabbath he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron. We know, at the building of Solomon's temple, all things were so prepared before it was commenced, that neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron was heard; but there are various allusions elsewhere to bars of iron, fetters of iron, pens of iron, and a pillar of iron. Moreover, the prophet Daniel described the great image that was seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream to be made of gold and silver, brass and iron, with the legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay, and interpreted the vision to mean that the fourth kingdom that should arise after his days would be as strong as iron, and yet, as the feet were partly of clay, would be divided, and partly strong and partly broken. In the Acts of the Apostles there is special mention of an iron gate, when the angel appeared in the prison to Peter, and told him to cast his garment about him and follow him:—"When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate which leadeth unto the city: which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him."



THE SOUTH DOOR, TURVEY CHURCH, BEDS.

Seven times there is particular mention of smiths, including Demetrius the silversmith and Alexander the coppersmith. The first time was in the days of Saul when it is said, "Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears." The next is in the Book of Isaiah, when idol-makers and idol-making are discussed: "The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms; yea, he is hungry and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water and is faint." And again: "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals on the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work." We are told Nebuchadnezzar carried away to Babylon all the princes, the craftsmen and smiths; and
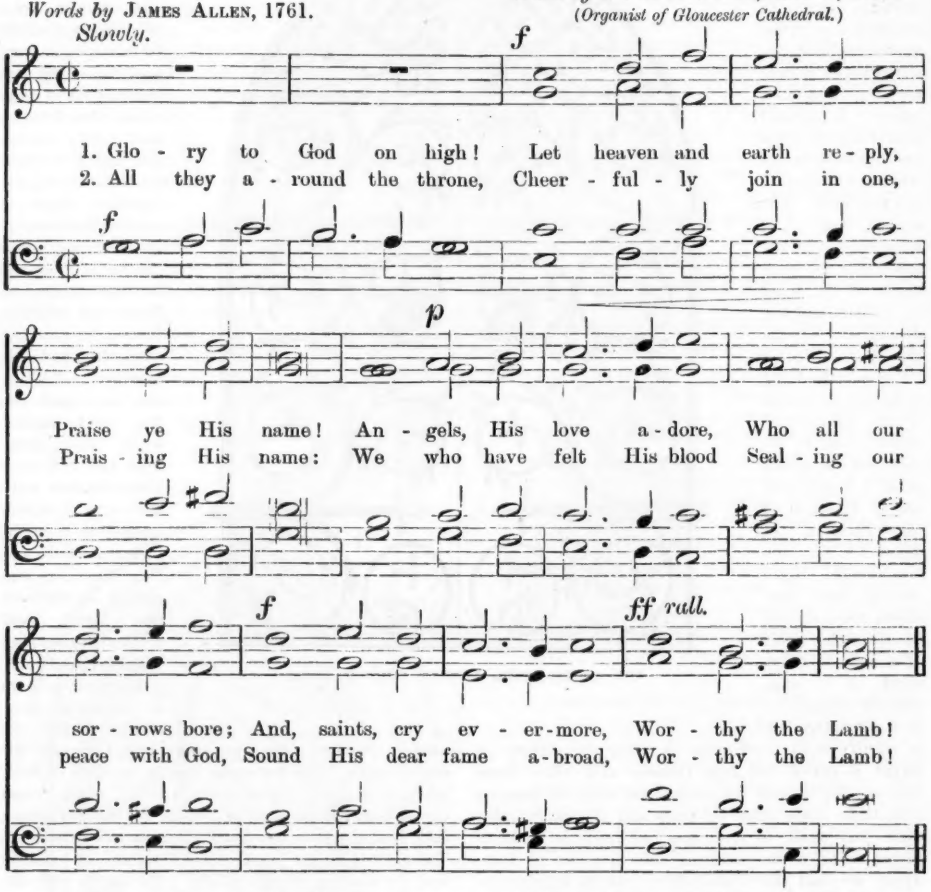
Jeremiah, writing to the captains to build themselves houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat of the fruit of them, dates his words as sent to them after Jeconiah, the king and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem.

When, therefore, we look at our ancient iron-work in our churches—the beautiful hinges, graceful *grilles*, majestic gates, traceried locks, pulpits, candelabra, lecterns, and other relics of our skilful smiths, we should remember they probably put into their work all the feeling that such associations would evoke, as well as all the power their daily experiences measured out to them; and we should value it accordingly. S. W.

Glory to God on High!

Words by JAMES ALLEN, 1761.

Music by C. LEE WILLIAMS, MUS.B., Oxon.
(Organist of Gloucester Cathedral.)

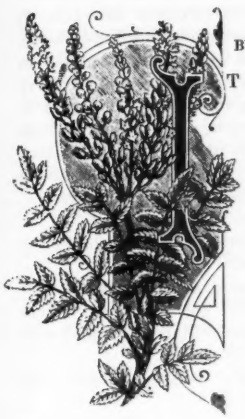


3. Join, all the ransomed race,
Our Lord and God to bless:
Praise ye His name!
In Him we will rejoice,
Making a cheerful noise,
Shouting with heart and voice,
Worthy the Lamb!

4. Though we must change our place,
Yet shall we never cease
Praising His name:
To Him we'll tribute bring;
Hail Him our gracious King;
And, without ceasing, sing;
Worthy the Lamb!

A LOYAL LITTLE MAID.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MISS HILARY'S SUITORS," ETC. ETC.



IT was in late autumn when the unexpected order came down from the War Office for the Forty-first Foot—the "Loyal Devon," as the regiment was always called—to prepare for a move to India, and when the news spread through the barracks, though some of the younger officers rejoiced at this sudden end to the stagnation—professionally speaking—of a small depôt, and half the privates hailed the notion of a voyage as a "jolly" escape from dull daily drill, yet the tidings carried woeful dismay into one military home.

The Wilsons had thought themselves sure of another year at Crouchester, with perhaps only a move to Aldershot at the end of that. Now, when the Major came into their sunny little morning-room on Abbey Terrace, and in a low voice told his wife what was at hand for them, a most expressive silence followed his words. He knew only too well what a blow he had just dealt the tenderest mother in the world. She understood only too clearly what caused the faltering voice of the soldier, who was as kind and gentle as he was brave. Neither dared look at the other, but both turned instinctively an anxious glance upon the point of their present trouble, the great delight of their lives, their one child, Ina. A bonnier, brighter child than this never gladdened any household—or so the Major thought—and from the day, near seven years ago, when, in the far-off land to which they were now again ordered, a dusky Ayah had laid his little blue-eyed daughter in his arms, she had grown dearer and dearer to her father, fonder and more companionable to her mother every hour. The delicacy small Ina at first shared with so many children of English parents in India only served to double their affection. Happily, the regiment was drafted home when the much-prized baby was but a few months old. Once in England, she throve apace. Now, taking their darling back to that scorching clime, and in the height of its summer too, could not be dreamed of, and yet——

It was not so long since Major Wilson had recovered from a sharp illness. He was not beyond wanting his wife's best care and nursing still. To Meerut she would never let him go alone. On the score of health he might have escaped going out at all, or he might have exchanged to a home-keeping regiment, but either course would have curtailed the chance of his getting his next step speedily: that colonelcy with which he would be content to leave the service, and which would provide—what he did not yet possess—a sufficiency for his little Ina's future.

He then *must* go. Assuredly his wife would be his companion. And Ina—must be left behind!

That was the prospect which sent the father to gaze dimly out of the window, unable to smile even at the awkward squad drilling below, and turned one of the child's drollest picture-books into a dull blot before the mother's eyes.

The little one herself, playing on a big tiger-skin, was presently struck with her elders' silence. Father's return from the orderly-room was generally the liveliest part of her mornings. Why did he not want her, call to her instantly, as usual? Running to her mother's knee, she put the question earnestly, "Papa is not going to be ill again, is he? Why doesn't he speak?"

Then one took her in her arms and the other drew her fair head to his breast, and both together, as best they could, told this much-loved child how she must be left awhile: for, being their only one, Ina was the entire *confidante* of their life's movements, sharing their cares as well as their pleasures.

Curious training, perhaps, for such a little thing!—making her thoughtful, self-reliant beyond her years: "old-fashioned," some people called it; but her lively temperament kept her absolutely childlike under the system, and its happy result showed itself in her power now to comfort her troubled parents better than many a wiser counsellor could have done.

Intensely sensitive, she was instantly in touch with their pain. Blessed with the rich inheritance of unselfishness, she swallowed a nasty lump in her throat as, pulling her father's face down to be kissed, she answered valiantly—

"Don't mind for me; I'll be good while you're away. I shall be safe till you come back, if you go and take care of father, so put me where you like, mother."

Where they liked, indeed!

An easy-sounding choice, but what a hard one when they came to grapple with it! For the Wilsons had no relatives ready to take their nestling in; no nursery full of cousins for her to run loose among; no friend whose home would be open and exactly suitable for her. "Leave her with us," said General Martin's wife, who was always loading the pretty child with ornaments her mother would not let her wear, and bonbons she could not let her eat; but the kind old lady had never had bairn of her own, and knew less of the management of children than of cockatoos. *That* was not to be thought of. Colonel Maude, Ina's chief grey-haired chum, would willingly have adopted his "Loyal Little Maid," as he called this pet of the Forty-first, for the time being, but as he would certainly have fed her chiefly on

chocolate creams, and his entire establishment would have made a charming toy of her the whole while, that idea could not be entertained. Schools were questionable: so-called "homes" doubtfully desirable when their heads were individually unknown.

What was to be done, then?

Ina solved the difficulty herself.

"Let me go to Margery's," she exclaimed after three days of perplexity that made her mother pale and worn; and the idea sounded like a happy inspiration, one it was strange they had not thought of before.

For Margery had been Ina's one English nurse. Belonging to the neighbourhood of Crouchester, she had been sent by another officer's wife to the Wilsons on their first return from India, had stayed with them, devoted to her little charge, for six years, proving through sundry removals from depôt to city what an appreciable comfort is a good servant; and proving, moreover, that she was as steady-headed as warm-hearted.

Vainly had a colour-sergeant, a corporal, the Major's own man, and certainly half a dozen privates, attempted to woo the pleasant-faced Essex girl. Nothing shook her allegiance to an honest young country fellow of her own parish, and when Andrew Wood stepped into the post of "looker" or bailiff on an off farm of a large landowner at Wyndchurch, why, then Andrew urged his new home could scarce be managed without a wife. No just cause or impediment preventing this, Ina had to dry up her tears over the parting; Margery went about red-eyed a week before her wedding, and only left Camp Terrace on the very morning of the auspicious day, in her pretty blue dress and her mistress's own pony-carriage.

Since then many a visit had kept alive the kindliness so many years of service had planted among them all. Margery's home was a bower of bliss to Ina. It was a roomy old one-floored farm-house, whose thick lichen-tinted thatch offered the great charm of sparrows in the early morning all the year round. It was by a wood, where pigeons cooed all day. It had a garden, where gooseberry-bushes jostled up against tiger-lilies, and sweet-williams grew as thick as grass. The apple blossoms, when she first, and the apples themselves when she last, went there were a delightful recollection. If any spot on earth could be really nice while her father and mother were away—about which Ina had her doubts, but kept them strictly to herself—why, Wyndchurch was that place; and when the elders found that "Needle's-eye," as the homestead was called, was just far enough from the village for the occupants to be all to themselves; that down the meadow and over the brook was the Rectory, where Ina could share the lessons of other children; that Margery and her husband, moreover, were exceedingly proud and delighted at undertaking the charge proposed—then the Wilsons felt the best thing they could do was to leave their child there, and made preparations accordingly.

All too soon came the day when the auctioneer's men carted off the pretty furniture from No. 7, Camp Terrace, and Ina was driven to Needle's-eye, very subdued, indeed, but quite determined not to let out that she felt rather choking. Margery gave them tea in her best room, which they tried hard to seem as if they were enjoying; then Major Wilson took Ina under his rough ulster cape, and talked with her a brief while out in the soft starlight, giving her that best of all medicines for loving hearts—something to do for those they are loving.

Little did he think, though, how the child-mind would translate his orders.

"It is so good of Margery and Andrew to have you, darling," he explained; "it comforts your mother and me so much. Our Ina will be very good with them while we are away?"

"Yes, father, I—I'll try," clinging to him very close indeed.

"And any single thing you can do for them you will? To show them how thankful we are, you know."

"Yes, I—promise."

A few minutes later Ina had said, "Our Father" for the last time by her mother's side. She was left smothering her sobs in her little snow-white bed; the great wrench was somehow over. Sadly desolate, the officer and his wife drove away from Wyndchurch, and the very next day started from Gravesend, their hearts sore with a sadness such as civilians only rarely have to suffer.

CHAPTER II.

INA had not chosen ill in electing to go to Margery Wood.

Habit made the one-time nurse the best of caretakers. Andrew, in his slow, quiet way, marked all the winning manners of the delicately reared child, chuckled over her wise sayings, and frightened his wife dreadfully by pronouncing her too sensible and nice-behaved for this world. Being promptly told, however, not to talk such nonsense, for Miss Ina was only "the very moral of her mother," Andrew withdrew his alarming observation, and merely paying their charge the compliment of brushing up his own behaviour to match hers, became Ina's very humble and willing attendant whenever Margery allowed him to wait upon her.

Besides the birds and cats, too, another delightful playfellow was provided in the shape of Bob, an amiable, not very well-bred retriever, who would actually desert his master for a game with the new inmate of the farm; so, altogether, "little Miss Wilson," as they all but Margery called her, was happy enough, save that—as she once confessed to her friend, Colonel Maude, who often drove over in his tall dog-cart to see her—"she couldn't help always feeling rather hungry." "Not," she hastened to add, as the Colonel broke out angrily with "What! don't they feed you well, lady-bird?"—

"Not hungry for *eating*, you know; Margery is always giving me nice things. But oh, I am so hungry for father and mother!"

With this came such a yearning look in the little maid's eyes as made the old officer feel quite womanish, and inclined to think that the child ought to have gone with her nearest and dearest at almost any cost. He lingered at Needle's-eye, extra tender over bidding the child good-bye that day, and stooped down from his dog-cart to give her golden head one more stroke before starting.

"You know I write to Meerut very often," he said, "so mind you let me know if there's anything you want me to tell them. Done your last chocolate, eh? Bring you some more next time I come, shall I? And whatever you want or wish for, just you say it to me; I'll see you have it. Drop me a line if I don't happen to come, you know."

"But I can't write properly," said Ina.

"Oh, fudge!" cried the Colonel gaily; "printing will do for our love letters! Mind, now"—nodding to Mrs. Wood as he drove off—"I shall expect one some day."

"But I don't think I shall have to send it," said Ina gravely, to careful Margery, who was holding her back from the cart-wheel, "because, you see, you give me everything I like—almost."

A wistful ending Margery quite understood, and promptly sought, by a visit to some week-old lambs, to chase the shadow from the thoughtful little face.

These lambs, with their ridiculous attempts at playing, and the delicious congregation of young life about Needle's-eye, and first the fluffy buds upon the sallows, and the white anemones up-springing, and then all the hazy green of the wood outbursting in May, and after that the warm, sleepy delight of summer, when she and Margery nearly lived in the hay and harvest field—all these carried Ina through what was expected to be half her country sojourn. Major Wilson would most likely return next spring. Her vivid joy when Colonel Maude carried that news was pathetic. Not less so were the quick caresses she lavished on Margery to atone for seeming ungrateful by showing the least wish to leave her. For faithfully she tried to keep her promise to her father—to be good to her guardians always; though what to *do* for them the child was continually puzzled to think.

Her range of usefulness was so uncommonly small. She knew perfectly well Margery could count the daily ingathering of eggs, and put them in their proper baskets, just as well as she could, though it pleased Mrs. Margery to thank her, and say, What should she do without her? And Mr. Wood didn't *really* want her help at making sample seed-bags. His wife would have done them better and more quickly, only he chose to be very polite, and praise Ina's handiwork profusely. That was to please her, of course. Ina could quite see through it, and it rather troubled her, for Andrew was always being kind to her. If it rained, and he had to bring his light cart round by the road and fetch her from lessons at the Rectory, he was never cross. If, on summer days, she ran down with governess and children, and called to him from the other side of the brook, just to save her going round by the bridge, and to get her back quicker to Margery, he would come in an instant, and with bared feet fetch her through the water, Bob splashing about in attendance, and would carry her half-way up the meadow-side, and never be impatient or say his arms ached, though she *must* have been heavy.

Clearly she owed a great deal to Andrew, and how to requite him she could not devise. "I wish I could," she said one day, thinking her thoughts aloud as he was carefully carrying her over the stream.

"Could what, Miss Ina?" said Andrew.

"Make it up to you somehow. You do so many things for me, Mr. Wood."

"Ay, ay," said Andrew; "now don't you worrit yourself about that. 'Tain't a long account 'atween us two. You'll square that right enough sooner or later, I'll warrant."

And curiously enough opportunity gave her the chance she so earnestly longed for very soon indeed.

Autumn was nearly over: the apple-gathering finished all but one tree, a beauty that stood with fruit as red as poppies, and as hard as its own trunk, till the first touch of frost had mellowed it. That first touch came all in a hurry early in November. Margery brought Ina's woolly clothes out next morning, and wrapped her up most prudently before taking her apple-picking at noon-time. The very lowest boughs were left for her; a lad off the farm climbed among the top ones, for Andrew was busy with thrashing, fields away. Margery herself, anxious for her handsome crop, was busy in all directions, up chairs and steps and ladder, armed with a big basket and huge wooden rake. But for once she was too active. Just when they were merriest a laden bough tempted her too forward, then broke as she grasped it. Down came the apples, and, alas! down came Margery too, to lift herself up presently most horribly shaken, with a dislocated shoulder and a face as white as ashes.

Then the boy had scampered off for Master Wood. Soon had come the village doctor, and Margery's mother from the next parish, and the rector's wife from across the brook, and this last bore Ina off to stay among her own children till young Mrs. Wood had recovered from the awkward accident.

That was not for many days; and so long seemed the time away from Needle's-eye, that Ina rapturously received Andrew when he came one morning with leave to take her back.

"My Margery is quite well now?" Ina questioned eagerly as he drove her along; and her face fell as he answered gravely—

"Nay, not by a good bit, Miss Ina. She've got to keep very still, and be bothered for naught, the doctor says, for a good bit yet. But she wasn't easy without you, so we thought we'd best fetch you back. You'll help to keep her quiet, won't you, now?"

"That I will!" said Ina; and after the first warm hug of return the child went about her nurse's room as mute as a mouse when she slept, as bright as a sunbeam when she was awake, and for a day or two all went well.

Then just when he ought to have been getting



"He would fetch her through the water."—*p.* 111.

easy and pleased, Ina noticed something amiss with Andrew.

It was one dark afternoon. He had been away and busy all day, and he came in and stood before the fire deep in a brown study for half an hour, looking exceedingly queer.

When Margery called him to go to her room, he seemed to do it unwillingly: he who had spent every spare minute at her bedside till now, and had sat up with her unwearied night after night. This evening he told Margery he was very tired after his day at Crouchester Market—and—and—— "Wasn't he hungry?" she asked anxiously. "Oh yes, he was very hungry, too." And yet he ate hardly a morsel at tea-time, left the house on some plea as soon as he could, and Ina saw no more of him that night.

Next morning was worse still. Never very talkative, now Andrew hardly spoke a syllable, and looked as if not one bit of sleep had he had all night long.

"I've heaps of things to do to-day," he just said, putting his head into his wife's room before her blind

was drawn aside, "I mayn't be in again till dark;" and then he went off, looking much worse than when he had the toothache in the spring, and returned no more till evening.

Ina had been in bed and asleep she was not sure how long when the sound of voices near woke her up. Since Margery's accident her room had been changed, and opened on to the square, comfortable "house-place" where they all sat for meals, and whence every word now reached her clearly.

It was Andrew and Margery's mother who were speaking, and the young bailiff's tone was broken and troubled.

"I tell you I'm certain. I had the whole of it just as Mr. Morriss, the corn-dealer, gave it to me over his counter. Five notes there were, and five sovereigns, all done up tight in the leasest of my sample-bags. I wrote the receipt out, and signed it 'Andrew Wood, for W. Hazledean, Esq.,' and I took the money straight away with me. Then when I put my hand in my pocket to feel for it just before I came in this house yesterday, it—wasn't there!"

"Where'd you been, Andrew, afore you started home?"

"Nowhere. I felt that done with harassin' after Margery, and that sleepy for want of proper rest, I wouldn't have stayed out longer than I was forced, no, not at a shillin' an hour. I'd sent the teammen home in the forenoon, and only waited for Mr. Morriss to pay me the money. When he gave it to me, I went right to the Crown stables, and I looked to see if Bess had finished her feed, and I harnessed her, and came back here without a minute's stop. But I tell you, outside our own door I found the money was gone!"

"Lad, lad, you must have dropped it, then!"

"Ay, I must. But where—is more than I can tell. I took the lantern, and I trod every step of the road back from here to the Crown last night, but I got nothing by that. I told old Joe at the stables the fix I was in, and he was downright sorry. He and me hunted through the straw, but it was no good. If he'd found it in his yard, he'd have kept every penny for me. But let a stranger happen of it, and there's no chance of me seeing it again. And if there's no chance of that, why, I know the master well enough. He's a hard man where money comes in. And he's a right to his own. If I have to face him to-morrow noon without that thirty pounds, why, out I shall be packed from here with a bad name, and my poor Margery——"

Here ensued some very queer sounds, hastily checked by the hearer.

"Hush, lad, hush! Now, don't take on so. It'll do no good. It'll only wake your wife up yonder. And she's none too well to-night. She's fidgeted 'cause she fancied you weren't comfortable without her about, and didn't speak to her cheerful like."

"I tried, that I did," said poor Andrew gruffly; "but I do tell her everything, and it came so hard to keep this back. It'll come harder, though, for her to hear it. And leavin' Needle's-eye like this 'll just be the death of her. Oh, that thirty pounds! That thirty pounds!"

A minute's stillness. Then said Margery's mother:

"If on'y I'd the money! But I haven't five pounds, to say nothin' of thirty. Ain't there anyone you can borrow it of, Andrew?"

He answered with a groan.

"Borrow thirty pounds! Who that's got so much would lend it to me, I wonder? Why, nobody! I feel that bad that if it hadn't been for Margery layin' here at home, I believe I should have gone to the bottom of the pond this day, that I do!"

"Lad, don't talk such evil," rebuked the old woman. "You must go lay down in the little back room, and get a bit of sleep to-night. Say your prayers, do, and get you to bed. Happen something 'll bring you out of this to-morrow."

Soon this advice seemed taken. The farthermost door in the passage off the big sitting-room was shut. Old Mrs. Carr moved softly about, clearing up for the night, then went to her place by Margery. In a few minutes all was still, though not dark, for the lamp was left burning in front of the safe cinder fire, for fear the invalid should want anything during the coming hours, and from this a streak of light shone through Ina's just open door.

It shone on a sight that would have startled the other inmates of the silent house: on Ina sitting bolt upright in her bed, eyes sparkling, cheeks flushed, heart beating fast over all she had just heard. Andrew was in distress. He wanted thirty pounds directly. The money would save him leaving this pretty home. It would save Margery from dying. They had no one to get thirty pounds from. Well, then, she would get it for them! Had she not said she would do anything she could to show she was really grateful? Had she not been longing and longing for the chance that never seemed inclined to come. Now was her time. Everything fitted in most beautifully.

This was her plan:—Colonel Maude had bidden her ask him for any single thing she wanted. Now she wanted money. Her father would pay him back by-and-bye. And Andrew wanted his thirty pounds early to-morrow to give his master. So she had better go for it to-night, and had no time to lose.

As brisk as any little bird, she hopped out of bed, slipped on her clothes, fumbled herself into her fur jacket, and, looking like some bright-eyed pixie, was stepping noiselessly into the sitting-room—for Margery must on no account be waked—when a thought struck her.

Perhaps her friend the Colonel might be out. It was rather late—near midnight, really—he might even be asleep. What if she couldn't wake him or his house? Why, of course, she had better write him a letter. That was what he had once told her to do, just as if he had known this occasion would be coming. So now for her note! Correct paper was not easily come-at-able, but that was no

consequence. Her copy-book lay on a table near. Ina gently abstracted a leaf, which had the great advantage of lines ready ruled. A-tip-toe by the table, she cedar-pencilled her missive—a mingling of printed capitals and proper letters—for Ina, dear little maid though she was, was confessedly something of a dunce. This finished and folded, without a sound she slipped the bolt of the house door, and stepped out under myriads of shining stars.

Fearlessly she started on her long lonely walk, for she had never been taught to dread the night; moreover, was she not doing what she had promised her father? Quickly the child's feet traversed the winding wood path and the broad high road. Not a living creature did she meet between the farm and the church, a mile away. A cart passed quickly then, and nothing else whatever till she was close on the outskirts of Crouchester. A carriage or two rolled by her there—from late parties, perhaps. Her mother sometimes, in most charming dresses, had gone to such. Ina could have danced for joy on the pavement as she thought of how soon she should see that dear mother again. She gave a happy little jump as the prospect flashed on her of telling a fully approving father how Andrew had got the money he needed just at the right time, like a real fairy tale. A few yards after that frisk she was at the Colonel's door—for, like many other retired officers, he lived at the edge of the town. And it was just as she expected: the house was all shut up, every blind drawn down; the only door she tried with both hands fast locked as an iron safe.

"Well, never mind. How lucky," thought Ina, "that I've written to him." Carefully she slipped her letter into the box, knowing, by the experience of frequent visits, that it would so reach him on his breakfast-table. Then, her heart very light at having achieved so much, she tucked her cold little hands up the sleeves of her jacket, and set off for home again as fast as she could go.

But the second journey was none so easy as the first. The great excitement was over, and she was *so* tired. It wouldn't matter much, though, if she couldn't go quite so fast, she kept thinking, for even at a snail's pace she must get back before Andrew's waking time next—no, *this* morning. Then it occurred to her as quite an unpleasant shock that Margery's mother might go to look at her in the night. Margery often used to see if she was tucked up. After all, she had best hurry on. But the more she made haste the more tired she grew, and oh! so sleepy. The stars went in, too; the cold became intense; her very feet, for all they trotted their best, grew heavy and numb. When she reached the cross-roads she could hardly keep her eyes open, and somehow couldn't remember which turn she ought to take, so she took—the wrong.

On stumbled the small figure some weary half-mile more; then she felt forced to rest her chilled limbs a minute on a friendly stile.

She made another attempt at going on presently, wishing very much she could remember some of her happiest good-night hymns to cheer herself up with. Somehow, though, she could only recollect:

"Death will be to slumber
In those gentle arms."

Crooning that again and again, she struggled on almost blindly, for a funny feeling came over her as of cold feathers lighting fast upon her face; and just about that time she dropped into—no feeling at all.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Andrew Wood came in at eight o'clock that morning to the breakfast he didn't want, poor man! Mrs. Carr met him with surprising words: "Why, I thought little Miss Wilson had run over to the stable to look at the horses with you. Where is she?"

"I don't know, mother," he answered, knocking his boots right and left on the scraper; "in the house somewhere, though. It's not fit for her to be runnin' out this mornin'; it's snowed a deal in the night."

"Well, she's not in bed," said the old woman, puzzled; "for I went to get her up and the room's empty."

"Gone and crept in with Margery, maybe, then. Let her stop there if she is, till I'm gone, mother. She's that quick, she's sure to find out there's somethin' wrong with me. And I can't make believe there isn't. I haven't got the spirit."

And Andrew sat down with his face so haggard and wan, that old Mrs. Carr, after an expedition to Margery's room and a thorough look round under pretence of hunting up a cat, scarcely dared worry him further with the strange fact that no Miss Ina was there. "Nor haven't been, for Margery asked after her. So wherever is she?" whispered the old woman anxiously.

Promptly, though not easily, the bailiff roused himself from brooding over his own calamity, and sought about the premises in every possible place for their much-prized charge. But there was no finding her—no hint discovered as to where she was gone. The only clue was that her hat and little fur coat were missing too.

"Would she be run to the Rectory early?" suggested Mrs. Carr, and thither sped Andrew, only to return all too soon, his honest face furrowed with new fear.

In his home tribulation reigned supreme. Margery had asked so urgently for Ina: was so certain the child was ill by her not coming in as usual, that it had been impossible to withhold from her the truth—the incredible truth—that her Miss Ina, her mistress's one dear child, the charge she never could make enough of, was—lost!

Up she got, heeding no remonstrance, and went trembling from room to room, crying, "Miss Ina, my pretty, my dear, come along; here's Margery looking for you!" No gay young voice replied by a sound.

When Andrew opened his home door, his wife met him on the threshold, her one hand seizing him with distracted pleading. "I never dare meet her

mother without her," she cried. "Oh, Andrew, find her, find her! Don't rest one minute till you have got her somehow, and fetched her back to me!"

As he put his arm round his half-helpless wife, the man looked overwhelmed, as white as she did.

"Eh, poor fellow!" the elder woman exclaimed unguardedly, "but he has got a peck of troubles all at once!"

Margery turned a quick glance on her.

"What do you mean, mother? Is there something else?" Then scanning rapidly her husband's drawn features, "Why, Andrew, you're ill! There was something the matter with you yesterday, and you wouldn't tell me. But you must now. Directly. Everything!"

To quiet her, they had to disclose the story, thus far hidden, of the terrible loss of their master's money: the ruin that hung over them. Crushed under the double blow, Margery sank down by her fireside. "I'm—I'm dizzy with it all," she murmured, turning sick and faint; and indeed they were all bewildered for a while, past any power of rational reasoning.

At ten, Andrew called his men off the farm, and all joined in searching for the child; but vainly.

Every nook of the house was explored without a trace of her being found. Not a single little footmark was there on the thick fallen snow to guide them. Deeper and deeper grew the anxiety. Then came one that made their pain ten times worse.

Along the road muffled sounds of wheels drew near, and Colonel Maude reined up by the gate and alighted, calling out cheerily, "Come along, Ina! Here I am according to command. Well,"—nodding kindly as he came in—"where's your little lady? Sit down, sit down, Mrs. Wood; you look anything but strong yet. Now then, what does my little maid think you want thirty pounds for? Her letter didn't go into particulars."

"Her letter!" cried Margery.

"Thirty pounds, sir!" stammered Andrew.

"What, you didn't know she wrote? Oh, but she knew the right quarter to apply to! Look here!" And the Colonel put Ina's queer little scrawl into Margery's shaking hand.

"Dere Maudie. Plese come to-morrow and bring thirty pounds, do come. I want it verry much. Be sure and come, becors of poor Andrew and poor Margery. Come verry erly plese. Ina."

"There, that was in my letter-box this morning before seven. So off I came as soon as I had breakfasted. I've brought the money. Now, who is it for?"

Margery gave one terrified cry. Andrew sat down and sobbed like a baby.

"Oh, good patience! she heard us talking, me and Wood, all about the thirty pound. Her door stood ajar, to be sure; but we never thought of that. And the poor little thing must have got up and wrote, and gone off with her letter when we were all asleep," explained old Mrs. Carr, quavering with fright. And that, when they were able to talk of the wretched chapter of mishaps, and to tell of their money loss, seemed the only solution of the child's disappearance.

"Never should she have known of it if I'd been up," wept Margery; "but it's all just a dreadful lot of accidents; and oh, sir! whatever shall we do?"

The Colonel, in his grief for his little favourite, could hardly give a coherent answer. The horrible fact of the small thing having wandered about the road that bitter night—his loyal little maid, for once too brave—opened the way to every species of fear. "Which way would she come back?" he asked at last, and Andrew answered—

"By the high road you drove, sir, or"—dropping his voice, awestruck with fresh alarm—"or over the fields and the stream by the foot-bridge."

"Has the bridge got a good railing?"

"N—o, sir. None at all."

"Then," said Colonel Maude, turning his head aside to hide something old soldiers are not fond of showing, "come with me now, Wood. You can pay your master presently. The poor little thing's wish shall be carried out if I can do it. But first we'd better go and have that stream dragged!"

They dragged it up to where it narrowed to a mere rill, and down to where it joined a wider river, but to no purpose.

People from all over the parish came to help, and scoured the country for half a dozen miles, searching hayricks, hedgerows, church porches, anywhere that she might have crept in for shelter: all unavailingly.

Colonel Maude set the police at work. They only found out that a dealer late on the road had passed a child; had thought of offering it a lift, but had a cart full of live goods, and so didn't. When the officer and Andrew went up at dusk to Needle's-eye, they could take half-distracted Margery not a single scrap of comfort. Even Rob, who had joined the search all day almost with the sense of a human being, lay down utterly fagged out, and thoroughly dejected.

"And the cruel thing is," said Colonel Maude—"I wouldn't tell you if I could help it, but I'm bound to do so—Major Wilson and his wife will be here almost directly. Your master got his promotion unexpectedly last month, Mrs. Wood, and under doctor's orders started straight for England. I only knew it this very morning, and should have been up to-day anyhow to tell you. The *Jumna* was expected at Devonport last night. I shouldn't be surprised if they reach here to-night, wanting, first thing of all, to see their child."

This was the last drop in Margery's over-full cup.

"May God help them!" she said brokenly, "and me too, sir," and then fainted clean away, and before consciousness returned to her the Colonel's forecast had actually come true. A Crouchester cab drove up. Ina's father and mother were in their midst, asking eagerly for their darling.

Colonel Maude always says since that his hottest battle—and he was a "Mutiny" hero—didn't take it out of him anything like those next few minutes.

Which of the two women was the wretcheder it would have been hard to say. Margery's tears fell like rain. Too generous-spirited to reproach her servant, Mrs. Wilson's mute agony was pitiful to behold. No one dared speak of consolation yet. Not a spark of hope glimmered among them all. The wind that wailed and sighed outside the house seemed but in sympathy with this unhappy group of people within.

Its fitful gusts acted on the nerves of Rob, who lay in the firelight, apparently cogitating profoundly over the mournful non-success of his day's hunting. At an extra-vehement swirl he got up and went towards the door, whining uneasily. Something without he could hear sooner than these sad, self-absorbed men and women. His whines broke soon into short, peremptory barks.

"Hush, doggie, hush!" whispered old Mrs. Carr persuasively; but Rob was not going to hush for anybody while those heavy stranger wheels he had been first to notice came grinding up the road. His clever black head all to one side one moment as if listening intently, the next he was sniffing and scratching at the door like an animal demented.

"Let him out," said the Colonel, and as Andrew obeyed, the intruding wheels stopped by the gate; the light that streamed out from the farm-house shone on a big basket-covered caravan, towards which the dog made a wild rush, with barks that set the hillsides echoing again, while mingled with his noisy joy they all heard——

What?

Why—"Rob, Rob, Rob! here I am! Yes, this is Margery's. Take me out, please. Oh!" with a shriek of rapture, "here's MOTHER!"

And a big man, all corduroy and red comforter, came forward into the blaze of lamp and logs, and put the little maid into the outstretched arms that clasped her—ah! as if they never meant to let her go again.

"I daresay, now," said the new-comer, genially gazing from one glad face to another, "you was a wonderin' where that little 'un were? Now, wasn't you? Well, we picked she up 'most starved wi' cold i' the middle of last night as we was travellin' to Endford Fair. Know she, us didn't. Speak to we, her couldn't. So bein' as us was forced to jog on, my missus let she sleep the day nigh through. And this arternoon when her woke up, an' told we wheer to bring she, why, us took an' done it! And here the little 'un be!"

Neither pen nor tongue can tell that minute's joy. Let any living heart to whom kind Heaven has given back the nearly lost imagine it without description. And then, as if their mercies, like their troubles, were not to come singly, who should jog up to Needle's-eye but old Joe from the "Crown," flourishing something at sight of which Andrew turned violently red.

"The bag, man! Wherever did ye find it?"

"Why, the far corner of the manger, lad—not an hour ago. You must have laid it there your own self, bein' sleepy and dull like, when you fetched Bess out, for I brushed the place down this arternoon, and there ter was under a wisp of hay. 'Drew 'll be rare an' glad of this,' says I, and sets off with it fast as I could travel. And you've got the little lady back too, haven't ye? Seems to me you've plenty to be glad of, then, to-night!"

To-night! Ah! and as long as they live. For from the bottom of their hearts do every one of those concerned say still, as they said then, "Thank God!" when they recall this ending to the strange journey of their dearer than ever, most LOYAL LITTLE MAID!

THE ROSEHEATH CLASS FOR YOUNG WOMEN.



"WE want your advice about something," said young Mrs. Blyth, turning a bright, eager face upon the peaceful-looking mistress of Roseheath Cottage. "Hilda and I are in exactly the same state of mind just now, and only *you* can help us."

Mrs. Granger looked just the one to respond to an appeal like this; people in predicaments usually did seek Roseheath Cottage, for they knew that the widow lady with hair prematurely white, and dear ones laid to rest amid Australian flowers, had yet

> "A heart at leisure from itself
> To soothe and sympathise;"

and the helpfulness of one whose mind is stayed upon the Lord of love and mercy.

"Everyone has heard about your successful class for young women," said Miss Berkley, who was slower of delivery and statelier in aspect than the young wife she was visiting, but an earnest Christian at heart, and full of longing to do good.

"Yes, indeed," interrupted Mrs. Blyth, "when we first came after our furnished house at Roseheath, I saw a framed notice of the meeting at the confectioner's where I had lunch; your class is a real blessing to the girls of the neighbourhood, Mrs. Granger, and when I go back to Riverlea, and Hilda to Pinedale, we *should* so like to undertake similar work, if you would advise us a little on the subject. I feel I ought to be of some help to the girls in Edward's mills, and Hilda has already been asked to interest herself in a meeting for the young women of Pinedale; so now please tell us how we are to make such work successful. It would

be dreadful to find one's efforts a failure, and gaze on a handful of members and long rows of empty seats!"

"The more the better, of course, my dear," said Mrs. Granger with a smile, "but *numbers* do not make or mar success. *One* immortal soul is priceless; one student of God's Word may mean the salvation of hundreds to be influenced by that quiet, earnest study. Our Master's message is the same whether spoken to a 'handful,' or a crowd; *our* part is to speak it right home to some hungry, wandering heart."

Hilda looked up wistfully; she was shy of speaking of you choose us a favourite hymn?' But *singing* is not the end and aim of our class, my dear; my first and chief thought in prayer and work is to bring each member and attendant to the Master in loving obedience, in devoted consecration. Show them the Lord Jesus Christ more and more fully—that is the beginning and end of your work as leader."

"I *did* try to take a class of the mill-girls once," said Mrs. Blyth, "but I felt so discouraged and disappointed; some would not open their lips, some were over-free with their conversation, and many were



THE ROSEHEATH CLASS.

on such subjects, but the throng of shop-girls and dressmakers and young women of various callings, who seemed in need of a Christian woman's help at Pinedale, had long been on her mind and heart.

"What is your chief aim in this class at Roseheath, Mrs. Granger?" she asked. "I hear the singing is a great attraction."

"Yes, we stay later every other week for a singing practice. Some of our girls have beautiful voices, that amply repay any trouble in training, and now and then during the meeting we arrange to have a solo or duet to enforce the lesson we are studying. At *every* meeting we have plenty of singing; any glimpse of fatigue prompts me as leader to give out a verse or two even during the lesson, and I can generally put an end to furtive glances at the clock by saying, 'Now will one

quite haughty towards me. I get on much better with my Sunday-school class of boys at Riverlea; boys are so frank and open—young women are often so cold and critical and unapproachable."

"And *I* took my cousin's class at Kensington for some weeks," said Hilda, "but I heard afterwards they did not care for me as a teacher; they said I was too 'stand-offish.'"

"And the Riverlea girls said I wanted to patronise them," said Mrs. Blyth. "What *is* one to do!"

"Get to know them and to love them," answered Mrs. Granger, "and let them understand you *do* love them. Love is the great leveller, or rather the great uplifter. A teacher who wants thawing should get the ice melted first on her knees ere she carries Christ's message; and one who goes to her class full of

patronage, making a mighty descent from the heights of her greatness, fails to represent Him who came in the form of a servant in meekness and humility. The best preparation, be sure, dear girls, for any work like this, is lowly and fervent prayer, and then comes earnest Bible study; you must not give the meeting that which has cost you nothing."

"How did your class here begin?" asked Hilda.

"At the bedside of a young dressmaker," was the reply. "I formed her acquaintance when I first settled here; she was a power for good in the place—she could go to no meetings, so she just did what she could. She gathered together five or six of the most friendless girls in Roseheath, and by her bedside they met for singing and Bible study and prayer: this meeting developed into a roomful at last, and when she entered into rest, I took the class as her legacy; and, as you know, we fill the large schoolroom every week. I always have printed notices in circulation among the members and in some of the shops, also I advertise the class in our local papers; Christian friends visiting the neighbourhood often look in upon us, and I have thus secured many helpful addresses for the class."

"Do you take it yourself as a rule?"

"I used to, *always;* but so many helpers have come to my aid of late that we have now arranged for quarterly programmes announcing the subjects and the leaders for each week; during the winter if I am single-handed again, I shall return to my former practice of going regularly through a certain portion of Scripture. In either case, the members of the class always know what we shall study the following week, so that they can read the lesson over and help us with thoughts concerning it, or ask questions of the leader."

"Ask questions!" cried Mrs. Blyth. "I am sure that would frighten me; suppose one could not explain everything to them!"

"Who *can* explain everything, child?" said Mrs. Granger gently; "if you take up this work you must not discourage questions. *We* found the members too shy to ask them at first, so we started a question-box in which they were put anonymously. Believe me, a spirit of religious inquiry is the promise of glorious things. You will lose nothing in the opinion of the members by confessing sometimes that you do not know the right answer; be honest, but promise likewise to search out the matter, and mind you keep your word. I invite the members also to think it over, and offer *their* explanations next week."

"I think you must want an immense amount of tact for such a class," said Hilda; "do you know each member by name?"

"Certainly, dear; that is most important. Every leader should get there early and leave last; the welcome and the personal 'good-bye' are invaluable. Also I place great stress on the personal appeal of *letters* that can be read at home in quiet, and preserved and thought about. Social gatherings in the home, garden, or drawing-room must not of course be forgotten, but, above all, I attribute our success here to the fact that some of us have long been accustomed to make each member a subject of special prayer, and we rest satisfied with nothing short of a decided stand for the Lord."

"How do you sit?" asked Mrs. Blyth. "The mill-girls *would* sit at the end of the long schoolroom at Riverlea, and I felt so dreadful, perched up there on the platform with dreary rows of seats between us."

"Oh, that would never do!" said Mrs. Granger, with a smile; "take care they know you better, and they will not want to sit so far away in the future. *We* sit in a sort of horse-shoe form; it looks more homely, I think, than regular rows of seats."

"Do the young women *pray* at your class?" asked Hilda.

"Yes, my dear; we generally have six or seven short prayers, some of them occupying not more than two or three minutes. I never dream of *forcing* a member to pray; I speak to them privately about it first; some decline through self-consciousness, which wears off as they grow nearer the Master; and some are sweet, shy souls that can scarcely bear the sound of their own voices—with the bloom of their timidity I dare not interfere. But nearly all join in reading the portion verse by verse, and we always end by uniting in the Lord's Prayer."

"Do you devote any portion of the time to needlework?" asked Mrs. Blyth.

"Not on the Thursday evenings; we keep that for our Bible class, but supplementary meetings have grown out of our class. Once a week we meet to sew for an orphanage, and once a fortnight we hold our essay society, at which the girls read compositions on subjects chosen by their own vote. In the summer we have our botanical club, and our tennis association——"

"*Tennis!*" cry the girls with wide-open eyes.

"Yes, my dears; our young women have lungs and muscles as well as yourselves, and get much less exercise. So each subscribes a little towards expenses, and sympathisers subscribe a little more, and we have many a merry game in the summer evenings. Of course we have a lending library; we want to develop our young women *all round*—soul, mind, and body—and make them healthy, good, and happy."

"Do you keep an attendance register?"

"Yes, and thus we become aware of absentees, and send some other girl to look up the wanderer and take her in charge. I do want to promote mutual interest and sympathy among the members; I try to study their dispositions, and to secure for each some friendship that will be a mutual help and benefit."

"I will try what I can do at Riverlea," said Mrs. Blyth, "but I fear all my work will be thrown away on those careless mill-girls."

"Careless they may be outwardly, dear, but each has inward needs that God only can satisfy. I think of their influence in coming years—our young women are potent to drag down or uplift England's manhood—how can we strive too earnestly to claim their influence upon the Master's side? Be sure you will never meet in His name without a blessing. Some lay stress on the importance of associating our young working women with culture and refinement and education in the contact of Christian gentlewomen; but it is *Christ's presence* that will refine them, give them help and rest and salvation and power for service. Pray for

your class and get the members to pray for it; success is sure and eternal; only be faithful, I entreat of you, in pointing every member to Jesus, and leave the results with Him."

Hilda listened silently, wistfully, her heart recording the decision that as concerned the young women of Pinedale she would put her hand to the plough. The bright-faced young wife said hesitantly, "It must be hard work to go on as *you* do all the year round; it must mean giving up so much leisure, and I should think it gets very tiring at times." But the tender-faced teacher of the Roseheath class looked out to the red and gold that proclaimed the ending of the working day, and softly repeated:—

"As labourers in Thy vineyard
Send us out, Christ, to be—
Content to bear the burden
Of weariness for Thee.
We ask no other wages,
When Thou shalt call us Home,
But to have shared the travail
Which makes Thy Kingdom come."

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

A QUIET POOL.

SHUT in by overhanging trees it sleeps,
A quiet pool scarce flecked by the sun's rays,
And, undisturbed on wildest, stormiest days,
A calm unruffled face it always keeps.
Yet 't was not ever so! In years gone by,
Ere tree-surrounded, it would sparkle bright
'Mid the fierce sunshine; or, at tempest's height,
Would writhe and leap and moan with tearful cry.

Type this of calm old age! Surrounded now
By sweet forgetfulness and dreamy rest,
No storms of care or passion touch its brow,
Each passing joy is but a minute's guest;
And so in quiet peace it lingers on,
Till the Creator calls, and it is gone.

G. W.

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM; OR, "GLORIA MUNDI."

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A.

I WENT a short time since to see the last flower-show of the year—that of chrysanthemums in the Temple Gardens.

There was something ineffably sad about it; it was Flora's last effort of the year. Her roses, and lilies, and all the bravery of her laburnums and lilacs, her painted tulips, her ever-shifting kaleidoscope of colour and form, were all gone; and, whatever she might do again next year, this year she could do no more. The chrysanthemum is a kindly flower; it tarries with us when all else has gone; and amongst those in this show were the very best which could be produced of their kind; and very beautiful, after their kind, no doubt, many of them were.

I had not gone far into the show, when my attention was arrested by a very large, well-shaped, and perfectly coloured flower; and the label it bore was "Gloria Mundi"—"the glory of the world."

Alas! its glory had already begun to be dimmed; its head was drooping, its leaves at the outward edge were beginning to shrivel—the flower had heard the whisper of death, and responded to it; the echo of the whisper was to be heard in the shrivelling of the flower's outward fringe.

"Even thus it is," thought I, as I looked on the departing beauty. "'Sic transit Gloria Mundi'—so passes the glory of the world."

Yet but a very little while, and the blossom so proudly labelled would be thrown out with the refuse of other things, the "Gloria Mundi" undistinguishable from what never had any higher claim than to be trodden under foot.

I could not separate "Gloria Mundi" from the "Sic transit" which so commonly goes before it, and which, sooner or later, plays its part in the history of all earthly states, all earthly people, all earthly things.

I do not know for certain the origin of this phrase, "Sic transit Gloria Mundi." There was a custom in Rome that when the Emperor went out on some grand day in all his imperial pomp, there was appointed an officer to burn flax before him, crying out, "Sic transit Gloria Mundi," and this was done to put him in mind that all his grandeur and honour should soon vanish away like the smoke of the burning flax. Perhaps it comes from this.

The burning flax, the fading flower, the wrinkling cheek, the dimming eye, the crumbling palace, the hard bite of the rust, the subtle fretting of the moth! The cold bright stars look down on a world of perishing glories, and the wail goes up to them that the whole creation groaneth, and a voice as from a wilderness reaches them, crying that "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Yet this is not all: this for the

present, indeed; but there is a beyond—the groanings of creation for the birth of a new glory which shall not pass away; and the voice tells us how that "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

A few thoughts on this subject at the end of the year may do us good; they need not make us unduly sad.

The glory of the world: what is it? It is its show, and possessions, and honours, and positions, and titles, its glitter, its pomp, its pride, its grandeur, its riches: all those things after which men gape, not so much for their own sakes, but because they appear to lift them up above others. These are all passing, and passing, so far as this world is concerned, into nothingness—for how many have they entirely, and in some cases almost ridiculously, passed?

To begin with: when you come to analyse it, what a poor and miserable thing any glory is, which is not connected with absolute and essential good—the glory which is attached simply to the individual!

Let us take the great kings and warriors of the world. In their day they gathered hosts of their fellow-men under their command. They were called "General" or "Emperor," or anything else you like; with these men they murdered a number of other men; and they made what were left give them money, under the name of tribute; they were merely highwaymen on a large scale. But thousands upon thousands halloed and shouted when they made their appearance—they trod upon each other's toes, and squeezed in each other's ribs, to get a sight of them. The sun shone upon their burnished armour just as it does on my fish-kettle and frying-pan, when they are kept as they ought to be; in a few minutes the road on which their triumph passed was just as it was before they came—only a little more dusty, that's all—and nobody knows anything about it now.

And at last they came to die. Then they saw what it all was. A moment before Saladin the Great died, he called the herald who had carried his banner before him in all his battles, and commanded him to fasten to the top of a lance the shroud in which he was soon to be buried. "Go," said he, "carry the lance, unfurl this banner, and while you lift up this standard proclaim, 'This, this is all that remains to Saladin the Great of all his glory.'"

"Christians," said Saurin, "I perform to-day the office of this herald: I fasten to the staff of a spear sensual and intellectual pleasures, worldly riches, and human honours. All these I reduce to the piece of crape in which you will shortly be buried. This standard of death I lift up in your sight, and I cry, 'This is all that will remain to you of the possessions for which you exchanged your souls.'"

Yes, it must all go, whatever form it takes. Poor Cardinal Wolsey, who held an orange to his nose to keep away the smell of the common people, who built Hampton Court Palace for himself, had to give his palace away, whether he liked it or not, and was deserted by all at the last, and uttered this melancholy exclamation, that, if he had served his God as he had served his king, he would not have been deserted as he was. So went human honour. But this very glory of honour passes sometimes even before the end.

Isaac Disraeli tells of a Polish king who left his companions while hunting; he was found a few days after disguised as a common porter in a market-place, lending out his shoulders for a few pence. His courtiers expostulated with him, but his Majesty having heard them, replied, "Upon my honour, gentlemen, the load which I quitted was by far heavier than the one you see me carry here—the weightiest is but a straw when compared to that under which I laboured. I have slept more during four nights than I have in all my reign. I begin to live, and to be king for myself. Elect whom you choose. For me, who am so well, it is madness to return to court." Another Polish king, who succeeded this philosophic monarch, when they placed the sceptre in his hands, exclaimed, "I would rather manage an oar!"

Pope Adrian the Fourth in early life suffered great hardships from poverty, and he told a friend that all the hardships of his life were nothing in comparison to the Papal crown.

The Emperor Diocletian found the crown so heavy that he laid it aside and retired into private life; and Charles V. gave up his and went into a monastery.

Very often the glory of the world, which we think has not yet passed, but is present, has really passed for those whom we are inclined to envy; so that after all it might be that what Queen Elizabeth (called glorious Queen Bess) said to one of her courtiers is true: "They pass best over the world who trip over it quickly, for it is but a bog; if we stop we sink."

Well, life ends, and we follow some of the world's great folk to the grave.

> "Our lives are rivers gliding free
> To that unfathomed boundless sea—
> The silent grave;
> Thither all earthly pomp and boast
> Roll—to be swallowed up, and lost
> In one dark wave.
> Thither the mighty torrents stray,
> Thither the brook pursues its way,
> And tinkling rill;
> These all are equal—side by side
> The poor man and the son of pride
> Lie calm and still."

And yet "Gloria Mundi" has tried to make its way down into the very grave itself. And there, in a kind of way, it has continued to maintain itself for awhile. At least, the people above ground thought it was there; but from the poor creature lying in the grave "Gloria Mundi" has departed for ever. His coffin might have been filled with diamonds, but he would not have known it—crowns, sceptres might have been laid there with him, but to him they would have been naught. "Gloria Mundi" in the tomb is one of the most ridiculous ideas of man.

At the time of the great French Revolution the mob burst open the tombs of the Kings of France, and a little black earth was all they found in some.

There was some "Gloria Mundi" there in the shape of silver sceptres, coronets, rings, etc.; they were all taken away; the coffins were melted down to be made into bullets; and the bones and bodies of the Sovereigns who had reigned over France for fourteen centuries were all thrown into a pit near the church, and the grass now grows over their common graves.



A QUIET POOL.

See p. 119.

Alexander the Great finding Diogenes in a charnel-house, asked him what he was seeking. He answered, "I am seeking for your father's bones, and those of my slave; but I cannot find them, because there is no difference in their dust."

The great Charlemagne built a chapel for his own burial, and there he was laid in great state—"Gloria Mundi" and he having, so far as "Gloria Mundi" could take a part in it, and so far as he could take a part, the vault to themselves. There the corpse was seated in a throne-like chair of white marble, arrayed in royal robes, crowned, sceptred, and with his familiar pilgrim's pouch by his side. In silence and in night there had he sat for nearly two hundred years; but at last one, Otto III., broke into the sepulchre, and poor Charlemagne was treated no better than a fowl, bone being separated from bone, and almost all the little bits which went to make up the great monarch when he was alive, being distributed about, here and there—and relic-hunters, and saint-mongers, and monasteries and shrines, got possession of what was left of his clothes and of his bones.

So that of him and many like him, who filled the world with their name, we may again take up the poet's words:—

> "What is their prosperous estate,
> When high, exalted, and elate
> With power and pride?
> What but a transient gleam of light—
> A flame, which, glaring at its height,
> Grew dim and died?"

Yes; if we looked onward, the grave would be the great corrective of the dazzling and deceit of "Gloria Mundi." Man walketh in a vain show and disquieteth himself in vain, and in one form or another "Gloria Mundi" has much to answer for as to this. The law of this world, and of all belonging to it, is this—"the world passeth away, and the lust thereof"; the heart would sink but for what follows—"but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever": not here, but in "the world without end." Even

> "A life of honour and of worth
> Has no eternity on earth—
> 'T is but a name;
> And yet its glory far exceeds
> That base and sensual life which leads
> To want and shame."

It may be that many of my readers say, "Oh, I have nothing to do with 'Gloria Mundi.' I am in very middling circumstances; I am nobody. I don't put up for being a statesman, or a soldier, or a man of mark; I don't keep a carriage with silver harness; I haven't a coachman with a full-bottomed wig, nor a pair of footmen with two pairs of silk-stockinged calves behind my carriage."

A word with you, if you please, Mrs. De-la-Nie. Now, you know very well that your name is Delany, and I want to know why you call yourself De-la-Nie. I want to know why you repudiate that honest name, which is "Delany" over the grocer's shop in William Street, but which is De-la-Nie in your semi-detached in the suburbs.

I want to know, Mrs. Delany, why you get out of the tram at the corner of your road, and walk up the rest of the way, when you know you are sometimes so dead beat coming from town that you'd be thankful (if only your neighbours couldn't see them) if the rails were laid right through the hall door, or, still better, the back door of the semi-detached, right up to your sofa, and if without more ado the gallant conductor handed you out of the tram into your arm-chair.

When you gave a little dinner-party—for the semi-detached would not hold a great many—and when Mr. Rayson, with whom your husband has commercial dealings, after a great deal of difficulty was hooked, with Mrs. Rayson, to dinner, I want to know why you didn't entertain them according to your means, and why you splashed out with a hired epergne, and with a guinea pine-apple, and with two German waiters to attend.

I have not done with you, Mrs. Delany; I should not have done with you if I wrote six pages instead of three. It is very rude to make a remark on a lady's dress—I know that, Mrs. Delany—unless it be to say how well she looks in it: then it is admissible. But I am not going to say that of you. I am afraid I am going to say just the contrary, if I say anything on the matter at all.

"Well, why have you that velvet dress?"

"It was bought for dear Juliana's wedding."

"And what business had you to buy it for Juliana's wedding?"

"Oh, she was marrying the descendant of a man whose godfather was knighted in the reign of Queen Anne; and, moreover, there were going to be some folk at the wedding who knew some other folk in high life, and I thought I must be equal to the occasion."

"'Gloria Mundi,' Mrs. Delany: you carried it on your head in that bonnet as much as if you had on a crown. You carried it on your back, Mrs. Delany, as much as if you were in Coronation robes; you had it in your hand in the form of that three-guinea bouquet, as much as if you held a sceptre. The world was on your head, and on your back, and, worst of all, Mrs. Delany, it was in your heart. You had no business to give more than seven-and-sixpence for a bouquet; you had no business to buy a velvet dress; the bonnet is the only thing which by stretching a point I can excuse—but the world, and the glory of being as good as others (it may be a little better), the delight of being thought, as you supposed, a well-dressed woman—a somebody—or at any rate not a nobody, was too strong for you. 'Gloria Mundi' pinched the dinner-table at the semi-detached, and tightened several domestic economies for some time, and made Mr. Delany cross, and nothing good came out of it after all. For you were observed and commented on as a woman whose face didn't match with her back, nor her bouquet with her hands (you know you shouldn't have taken off your gloves), and one of the kind ones repeated this to you; and so, when your little strut was over, 'Gloria Mundi' took its departure and that velvet was not likely to have a chance of being used—nobody knows when again—and, like Charlemagne, it is practically entombed, to

be disinterred, no doubt, some day, for what melancholy cutting-up purposes who can tell?"

O world! you are full of Mrs. Delanies, from Duchess Delanies down to Charwomen Delanies, and the "Gloria" must pass from you all.

But could there be a Charwoman Delany—or De-la-Nie?—Yes, indeed; her "Gloria Mundi" is of the glow-worm type, shining, so to speak, in the hedge—but it is "Gloria" to her, and in her little world, all the same. For "Gloria Mundi" is of various kinds, and is in different forms for different people. Mrs. Scrubs, our laundress, carries about a brass brooch with a piece of glass in it, wherewith she cuts out, and makes look small, and desires to annihilate Mrs. Softsope the charwoman, and all her ilk. In her own estimation, at any rate, she is as big as Charlemagne was in his.

What a dream the whole thing is! There go the scarlet liveries, the coach all painted and gilt; the trumpets sound, the people shout. And an hour after the whole thing is as though it had never been; a cab with the shilling fare has possession of the road, the rumble of carts, and the bawling of costers, take the place of cornet, trumpet, and drum. Where is it all? "Gloria Mundi," you passed by very fast; it wasn't worth while having to stand on tip-toe to see you, besides being trodden on in the matter of a susceptible toe, and dug into the ribs by the elbows of a lean and sharp female, and almost rolled over by the avalanche of a very fat one, and having the small of my back—O English language! help me to an expressive word. I have it!—thank you for them both—"worrited," "gouged," by an umbrella. Ah! that lady, I am sure, had a new ferrule on that umbrella during the preceding week, and it must have been made of steel, which my vertebræ, I feel quite sure—or as nearly sure as any man can be of anything—are not. A very few hours—sometimes a very few minutes—does "Gloria Mundi" last; and very little, that I can find, does it leave behind.

"Gloria Mundi!" The statesman has had it in his way, the Sovereign has had it in his, the society man has had it in his, the intellectual man in his; even, after a fashion, supremely ridiculous as it is, those who have but little of this world's position or wealth have had it in theirs; and where is it all now? Past; and very few indeed are the cases in which it has left anything behind.

Well, all this being so, what has it got to say to us? A good deal. The world, and the things of the world, and the conditions of the world, are all of use to us if we use them aright—

> "Did we but use it as we ought,
> This world would school each wandering thought
> To its high state.
> Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
> Up to that better land on high
> For which we wait."

The very realisation of the transitoriness of the world's glory would be our best preservative—or, anyhow, one of the best preservatives—against it. "All these will I give thee, and the glory of them," would be a Satanic temptation less powerful than it often is now.

And not only of the world's *glory*, but of all that therein is. The chrysanthemums which this young girl had plucked to decorate her home will soon fade, it may be that her day-dream of life will soon fade too. It is but a few moments ago that I heard of the death of a beautiful girl—a friend of mine—which shall I say, "that she faded from a twelve-month home," or "that a twelve-month earthly home faded away from her"? Ah, it matters not which. She was a beautiful flower in every way for the owner to pluck. These chrysanthemums, my child, will fade, as will all of earthly homes; the flowers of the heavenly homes, and they alone, fade never—never.

These are some of the lessons which a due estimate of "Gloria Mundi" teaches us:—

One is, not to envy those who have the "Gloria." When we envy, we little know what a silly thing we are doing. The very people we envy are often bored to death with what we envy them for. Perhaps their being used to the possession of what we and others so much admire makes it of little moment to them. We know that possession often brings indifference.

If you envy anyone what he has, and want to change with him, you must do so all round; and perhaps you would get more than you bargain for, if you did.

Very often those you envy have not as much as you think. George the Third, in one of his walks, met with a scare-bird boy sitting on a gate. The boy did not know the king—he said he was in Georgey's service, and that all he got was his wittles and his clothes. "And that is all that I have," said the king. So it is: it comes down, more or less, to one's petty personality at the last.

Envy no one—mind that. Envy can turn all you have, and are, into gall.

Do not put undue value on anything. See how much "Gloria Mundi" is in it; and take all that out before you settle the price. "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" will be something very useful to remember when you are at your appraising work.

Remember that most things have a fictitious as well as a *real* value; and a great deal of the fictitious is "Gloria Mundi."

Even if you could get "Gloria Mundi," remember how short a time you can keep it. The world itself will soon jostle you out of it, and sometimes too in a very unexpected, and perhaps disagreeable way. Haman had a good deal of it; he was up as high as he could go—but, alas! Mordecai was a dead fly in the apothecary's ointment, and he was sent a little higher; the "Gloria Mundi" of the king's gate was gone, and there was none on the top of the gallows twenty cubits high.

Let us not sacrifice the true for the untrue, like the unwise dog, which dropped the real bone, as he crossed the bridge, to grasp the shadow which he saw in the water. O dog! you were no more foolish than many a man.

Let us be satisfied to see much pass us by. Many a fine carriage passes me on the road; I have to be content that I am not in it—I am thankful for the temporary use of my legs. There is no "Gloria Mundi" about a

pair of strong boots, but they keep out the wet. And I think people in carriages often catch cold.

But let us not be dead to the idea of glory. Only let us be filled with the idea of "Gloria Dei," and not of "Gloria Mundi"—that which is not of the world, but of God. There is honour which cometh from God only—there is glory, and honour, and immortality for even those who seek for it by patient continuance in well-doing. There is a crown of glory which fadeth not away: and there let my heart be set, where the true joys are to be found.

Even earth's fairest flowers warn me to look away from the earth in which they grow; they show me to-day a brilliant colour and a perfect form, and to-morrow a faded bloom, a shrivelled leaf. And for him that hath ears to hear they are eloquent in their decay, and what they whisper to us is this—"Sic transit

"GLORIA MUNDI"

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

DECEMBER 15TH. SOLOMON'S FALL.

To read—1 *Kings xi.* 4—13. *Golden Text*—1 *Cor. x.* 12.

I. SOLOMON'S SIN (4—8). So far, Solomon's has been a glorious reign. Remind of what he was, and what he had done.

(*a*) A man of wisdom and piety.

(*b*) Had extended the kingdom largely.

(*c*) Had built a magnificent temple for the Lord.

(*d*) Was sought after by neighbouring monarchs.

But now in his old age he goes astray. What was the cause?

(*a*) *Display*—making houses, vineyards, walled cities (ix. 17, etc.) to increase his own glory and splendour.

(*b*) *Riches*—given him to make a good use of, but used for self-gratification. (See Eccles. ii. 8.)

(*c*) *Pleasure*—having a large number of wives.

See what special warnings God had given in His law against these three very things. (Read Deut. xvii. 16, 17.) What was expressly forbidden?

(*a*) Multiplying horses—especially from Egypt.

(*b*) Multiplying gold and silver.

(*c*) Multiplying wives.

And what was expressly commanded for the king? (Deut. xvii. 18, 19.)

(*a*) To write out for himself a copy of the Law.

(*b*) To study it diligently every day.

Solomon had broken these commands and neglected these duties. Hence was led into fresh sin. What was that?

Set up places of worship for false gods!

Ashtoreth—goddess of the Zidonians.

Milcom (or Molech)—fire-god of the Ammonites, to whom living children were offered in sacrifice (2 Kings xxiii. 10).

Chemosh—god of the Moabites.

And gradually similar places for the gods worshipped by his other wives.

What a terrible sight in the holy city Jerusalem!

The king who built the temple building heathen altars.

The king's wives sacrificing and burning incense to false gods.

LESSONS. Solomon's three sins very common still. (1 John ii. 16.)

1. *Lust of the flesh*—indulging the body.
2. *Lust of the eyes*—love of show and display.
3. *Pride of life*—forgetting God.

Take heed lest ye fall. (Golden text.)

II. SOLOMON'S PUNISHMENT. No wonder God was displeased! What had God done for him?

(*a*) Appeared to him twice. (iii. 5, ix. 2.)

(*b*) Given him wisdom, power, riches.

(*c*) Warned him expressly against this very sin. What was the punishment to be?

(*a*) The kingdom should be rent in twain.

(*b*) Solomon's own servant should reign.

Yet see how God remembers mercy.

(*a*) One tribe (*i.e.*, Judah and Benjamin together) left to his son.

(*b*) The division of the kingdom not to come till after Solomon's death.

LESSONS. 1. Pride goes before a fall.

2. I will sing of mercy and judgment.

DECEMBER 22. CLOSE OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.

To read—1 *Kings xi.* 26—43. *Golden Text*—*Eccles. xii.* 13.

I. SOLOMON'S SUCCESSOR. (26—40.) Solomon's troubles began with his sin.

Two adversaries had already risen up against him.

Hadad, an Edomite, who obtained help from Pharaoh. (22.)

Rezon, who made a rebellion in Damascus. (24.)

Now another formidable opponent appears—

Jeroboam, of tribe of Ephraim, a servant of the king. Notice—

His character. Mighty man of valour.

Industrious and trustworthy.

His position. At first set over city of Millo.

Afterwards ruler over whole tribe of Joseph, *i.e.*, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Thus accustomed to rule, being trained for future work.

His call. From God, who sent the prophet Ahijah to him.

The story told to him of Solomon's sin and intended punishment.

Solomon's son to have one tribe left to him. Why?

(*a*) For David's sake, who served God faithfully.

(*b*) For Jerusalem's sake, that God's light might always shine there in His house of prayer.

His sign. His garment rent by the prophet as Saul's garment (1 Sam. xv. 27) had been rent by Samuel.

His commission. To reign over the ten tribes of Israel.

His security. To walk in God's ways and keep His statutes. (Golden text.)

His future. Should have a sure house, *i.e.*, be firmly established in the kingdom.

Such was God's intention for Jeroboam. What did Solomon do when he heard it? Sought his life. How different was David's way of taking his punishment! He bowed to God's ordering, *e.g.*, when his child died (2 Sam. xii. 20), and when the destroying angel drew near to Jerusalem. (2 Sam. xxiv. 17.)

LESSONS. 1. Who can resist God's will?

2. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.

II. SOLOMON'S DEATH. (41—43.) Died after a reign of forty years, and received honoured burial. Notice about his reign—

It was *long*—forty years—same length as Saul's and David's.

It was *prosperous.* God honoured and blessed him.

It was sad at the close—like a brilliant day ending in a dark bank of clouds at sunset.

LESSON. Be thou in the fear of God *all* the day.

DECEMBER 29. REVIEW OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS.

HAVE had twelve lessons on reigns of David and Solomon.

What have been the leading facts?

I. CIVIL. The twelve tribes at first all united under King David—the country prosperous. Enemies refrain from attacking. Alliances made with foreign kings, such as Hiram, king of Tyre, and the Queen of Sheba.

BUT at last the kingdom to be divided into two parts, because of Solomon's forsaking God.

LESSONS. 1. Fear God, honour the king.

2. God makes a good man's enemies at peace with him.

3. How good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity!

4. Evil shall pursue sinners.

II. RELIGIOUS. 1. The ark brought with great rejoicing to Zion.

2. The temple built and dedicated to God.

BUT altars built by Solomon for heathen gods.

LESSONS. 1. We have thought of Thy lovingkindness in the midst of Thy temple. (Ps. xlviii. 9.)

2. I was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord. (Ps. cxxii. 1.)

3. What concord hath Christ with Belial? (2 Cor. vi. 15.)

III. PERSONAL. 1. David serving God fully.

BUT giving way to great sin with Bathsheba and Uriah.

Forgiven on his repentance.

2. Solomon asking for wisdom.

BUT letting pleasure lead him into folly.

LESSONS. 1. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor. x. 12.)

2. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. (1 St. John i. 9.)

3. Know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee into judgment. (Eccles. xi. 9.)

IV. DOMESTIC—

1. David grieves over Absalom dying in his rebellion.

2. David commends his son Solomon to the elders.

3. Solomon, to please his wives, builds altars to strange gods.

LESSONS. 1. A foolish son is a grief to his father. (Prov. xvii. 25.)

2. Hear instruction of thy father. (Prov. i. 8.)

3. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil. (Prov. iv. 27.)

V. GENERAL. We are taught during this period—

1. *The beauty of holiness.*—God's house, God's people, are all sanctified to His service. Must be holy as He is holy.

2. *Sin must be punished.*—A king's sin, a son's sin, a nation's sin. There is no respect of persons with God.

3. *There is forgiveness.*—David was forgiven. Solomon lived to see his folly, and was pardoned.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS. FIRST QUARTER.

JANUARY 5TH, 1890.—THE FORERUNNER ANNOUNCED.

To read—St. Luke i. 5—17. *Golden Text—Mat. iii.* 1.

I. INTRODUCTION.—Begin a new course of lessons with New Year. The life of Jesus Christ as told by St. Luke. Message of salvation through Christ called a "Gospel," or good-news. St. Luke's Gospel, written for Gentiles, tells most about the *human* life of Christ—His birth, boyhood, daily life, etc.—but first of all tells of the messenger sent to announce His coming, and prepare the way.

II. THE FATHER. (5—9.) Always interesting to know something of the parents of a great man. Notice about Zacharias—

(*a*) He was a priest of the course of Abia—one of twenty-four courses appointed by David for regular service of the temple. (1 Chron. xxxiv. 19.)

(*b*) He was a married man without a family.

(*c*) He and his wife Elizabeth were godly.

(*d*) He was performing his appointed duty in the temple—burning incense.

(*e*) He received a special message from God.

III. THE ANGEL. (10—12.) *The time*—of public prayer and worship—either 9 a.m. or 3 p.m.

The place—the Holy place at the altar of incense—*i.e.*, the table of acacia wood. (Ex. xxx. 1.)

The messenger—an angel sent by God from heaven, probably bright and spirit-like.

The appearance—sudden and unexpected—causing fear, as it did to Manoah (Judges xiii. 6, 22), and to the Shepherds (chap. ii. 9.)

IV. THE MESSAGE. (13—17.) God has heard Zacharias' prayer. A son shall be given him—to be called John. Notice these points.

(*a*) *His person*—sober—drinking no strong drink.

(*b*) *His character*—great, because holy.

(*c*) *His office*—to preach repentance. (St. Matt. iii. 2.)

To make people ready for coming of Christ.

(*d*) *His helps*—the Holy Ghost from his birth.

The meek spirit and mighty energy of Elijah.

(*e*) *His success*—will turn many hearts to God.

LESSONS. 1. Why was Zacharias so honoured?

Because a man of faith, prayer, holiness.

2. How was St. John to be great?

In character, office, and success.

3. Why is this greatness best?

Because it is within the reach of all, and *it lasts.*

4. How can we copy Zacharias and St. John?

By serving God, and being diligent in prayer.

JANUARY 12TH. THE SONG OF MARY.

To read—St. Luke i. 46—55. *Golden text—verses* 46—47.

I. INTRODUCTION. Last lesson told of angel's visit to Zacharias. Six months later same angel Gabriel sent to Virgin Mary at Nazareth, told her she should be the mother of the Saviour—also told her of her cousin Elizabeth. Mary leaves home to visit her cousin. Journeys from Nazareth to Judæa. Arrives at house of Zacharias. Tells her tale. Elizabeth speaks of the high honour of receiving a visit from her. Mary breaks out into hymn of praise.

II. PERSONAL. (46—49.) Praise to God for His personal mercies to her.

(*a*) In giving a Saviour to her, a sinner.

(*b*) In regarding her low estate. How shown?

She was poor—only able to offer pair of turtle doves instead of a lamb. (Compare Lev. xii. 8, and chap. ii. 24.)

She was of humble birth.

Yet rich in being the mother of Christ.

Would be held in honour by all generations.

Truly God was through her doing great things: a great thing that a Virgin should bear a son; and that Christ long looked for should now be born.

LESSONS. How are we like Mary?

Poor, lowly as regards this world.

Yet God always doing great things for us. What?

We have knowledge of this same Saviour.

We have blessings through this same Saviour.

We should daily praise Him for His personal goodness to us.

II. GENERAL. (50—55.) Nothing selfish in Mary's song of praise.

God's goodness to her similar to that shown to all the world.

(*a*) *Mercy* to those who fear Him.

Example:—Hannah blessed with a godly son, Samuel. (1 Sam. i. 20.)

(*b*) *Strength* given to His people when in need.

Example:—David enabled to kill the giant.

(*c*) *Proud put down*, and their devices made of none effect.

Example:—Chief priests in plots against Christ.

(*d*) *Mighty humbled—i.e.*, put down from their seats.

Example:—Nebuchadnezzar driven from his kingdom. (Dan. v. 21.)

(*e*) *Poor exalted—i.e.*, raised to high stations.

Example:—David, a shepherd, became a mighty king.

(*f*) *Hungry filled.* Examples:—(*a*) Feeding five thousand. (*b*) Descent of Holy Ghost on Apostles.

(*g*) *Israel helped*—in remembrance of promised mercy.

Example:—People restored after captivity in Babylon. (Ezra ii. 1.)

(*h*) *Covenant kept.* In Abraham's seed all the world was to be blessed. (Gen. xii. 3.)

Christ, lifted up, draws all men unto Him. (St. John xii. 32.)

LESSONS. 1. God's goodness to be remembered.

2. God's mercies continue to all generations.

3. God's faithfulness knows no end.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

SWEET Saviour, once again the year
Brings to the happy earth
The season, held for ever dear,
On which we hail Thy birth!

While hall and cot, for Thy dear sake,
With leaves and boughs are drest,
We need Thee in our homes to make
Our Christmas doubly blest.

We think of Thee as once a Child
Who sought a mother's face,
An Infant, innocent and mild,
Who grew in years and grace.

Our wills and tempers, Lord, control,
And give us eyes to see
The tender heart, the loving soul,
The mind that was in Thee!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

"ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT."

THE senate-house has resounded hour after hour and night after night with the eloquence of rival party-leaders, measuring oratorical weapons in a great debate. But a critical moment comes for which the managers of Ins and Outs are equally unprepared. A speaker usually verbose has for once been brief, and every calculation is awry. Unless someone rises to the rescue, the debate will collapse. Only the members who with conspicuous self-denial "make a house" while others dine are here, and not one of their number seems immediately desirous of catching Mr. Speaker's eye. The pause grows awkward. Suddenly it is ended by the first tremulous sentences of a maiden speech. A hitherto silent member has got upon his feet on the spur of the occasion, and is putting the old and wearisome arguments in a surprisingly new way before an interested, if scanty, audience. His listeners did not know that he had it in him. He is astonished at his own temerity, and ignorant yet of his own powers. But the breaking of the ice is everything. If the veil of the future could be lifted, it would be seen that the first step has been taken in a brilliant career.

The next scene is widely different. It is laid amidst pleasant trees, very nigh to a grand old manor-house. Rustic festivities connected with the coming of age of the heir to the estate are in full swing. But cares creep in even upon gala hours. There are present whispering tongues which poison truth; and a young girl listens as in a dream to the smooth protestations of a man she does not love, and who is found at her side simply because she is an heiress; and yonder another woman winds a web of flattery about the feet of the hero of the day, who is dearer than life to the resentful watcher. The sight is a keen pain, and at the moment of sharpest smart—looking back on acts and words that seem now belied—the calculated question comes: "Will you be my wife?" Pique, and pique only, dictates the answer: "Yes." And on the spur of an evil moment, a pledge has been given which pride will never allow to be revoked, and a long life-tragedy begins.

Again place and people are changed. This is a waiting-room in a great railway station. An intending traveller, whose erect form, and stiff carriage, and stern face and forehead, with the storm-line crossing it, all indicate possession of strong passions and an iron will, comes briskly in out of the searching winter wind. But he stops—irresolute, perturbed—on the threshold. Standing by the grateful fire is a duplicate, but younger, copy of himself. It is a brother, long alienated through the usual cause: faults on both sides. Neither has planned the meeting; either would have gone five miles out of his way to avoid the other. But a strange impulse, making for reconciliation, carries the new-comer forward after the first quick recoil. He holds out a hand. Do the few spectators see an olive-branch in it?

"How d'ye do? All well at home?" he hoarsely asks, and the hand is shaken, and the queries are answered, and an old feud is safely buried, and if indeed a wild nor'-easter is blowing outside, here is warmth and peace, and within two hearts the airs of summer are at large.

Life-vignettes are these, and perhaps they have their several lessons concerning that common crisis in everybody's days which is spoken of as a die cast—maybe irrevocably—at the bidding of caprice, or passion, or a generous emotion, or at a sudden glimpse of flying opportunity

The first has been placed last here, but its intrinsic importance is not least. Many definitions of genius can be unearthed, in lexicons and elsewhere, but the facets of that gem baffle the inquisitor. Yet if the great gift has been fairly described under one aspect as the faculty of taking infinite pains, it may surely, with as much propriety, be sketched from another point of view as the knack of fitting effort to season, adventure to the challenge of events, the song to the silence, the utterance of wit or wisdom to the hour of intellectual twilight. It is related of Fenimore Cooper, the creator of "Leather-stocking," one of the most original and striking characters in all fiction, that he literally formed the decision which made him a writer on the spur of the moment. He had been reading an excessively dull tale, and he lost his patience and threw the book down in disgust. "I could do better than this myself!" he cried. And he set to work and verified his statement, and became America's first noteworthy writer of fiction. Charles Reade has left it on record that reading the *Times* newspaper on a certain September day in 1853, he came upon a passage which touched his heart, and then and there inflamed his imagination, and gave him the *motif* of his first important work, "It is Never Too Late to Mend." It was by action taken upon the spur of the moment that Daniel Webster achieved one of his earliest successes at the bar, and took a long stride towards eminence. He was advocating the cause of a poor man, who was being wronged by a rich one. Convinced of the existence of fraud, he yet had no evidence that he could lay before the court, until examining an adverse witness of little or no education, he stumbled on the trail of the deceit. A legal phrase came rather too glibly from the man's lips, and it darted upon Webster's mind that the witness was reciting a lesson. He determined, in his own phrase, to "make a spoon or spoil a horn." And deliberately walking across to the witness-stand, he demanded the paper from which the man was testifying.

Confused and magnetically impressed, the witness drew it from his pocket. Webster's victory was secure. One last illustration: Sherwin, the eminent engraver, and the favourite pupil of Bartolozzi, was in early years a wood-cutter, employed on the estate of a Mr. Mitford, near Petworth, Surrey. It happened one day that he was called into the drawing-room to receive some instructions from his master. The young ladies of the house were sketching, and Sherwin watched them with so much interest that he was lightly asked if he could do anything in that way. It was the challenge of opportunity, and Sherwin met it. He took the offered crayon, and produced a sketch that surprised all present, and that on exhibition to the Society of Arts gained for the untaught, but not unskilled, artist the Society's silver medal. A bevy of laughing girls had done young Sherwin a notable service.

It is the incontestable truth that a rise in life has often resulted from a gallant effort made on the spur of the moment, and very possibly with a hope in the breast so feeble and faint as to be hardly distinguishable from despair. Stimulus should be found in the fact. If an enterprise is lawful, and devoid of other risk than that of disappointment, and unexpected opportunity seems to beckon, the inward prompting to a forward step is best obeyed. The story of our captains of industry, of our inventors, of our merchant princes, of the honoured heroes in every department of life and labour, is largely a story of timely advance.

The next typical picture involves a set of sadder considerations. To be put upon one's mettle is sometimes to have dormant powers called into activity, or to reveal to surprised observers worth that otherwise might remain for long unsuspected. But to be tempted by influences that belong to the worst side of human nature into rash decisions is to invite misery, and put a premium on defeat. The suggestions that come to us in some instant of crisis from the sinister source of passion need to be examined with exceeding care, and with an apprehension of conceivable consequences, near and remote, that is rarely secured in the seasons when the mind seems a maëlstrom. Mistakes are so easy; rectification is so hard. There is a familiar and pitiful example in the case of the wife of Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning-frame. In the outset of his active career, Arkwright was a barber at Bolton, and his thoughts were continually brooding over mechanical problems that had little relation to his trade. Mrs. Arkwright was impatient at apparent neglect of the main chance, and one day an unkind and a dangerous impulse came to her. On the spur of the moment she destroyed a number of her husband's models of machinery, the product of prodigious pains, and even thus early the proofs of his budding genius. She had shattered more than a few ingenious hints at coming labour-saving appliances. The home concord was gone, never to return. The act led to a permanent separation between husband and wife. Regrets come to us all, but they would be fewer if we were less prone to yield to the spell of chagrin or temper. It may almost be entered as an axiom amongst the rules of life that whenever the impulse of the instant has its origin in self-love, second (and third) thoughts are best.

But not invariably so when it is a generous, kindly, self-sacrificing, forgiving inclination which gets us abruptly into its grip. It is said that a pathetic story of a living lady writer, dealing with the wretchedness of a divided house, has so beneficently influenced some of its readers that long-estranged hearts have been brought once more together, and bound with the golden band of love. Such happy repentance—the knowledge of which must be a rich reward, for the writer—was surely *quick* in its manifestation. A great wrong has been done; yes, but is not alienation a greater wrong yet? If the feeling that it is time for everybody's sake that bygones were bygones moves the heart to an effort at reconciliation, it is well to act on the spur of the moment, to go out and tap at the neglected door, to speak the healing word, to sit down at the desk and write the magnanimous letter. Surely this is the teaching of our third simple parable.

What of the last of these life-vignettes? Do we not all know these Reubens of to-day who are unstable as water, and cannot excel, who are the slaves, and not the masters of circumstance, whose wills bear the mark of every successive mould into which events cast them, who are at the mercy of stronger men, who are always acting on the spur of the moment? These are our failures, industrial, political, social, and, alas! moral. They promise well when fancy looks upward to the high places to which stout heart and sure foot may hope to climb. They volunteer for service in every field. But quite as quickly they swerve from the toilsome path, or desert in the face of the enemy. They are persistent in nothing except irresolution. Under pressure of conviction, when faults are pointed out, they repent, and vow amends, and under stress of new temptation—"just this once"—they repeat the old folly.

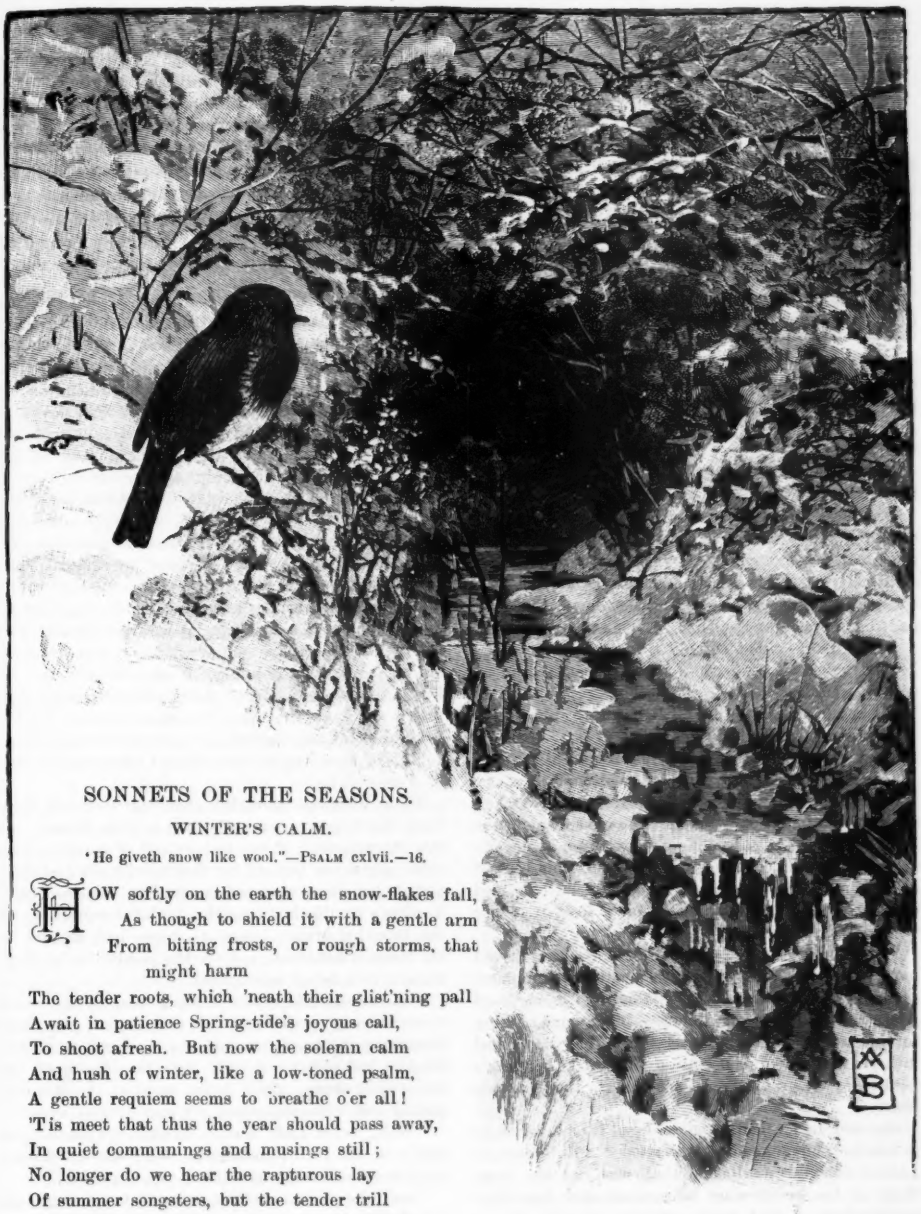
But to weave into a noble and lovely pattern the web of our days, we must have staying power as well as beginning power. To venture forth on the spur of the moment and attempt a new work is sometimes a wise, if a daring procedure. But not if the heart is soon to faint, and the hands to tire.

To gain life's successes, to earn in any sphere—even the lowliest—to earn a good name, and the commendation of conscience, there must be a stern resistance to many foes, within and without, that in unwary moments menace persistency of aim or integrity of conduct. A watch must be kept against freaks that would also be falls.

The subject is many-sided. Surveying the great field of mystery which we call human life, and realizing how large a part apparent accident plays in determining the progress whether of the individual or of the race, feeling how inexplicable are often our own most weighty decisions, and how trivial a thing may issue in momentous change, it is a deep solace and joy to know that through every devious way an unerring Providence guides the children of the King. The world is not given up to chance. "On the spur of the moment" may perhaps sometimes be man's phrase to designate the leadings of the Power

——"that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

FELIX FERRY.



SONNETS OF THE SEASONS.

WINTER'S CALM.

'He giveth snow like wool."—PSALM cxlvii.—16.

HOW softly on the earth the snow-flakes fall,
As though to shield it with a gentle arm
From biting frosts, or rough storms, that might harm
The tender roots, which 'neath their glist'ning pall
Await in patience Spring-tide's joyous call,
To shoot afresh. But now the solemn calm
And hush of winter, like a low-toned psalm,
A gentle requiem seems to breathe o'er all!
'Tis meet that thus the year should pass away,
In quiet communings and musings still;
No longer do we hear the rapturous lay
Of summer songsters, but the tender trill
Of trustful robins cheers the short-lived day,
From alders, drooping o'er the silenced rill!

E. M. ALFORD.

WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER V.

LADY ROSALIE'S NEIGHBOURS.

"Along the cool sequestered vale of life,
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way."—GRAY.

LADY VEREKER and Lancelot drove home together along the leafy Warwickshire lanes, where the trees met across the narrowest places, and the hedges on either hand were starred with dog-roses, and the banks gay with stitchwort and ragged-robin.

The tender evening light lay on the broad green fields; there was a faint blue mist under the distant trees, while the sunset shimmered through the nearer branches, and turned their leaves to gold. The square tower of Warwick Church rose above the meadows, recalling both to mother and cousin the distant "Maudlin" where their boy was, as they both fondly imagined, working hard for his degree; and neither spoke till the great tower, with its airy pinnacles, was out of sight. It had been a very silent drive all the way, for both had been busy with their own thoughts, and disinclined for speech.

"Well, Lance, what do you think of her?" Lady Vereker asked at last; and Lancelot answered, in an odd, constrained voice—

"It is not what I think, but what Ray thinks that matters, isn't it?"

"Ray cannot help thinking her beautiful."

"He did—at Easter," said Lancelot drily.

"It is only three months ago," said Lady Vereker, with some impulse of defence. The next moment she laid her hand on Lancelot's arm with an apologetic gesture. It seemed almost a wrong to this best of cousins and of friends that she should have deemed defence needed. But Lancelot only looked at her with a radiant smile.

"Did you ever know a fancy of Ray's that lasted more than two?" he cried, with a sort of triumphant gladness she could not understand. The sight of Avice had made her very doubtful if any man's liking for her would be the passing fancy that Ray's had hitherto been, and consolation built on her son's fickleness was scarcely acceptable to the mother's heart.

She and Lance had often deplored it or laughed at it together, but somehow there seemed a difference in Lance's tone, an exultation that was not the same thing as the overflowing admiration and love that could afford to find fault, because every fault was held at worst a virtue in disguise. Fickle? Of course Raymond was fickle, they had agreed a hundred times, but it only meant that he was so impulsive and warm-hearted, and so generously ready to believe in everyone. It was not his fault if his idols fell short of his first expectations, and the celerity with which they succeeded each other only showed the hopefulness of his nature and the goodness of his heart.

This was how Lady Vereker and Lancelot had hitherto spoken of the little weaknesses that proved Sir Raymond mortal; but the mother's fine ear detected a difference in Lancelot's tone to-night. He said no more, whipping up the ponies and driving silently along the sweet silent lanes, and Lady Vereker leant back amongst her cushions, silent as himself.

Her own feelings were too perplexing and engrossing to allow her to speculate on Lancelot's. While she had been under the spell of Avice's beauty, under the magic of the soft serious glances and sweet magnetic tones, she had not been able to resist their influence, or to regret that the girl her boy was said to hold dear was such a one as this. Even the almost professional singing that jarred on the aristocratic ears of Sir Raymond's mother had only half broken the spell. But now, as she drove through the familiar lanes, the feelings which had been temporarily in abeyance, overpowered by the onrush of new emotions, re-asserted their sway. Avice Meredith she still confessed to be of a beauty she had never seen before, with looks of marvellous sweetness, and a manner of quite exceptional charm; but it was not a question of beauty, of sweetness, or of manner, but of suitability. Was this unknown friend of Lady Rosalie Finch's, of whose pedigree Lady Rosalie frankly confessed she knew nothing, was she—however beautiful and sweet and charming she might be—was she, or could she be, a fitting bride for Sir Raymond Vereker of Verecroft?

These were the thoughts that had weighed upon Lady Vereker ever since she had left the Rosery. It was characteristic of her, and, indeed, of Lancelot also, that—given the fact of Sir Raymond's admiration—neither had for a moment doubted its return. Lady Vereker's trouble had been the doubtful suitability of the intended bride; Lancelot's hopes had centred on his cousin's fickleness, not on the possibility of Raymond's love being unrequited.

And meanwhile, Lady Rosalie and Avice were unconsciously retaliating on the guests who were discussing them. Hilda had not returned, and Lady Rosalie had thrown herself into the largest of the many easy-chairs, while Avice stood at the window, gazing out with abstracted air and dreamy eyes.

"Well," cried Lady Rosalie briskly, "what do you think of the future mamma? Will she do, Avice? And do you like her as well as you expected?"

"As if I expected anything!" said Avice, laughing. "And I was not thinking of Lady Vereker."

"You own the soft impeachment, then?" said Lady Rosalie. "I expected you would affect a blushing ignorance, and ask me whom I meant."

"Not when I knew. I own to nothing but the possession of an average amount of intelligence, but

after all the nonsense you have talked about Sir Raymond, *half* the average amount would have enabled me to know you referred to Lady Vereker."

There was a flash in Miss Meredith's eyes that made Lady Rosalie disinclined to argue the question.

"Well," she said placably, "and how do you like her?"

"Better than she likes me, I fancy. She looks sweet and good—not at all like her son."

"Isn't *he* sweet and good?" cried Lady Rosalie, with many notes of exclamation in her voice. "Is that how you speak of an absent friend?"

"I don't mean that, of course," in half-offended tones. "Those are not words one applies to a man. But they just fit Lady Vereker. She is certainly sweet and good, and I could imagine her being very fascinating. I think she would be so to anyone she liked; but she did not like me."

"My dear, that is nonsense. I am sure she admired you immensely."

"Oh, very likely," said Avice calmly; "but admiring and liking are different things."

Miss Meredith was quite above the affectation of pretending to be ignorant of her own good looks. The average intelligence she modestly claimed made modesty on this score simply impossible. She neither ignored her beauty nor held it cheap, but was grateful for it, as she was for her fine voice and English birth, for her mother and her sister, and whatever other good gifts a kind Providence had bestowed upon her for no merit of her own. It was not a gift she would have coveted, she thought.

"Does any woman want to be loved because her nose is straight, or her eyes a darker grey than other people's?" she had said with some indignation, when Lady Rosalie had prophesied "crowds of lovers" on the ground of these distinctions. But that was when she first came back from Germany, three months ago, and since that she had found a dignified indifference the best defence against Lady Rosalie's too open admiration. She was very fond of Lady Rosalie, but there was a strain of over-familiarity in the kind, big, fussy woman that set Avice's nerves on edge, and made her put on her most dignified and touch-me-not air. It was so apparent now, that Hilda Jackson, strolling in from the garden when the sound of the Verekers' carriage-wheels intimated that the coast was clear, inquired what her friends were quarrelling about.

"Quarrelling! We never were further from it in our lives," affirmed Lady Rosalie. "Wasn't it lucky Avice came in before Lady Vereker went? She has made quite a conquest, I am sure—and if you had only heard her sing!"

Avice laughed good-humouredly.

"I shall run away if you talk such nonsense, Lady Rosalie," she said, taking up her hat.

"Why, my dear, you know perfectly well that if your face wasn't your fortune your voice would be. I've heard nothing like it since Clara Novello."

"Rather my voice than my face," said Avice proudly. She said no more. She could not tell Lady Rosalie how it hurt her to have such things said, and if she could have stooped her pride to do so, she knew quite well that Lady Rosalie would not have understood.

"There's been nothing like her since Clara Novello, has there, Hilda?" the kind, obtuse woman went on, appealing to Hilda, who was looking from one to the other with much covert amusement. "I assure you, when she was singing that air of Mozart's I could fancy I heard the angels, and my poor dear Charlie's voice——"

There were tears in Lady Rosalie's eyes, but Hilda objected to sentiment, and crushed it ruthlessly.

"Considering that 'poor dear Charlie' had the mildest and flattest bass it was ever my lot to listen to, it isn't much compliment to Avice to talk like that," she observed. "Dry your eyes, Rosalie, and don't be a goose. I want to know all about Lady Vereker's visit, and if Avice is to go to Verecroft with us on the twentieth."

"I never thought of the twentieth, and I don't believe Evelyn did either. But Avice shall go, if I have to beg for an invitation on my knees."

Miss Jackson laughed at her friend's enthusiasm, but Avice looked imperial disdain.

"Do you think I would go anywhere where you had to beg for an invitation for me, Lady Rosalie?"

"Well, well, my dear, I dare say not," conceded Lady Rosalie, who would have accepted any invitation that suited her, with entire indifference as to the means by which it was procured. "You need not be afraid. I shall manage it without that, I've no doubt."

"You will 'manage' nothing for me, please," said Avice gravely. "You mean to be kind, I know, but you do not understand. If Lady Vereker asks me of her own accord, I will go. If not, nothing should induce me."

She wished her friends good-bye, and went away, and Hilda Jackson broke into a laugh almost before she was out of hearing.

"A nice hoity-toity young madam, upon my word! But come, Rosalie, tell me all about Lady Vereker. Did she make mincemeat of you for letting her cosset darling entangle himself? And what did she think of Miss Avice?"

"I thought they got on very well; but, of course, she had heard some exaggerated account of Raymond's attentions, and I fancy she thinks he's in earnest for once. She wanted to know all about Avice and her people—but really there wasn't much I could tell her."

"Particularly little, I should think! It always strikes me as very odd how little you seem to know about them, and how ridiculously Mrs. Meredith shuts herself up. I don't believe they know a soul in the place but you."

"And Mr. Collingwood."

"The vicar? But that goes for nothing. Clergy always have to know their parishioners more or less. Mrs. Meredith has lived at the Hermitage as long as you've lived here; and if it hadn't been for the scarlatina, I don't believe you would ever have been inside the house."

It was true: more entirely true than either Hilda Jackson or Lady Rosalie imagined. Mrs. Meredith had come to the Hermitage, the next house to Lady Rosalie's, about fifteen years ago, with two little girls whose extraordinary beauty was the talk of the place, but she had brought no introductions, and evidently desired no society. A few people called, and amongst them Lady Rosalie Finch, but Mrs. Meredith was at home to no one, and returned none of the calls. She was never seen except on Sundays, when, attired in the deepest widow's weeds, she attended the nearest church, and Mr. Collingwood, the vicar, assured people that Mrs. Meredith's spirits were quite unequal to the reception of callers.

Time went on, and the widow's weeds gave place to less funereal garments, but Mrs. Meredith preserved her strict retirement. It became understood that the widow lady at the Hermitage did not desire to be visited, and for many years her privacy had been invaded by no one but Mr. Collingwood, who paid a parochial visit twice a year; and Lady Rosalie Finch, whose utter inability to feel a snub, made her go on calling long after more sensitive people had given up the attempt to make Mrs. Meredith's acquaintance.

Lady Rosalie was not sensitive, and she was very good-natured. She was sorry for her neighbour's lonely and solitary life, and she had no perception that her efforts to ameliorate it were unwelcome. She fraternised with the two pretty children across the hedge which divided the Hermitage garden from her own, bought them bon-bons, and lent them books; finally, on hearing that they were both laid up with scarlatina, she took the Hermitage by storm, insisted on helping to nurse the children, and bound the mother's heart to her for ever by the devotion with which she performed her self-imposed task.

Since that time the Hermitage doors had opened freely to Lady Rosalie, but to no one else. Entreaty and argument had alike failed to induce Mrs. Meredith to accept her lively neighbour's invitations. She was pleased to see her at the Hermitage, but she would not go to the Rosery, or allow Lady Rosalie to introduce her to Leamington society. The girls were sent abroad to school, and till they grew up Mrs. Meredith persisted that she had no heart for gaiety, and no desire for any society but Lady Rosalie's.

Avice and her sister had been home three months now, but it seemed as if the habit of seclusion were too strong for their mother to overcome. She still shrank from society in what Lady Rosalie considered a quite unaccountable manner, and accepted her offers of chaperonage for the girls with almost disproportionate gratitude.

And so it came to pass that Avice and Margaret Meredith made their entrance into society under Lady Rosalie's wing, were seen at all the little dinners, the "musicals," and afternoon teas that made the Rosery so popular, and went with their kind and vivacious friend wherever she could procure an invitation for them, or felt intimate enough to take them without one.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHILE THE STARS SHALL SHINE."

"There is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies."—COWPER.

NEVER were sisters more dissimilar than Avice and Margaret Meredith. Avice—proud, imperial, passionate, reserved—seemed a different order of being from the bright and engaging Margaret, whom no one could call strictly beautiful, but whom many decidedly preferred to her stately and unapproachable sister.

"The plain Miss Meredith," Margaret called herself, with loving delight in her sister's superior beauty; but if she was not beautiful, she had one of the pleasantest faces in the world, full of dimples and smiles, of archness and drollery, of childlike innocence and gladness. It was altogether a round and childlike face, with soft blue eyes, big with love and wonder and trust, a small freckled nose, a mouth that disclosed a row of tiny teeth, small and white as a child's, and a broad fair forehead, framed in clustering rings of soft brown hair.

Avice—stately Avice—had never been called by a pet name in her life, but Margaret was hardly ever called by her own. Daisy was her usual appellation, and even Mrs. Meredith, the least caressing of women, found endearing epithets for this youngest child of hers, and called her Mavourneen or Mignonette when she did not call her Daisy.

Lady Rosalie sometimes reproached the mother for her partiality for Daisy, but Avice was not jealous. She was not of a jealous temperament, and indeed she knew there was no cause for jealousy. Between Mrs. Meredith and her elder daughter was the fine instinct of intuitive comprehension, born of close resemblance, and scarcely ever found except in those united by ties of blood. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been nature's closest bond, but with this mother and daughter it seemed only to deepen their natural reserve. For confidence, if it is to exist between natures so finely attuned to each other, must be mutual, and Mrs. Meredith had a secret she had never confided to her children, and which she prayed they might never know, and the consciousness of its existence rose up daily between the mother and the daughter who knew and felt and understood every look in her mother's eyes, and every inflection in her voice. Mrs. Meredith loved the daughter so like herself with a passionate intensity that Daisy could neither inspire nor return, but she set a guard on her lips and locked her heart against her, and seemed indifferent and cold, when she was only afraid of herself and of what she might betray.

And Avice understood, at least so far as to know that the coldness was not indifference. But though she understood, she felt the chill. Confidence could never have been easy, perhaps could never have been possible, to Avice Meredith, but there was no doubt that her mother's reserve deepened her own, and, well as they loved each other, it seemed to the girl sometimes as if they were like friends who wave farewells across an impassable stream.

Mrs. Meredith and Daisy were in the garden when

Avice came back from Lady Rosalie's. She saw them, but she did not go to them. She went up to her own room, and watched them as they paced up and down the walk at the end of the lawn, and felt an unreasonable sensation of relief that she had not yet to give an account of her afternoon, to meet her sister's lively comments, or feel that her mother's absence of comment was more significant still.

She lingered over the adjustment of her dress, smoothing the unruffled hair that owed its perfect arrangement to her own clever fingers, and pinning fresh flowers to her dress with a carefulness innocent of coquetry, and guilty only of an unaccountable desire to postpone the meeting with the others. She did not admit the desire to herself, but when she went down and found that they had not come in, the time that might elapse before they detected her presence assumed quite distinctly the aspect of a respite.



"Avice sat down under the lime-trees."—*p.* 135.

It was all the more foolish, she told herself, because there was nothing she wished to conceal. There was no possible reason why they should not know that she had met Sir Raymond Vereker's mother, nor even that she had felt the meeting to be not entirely a success. Her mother and Daisy were too sensible to have put any faith in the nonsense Lady Rosalie had talked about Sir Raymond. And for herself, though she had

understood the *empressement* with which Lady Rosalie had introduced her to Lady Vereker, she had not shared in the feeling which induced it. She had liked Sir Raymond very much, until—well, until he had made a goose of himself; but she was not so foolish as to believe in the raptures and sighs, the high-flown words and love-sick glances, that would have been all very well on the stage, but that seemed to have a note of unreality in an English drawing-room.

Miss Meredith laughed a little now as she recalled her young admirer's tragic looks and tones, and the little romance Lady Rosalie had so evidently built upon them. It was so like Lady Rosalie, it was not worth while to be angry about it, or Avice could have found it in her heart to be very angry indeed. The idea which underlay Lady Rosalie's complacency, the idea that she was to be congratulated on the conquest of so eligible a *parti* as Sir Raymond Vereker of Verecroft, was an affront to her pride and an outrage to her self-respect which Avice Meredith found it hard to forgive. She could have taken Rosalind's advice and thanked Heaven for a good man's love; but she would not be thankful, nor allow Lady Rosalie to be so, because the man happened to be a baronet.

"Avice, have you got back? We thought you were at Lady Rosalie's still," exclaimed Daisy's joyous voice, as that smiling little person flitted back to the house at last, while Mrs. Meredith's trailing black draperies swept more slowly across the lawn. One of the points in which Avice and her mother resembled each other so closely was a certain regality of movement, especially in walking, and the train the elder lady wore gave her dignified gait an additional stateliness. She had left off weeds long ago, but she always wore black, and her abundant hair, bright as Avice's still, was covered by a plain white cap.

"Have you enjoyed yourself, my dear?" she asked, as she came in and saw Avice. "We hardly expected you back so soon."

"There were not many there," Avice said indifferently, and her mother asked no more. It was Daisy who cried, with a bewitching little pout—

"You might tell us all about it, Avice, for you know we always like to hear. Who were there? and what songs did you sing?"

"Nothing but what you have heard a dozen times. And no one was there but Lady Vereker."

"Lady Vereker!" The name was repeated in tones of surprise, but it was Mrs. Meredith who uttered it. She looked at Avice with sudden interest.

"You have seen her at last," she said. "What is she like? How does she look? She must have altered very much since—since she was young."

"Did you know her when she was young, mamma?" Daisy asked, her round blue eyes rounder than ever with surprise and curiosity.

"I saw her once, many years ago," said Mrs. Meredith, in what Avice felt to be a repressive tone. She could not have asked her mother another question to save her life; but Daisy did not feel repressed, she only felt curious and amused.

"You knew her, and you never told us? How very odd!" she laughed. "Was it when we first came here, or before you were married, or when?"

Mrs. Meredith did not answer Daisy's question directly.

"It is a long time ago," she said, "and I only knew her slightly. She has probably forgotten me, and certainly I have no wish to recall myself to her remembrance."

"Oh, but I should!" said audacious Daisy. "It would be so much nicer for Avice and me. You do shut yourself up so, mamma."

"Nonsense!" Avice interposed sharply. "Why should we want to drag mamma out if she is happier at home? Come into the garden, Daisy; it is too hot for anything in here."

She went out into the pretty little garden, where the lilacs were in all their first freshness and beauty, and Daisy followed in some surprise.

"Why do you tease mamma with saying things like that?" exclaimed Avice. "Can't you see she doesn't like it?"

"But, Avice, indeed I think it is true, and somebody ought to say it. Lady Rosalie is very kind, but it would be so much nicer if mamma went with us. It would make us seem, somehow, of more consequence, don't you think?"

"I don't think anything, except that I am sure mamma would not like it, and that we ought not to tease her about it. We do very well with Lady Rosalie: and as for being of consequence, no one is that who is as poor as we are," said Avice philosophically.

"But if mamma knew Lady Vereker, we should be asked to Verecroft, and Lady Rosalie has never taken us there. You would like to go to Verecroft, Avice, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," said Avice frankly; "I should like it very much, if Lady Vereker asked us of her own accord. I should not like mamma to try and renew an acquaintance she evidently does not care for, in order to get an invitation, or for Lady Rosalie to scheme for it, as I'm afraid she does sometimes."

"Well," said Daisy, "I believe we shall go without either of those dreadful things. Sir Raymond will take care of that, you will see."

"I—I am not sure that I want Sir Raymond to take care of it. He is a very nice boy——"

"Boy? when he comes of age next month!" exclaimed Daisy, with the deep respect of her seventeen summers for the magnificent age of twenty-one. "And, Avice, you know how much he likes you."

"I know how much he says he does. I don't think it goes very deep—he talks too much for that."

"I thought you liked him," said Daisy, in a disappointed tone that made her sister smile.

"So I did, so I do—when he isn't silly," said Avice, with an evident reference to Sir Raymond's florid protestations that Daisy thought ungrateful and unkind.

There was nothing silly in adoring Avice, thought the loyal little sister, who wished success to Sir Raymond's wooing as heartily as Lady Rosalie herself. She was not proud—or, at least, not in Avice's way—and thought besides that any man ought to feel he had won more than his deserts if he won Avice's love. She would have liked to talk longer about Sir

Raymond Vereker, but her sister did not encourage the subject, and Daisy found the short indifferent answers disappointing, and presently flitted away to water the flowers in the tiny conservatory.

Avice sat down on the bench under the lime-trees, which was her favourite seat. There were bees humming amongst the blossoms, and a thrush singing on one of the branches. She could see the dark outlines of her mother's figure as she sat at work beside the open window, and Daisy's white dress fluttering amongst the flowers. The long sunset shadows were lying on the grass, the bells of one of the churches were calling to a week-night service. It was all very sweet and peaceful, but Avice was restless and disturbed. She would not have owned that the events of the afternoon had anything to do with it, and yet they had made an unacknowledged crisis in her life. She had been unwilling to discuss them, but she could not forget them, and as she sat and mused under the limes she seemed to live them all over again. Her mother and her sister, the flowers around her, and the swaying shadows on the grass faded from her sight; the distant bells and the thrush's jubilant song no longer reached her ear. She was not in the Hermitage garden; she was in Lady Rosalie's drawing-room singing, and a young man she had never seen before was coming in at the door, and looking at her as no other man had ever looked.

"I am thine while the stars shall shine!"

She drew in her breath in a long-drawn quivering sigh, and the colour mounted to her brow. What had those strange looks meant, and why had she been singing just those words?

CHAPTER VII.

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

"In this fool's paradise he drank delight."—Crabbe.

"I HAVE had a letter from Ray," said Lady Vereker, looking across the breakfast-table for Lancelot's sympathy.

Mrs. Kenyon always breakfasted in her own room, and Lancelot thought the meal he shared with his dear benefactress was the pleasantest of the day. He looked back at her with the smile that came so readily to either face at Raymond's beloved name.

"From Ray? So have I. How good of him to write to us both!"

"Is there anything particular in yours?" asked Lady Vereker, with the pleading look that meant "Show it me, if you can."

"No," said Lancelot, handing it to her. "You will see he is full of the boat-race last week, and can write of nothing else. He wants to know if we couldn't get up something of the kind for the twentieth."

"It would be very pretty, wouldn't it?"

"But the Avon is not the Isis. And where are the boats to come from, or the rowers?"

Lady Vereker allowed herself to be convinced, but she sighed, as she always did when any of Ray's desires were found to be impracticable.

"I suppose it would not do; and if you explain how it is, perhaps he will not mind."

"He will not mind," said Lancelot confidently. "You know how hot he is about everything at first, and how quickly he cools down again."

Lady Vereker agreed, but she looked uneasy still. Lancelot had been fond of referring to his cousin's love of change ever since the day he had driven her into Leamington. He had meant it well, no doubt, but, after all, he could not know Raymond as well as she did, and the letter she held in her hand was a refutation of the very point he seemed always trying to prove.

"He does not cool down about everything," she observed. "He wants me to ask Lady Rosalie to bring the Miss Merediths on the twentieth."

Lancelot looked up in unaffected surprise. He did not speak, for it suddenly seemed to him as if he had lost the control of his voice.

"You thought he would have forgotten all about her by now," said Lady Vereker plaintively; "but this does not look as if he had forgotten."

"It is not the twentieth yet," said Lancelot. He had found his voice again, but he spoke with an effort, and with the air of a man arguing almost against his convictions. "It is not the twentieth yet," he repeated; "and I don't see how he could avoid asking Lady Rosalie to bring the Miss Merediths, when he knows they always go out with her. The only wonder is we never thought of doing so. Lady Rosalie must have thought it very odd, after Ray's being there so much at Easter."

"I wish you had been at home at Easter," sighed Lady Vereker. If Lance had been at home, she thought, Raymond would have had no temptation to spend his days in Leamington; but Lancelot had spent his Easter with a college friend, and had only got back the day before Sir Raymond returned to Oxford. She had been sorry for the cousins not to meet, the cousins who were so much more like brothers in their attachment to each other, but perhaps she had purred a little over the thought of having her boy entirely to herself. And after all, she had not had him. He had spent his days at Lady Rosalie's, and she had only thought that he found Verecroft dull, and never even guessed at the attraction the Rosery had held for him.

She tried to think that Lancelot was right, that it was all over now, and that the request to include the Miss Merediths in Lady Rosalie's invitation was only a formal civility, which could not have been omitted without positive rudeness. Of course she would ask them, the docile mother decided; and when the acceptance came, she tried to think that she was glad.

Telling Mrs. Kenyon would be the most disagreeable part, because she never understood Raymond as Lancelot did, and would be sure to regard the invitation as more significant than it really was.

And indeed, Mrs. Kenyon smiled her most sarcastic and unendurable smile, when she saw that the Miss Merediths' names had been added to the list for the twentieth.

"I am glad your son's choice meets with your approval, my dear," she said, with incisive scorn.



"'Forgive me, forgive me,' she cried."—*p.* 140.

"The young person does not belong to the class from which the Verekers have been accustomed to take their brides, but if *you* are satisfied, I suppose no one can complain."

"I do not know that Miss Meredith is my son's choice," said Lady Vereker. "I am not asking her for any reason of that sort, but because she is a friend of Lady Rosalie's. You are mistaken, mother, if you think that our asking her is anything but an ordinary act of civility."

"Then the county will certainly be mistaken too! The county will regard it as a public approval of Raymond's suit; and if the girl is not a fool, she will think so too."

"Miss Meredith is a beautiful and ladylike girl," said Lady Vereker, with unusual spirit—for might not Avice Meredith be her son's bride even yet?—"and I do not think there is any fear that she will misunderstand. Lancelot quite agrees with me."

"Bah, my dear! Lancelot would agree with you if you told him my best black velvet was a white grenadine! Lancelot, indeed! Lancelot!"

Mrs. Kenyon walked away in high disdain, but as it had become practically impossible to please her mother, at least where Raymond was concerned, Lady Vereker was less distressed than she would have been a few years ago. And after all, she thought, why should not her Ray please himself? Surely a Vereker had blue blood enough for himself and his wife too! A Vereker ought to be able to mate where he pleased, if that was really in his thoughts; and if it was not, there was no harm done.

So Lady Vereker looked forward to the twentieth with almost unalloyed delight, while Lancelot awaited it with a feverish impatience exceedingly unlike his usual calmness and self-control. To see Avice Meredith again! To hear the matchless melody of her beautiful voice, and feel the soft regard of those incomparable eyes! He had not been to Lady Rosalie's again. He felt that he could not present himself there except as Avice's suitor, and it was impossible so to present himself till he had Sir Raymond's assurance that his own suit was withdrawn—supposing that it had ever been actually paid. He knew what Ray's florid manner was, and how apt people were to misunderstand it, and think it meant more than it did. And though Ray had raved about her to himself, she was by no means the first girl he had raved about. The thought of Sir Raymond's fleeting fancy for Miss Meredith was not enough to disturb his cousin's peace; it was only enough to keep him away from the Rosery, and give to his passion the determining force which the possibility of opposition brings.

There was much to be done in Leamington just now that only Lancelot could do, and though he avoided the Rosery, from a delicate sense of honour that seemed even to himself Quixotic and overstrained, he met Avice sometimes in the town. It was no wrong to Raymond, surely, if, when his business was done, he strolled down the Parade, before going back to the livery-stables where he had put up his horse. The Parade is free to all, the shops are inviting, the mere sight of the great elms where the rooks still build is refreshing on a hot summer's day.

And sometimes he was rewarded. Sometimes—stepping, Mr. Vereker thought, like the goddess of Virgil's fancy—Avice Meredith would pass by, and smile ever so little, and bend her beautiful head, and the wide, bright modern street would suddenly become enchanted ground.

There was one day he always remembered, a day when the sun blazed on the Parade, and seemed to have driven everyone but himself from it. He had done his business unusually early, and he turned away from the glare of the hot white pavement and went into the Jephson Gardens, where there is always the shade of dark-leaved trees, the splash of fountains, the coolness and beauty of smooth lake and velvet lawns, the Leam gliding cool and green under the cool greenery of drooping willows.

A few people were walking about amongst the ilexes, and on a seat directly in his path were Lady Rosalie and Avice Meredith. Lady Rosalie was frankly glad to see him, and if Avice was less frank, there was nothing to suggest that she might not be a little glad too. She was very quiet, he thought, and there was something that might have been shyness in anyone less perfectly graceful and self-possessed.

He was much too shy himself at the sight of her to be able to improve his opportunity, as Sir Raymond might have done, and was certainly far too self-conscious and disturbed to be a fair judge of anyone else's demeanour. For the love which had taken such sudden and complete possession of him was humble, as the love of a very proud man always is, and Lancelot Vereker was dumb and awkward as a schoolboy before the girl who had become to him the "one woman in the world."

"He has not half such good manners as Sir Raymond," Lady Rosalie said, when he had gone.

Avice said nothing. She only smiled a little, and sat looking at the soft green lawn before her, with the tiny lakelet sparkling in the sun, and a swan floating on the still surface, and mirrored in the glassy depth below.

"What are you thinking of?" Lady Rosalie asked rather tartly. She detested silence, and Avice had not opened her lips since Mr. Vereker went. They curved now into a rather incomprehensible smile.

"I was thinking how beautiful everything is," she said simply.

To her, as to Lancelot, the memory of that sweet summer day would be immortal. Always she would remember the sunny lakelet set in the emerald lawn, the white cups of the water-lilies, the swan that, like Wordsworth's, "floated double, swan and shadow." Always she would hear the splash of the fountains, and the distant murmur of the weir; always she would remember the bending willows and the dark, still river, and the church, with its rose-shaped window and graceful spire, rising above them all.

She would remember it, but she could not talk of it to Lady Rosalie. That was impossible—as impossible as it was to enjoy the privilege of silence when her vivacious ladyship was by.

"I see nothing particularly beautiful in the day," Lady Rosalie said now, in rather an injured tone. "It is just like any other day at this time of year, only a good deal hotter. Leamington is unbearable in summer, and if it were not for the Verecroft affair, I should be off to the sea next week. I am glad Lady Vereker sent you an invitation, for really, it is for your sake I am going, Avice."

"For my sake? How good of you, if you do not really care about it," said Avice gratefully.

Her eyes shone; she pressed her friend's hand affectionately. She had professed a good deal of proud indifference on the subject of the Verecroft *fête*, but the thought of not going to it seemed suddenly intolerable. How could she ever have fancied that she did not care to go?

"It is very good of you to stay," she said, with grateful iteration. "I hope you don't mind it very much."

"It was Hilda who minded. She hates Leamington in hot weather; but now Captain Hallam has come back, she will be glad enough to stay."

"Captain Hallam? Who is he?"

"Surely you must have heard of him? He is a great friend of ours. You must have seen his likeness in Hilda's album; she has him in every conceivable position—full face, profile, three-quarters——"

"Oh, then I know! Only I didn't know his name. I supposed it was someone Miss Jackson was engaged to, so I did not like to ask about him."

"Nonsense, my dear," said Lady Rosalie, on whom refinements of delicacy were always thrown away. "Whether they are engaged, or whether they ever

will be, is more than anyone knows but themselves. All that I know is that it won't be *her* fault if they 're not."

"Poor Miss Jackson! She would not like you to say so," said Avice, shocked at what she regarded as a breach of friendship; but Lady Rosalie only laughed.

"What does it matter when she doesn't hear?" she said comfortably. "And though I'm very fond of Hilda, I know it is absolutely true. She spends her days in running after him whenever he 's with his regiment at Warwick, and I 'm about tired of playing gooseberry for her."

"Oh, Lady Rosalie, are you sure? Perhaps you only fancy things——"

"Fancy? No, there 's no fancy about it, as you 'll soon see now he 's come back. Why, what do you suppose she asked Daisy to walk on the Warwick road for, except for the chance of meeting him?"

"Oh!" cried Avice, in shocked, indignant tones. "She should not have done it! Daisy is so young—oh! Lady Rosalie, why did you not tell mamma, or me?"

Lady Rosalie stared at her agitation in uncomprehending astonishment.

"My dear child, there 's no harm done," she protested. "Daisy will have had a pleasant walk, and if they do meet Captain Hallam, even your mother couldn't object. He is one of the pleasantest men I know, and one of the handsomest, to say nothing of his being a perfect gentleman."

"But if he knows—or guesses——" murmured Avice with burning cheeks.

"Whatever he knows or guesses, he will have the sense to know that Daisy has nothing to do with it."

"It is putting her in a false position," the elder sister said. "Oh! if I had only known, she should not have gone!"

"It is nothing to be so vexed about, I assure you. Hilda wanted me to go, but as I told her this morning, I draw the line at Warwick. I don't mind going on the Parade, for there are always the shops to amuse you there, but to play gooseberry on a country road is a little too much?"

"And so you sacrificed my sister!" Avice thought indignantly. She was very angry; but to say any more would have made an open breach; and the thought of Lady Rosalie's many kindnesses forbade the thought of that. It would probably have been quite useless too, and Avice did Lady Rosalie the justice to believe that she was quite sincere in saying she saw no harm in Miss Jackson's proceedings. She had spoken of them with amusement rather than reprehension, and Avice knew that her own view of the matter would be scouted as high-flown sentiment. She could only give up the hopeless task of convincing Lady Rosalie, and content herself with determining that Daisy should go no more walks with Miss Jackson, at least while Captain Hallam was at Warwick.

She walked back home with Lady Rosalie, in more annoyance than she allowed to appear, and was relieved to find that Daisy had already arrived.

The sweet childlike face was "sunning over with smiles," and Daisy had evidently enjoyed her walk, undisturbed by any doubts as to the accidental nature of the meeting with Captain Hallam.

"He knows Lady Rosalie and Miss Jackson quite well," Daisy explained, when she had related how they had met Captain Hallam near Emscote, and how he had turned off with them into the Guy's Cliff fields. "And, Avice, he wants to know you so much, for Miss Jackson has told him all about you, and about your singing; and he is coming to the Rosery to-morrow night to hear you."

"He is very much mistaken if he thinks I shall go," said Avice, with her stateliest air. "I dare say he is very pleasant, Daisy, but from what I hear of him from Lady Rosalie, I feel sure I should not like him. I would rather you went no more walks with Miss Jackson while he is in the neighbourhood, for I don't consider him a desirable acquaintance, and I don't believe mamma would like us to know him."

"He is a son of Lord Blackstone's," Daisy ventured to observe, with rather a crestfallen air.

"Lord Blackstone! A law lord! That is not the slightest guarantee that his son is a gentleman!" said Miss Meredith crushingly. And if Daisy looked as crushed as she felt, she must have looked very crushed indeed.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR RAYMOND'S RETURN.

"It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly."—SCOTT.

THE twentieth of June was close at hand—so close, indeed, that the sun going down behind the Verecroft elms in a crimson sky that augured a cloudless morrow, would rise on the eventful day itself.

Sir Raymond had come home an hour or two before, and Lady Vereker was full of delight and satisfaction quite past expression. Sir Raymond had inspected and approved all her preparations, and pronounced them perfect, and now they were sauntering back from the park, where the tents were already pitched, and the tables laid, and even the wickets in place.

"But it is not me you must thank—it is Lancelot. I could have done nothing without Lance," Lady Vereker said, with an affectionate look at the tall figure on her other side. She was always so afraid lest Lance should feel himself neglected when her boy came home. But Lance had no small jealousies, and was perfectly content that his cousin should be first in his mother's heart, as a son has a natural right to be.

It was impossible to look at this son, as he walked by his mother's side, and doubt that he enjoyed his rights to the uttermost. Lady Vereker could hardly take her eyes from his face, and it was a face on which no mother's eyes could have failed to rest with love and pride. Sir Raymond Vereker was a very handsome man, and though his dark complexion and magnificent eyes made Lady Rosalie call him a brigand, and had earned him the name of "Frenchy" at school, where that convenient appellation sums up all European nationalities but our own—there was something distinctly English in his manner and style—the seal which Oxford sets upon her sons and which, when the priggishness has worn off, produces some of the most finished gentlemen in the world.

And yet, handsome as he was, generous and frank and open-handed, he was not as popular at Verecroft

as his cousin Lancelot. He had grown up there from babyhood, but he was not in touch with the people in the village, or even with the servants whose master he would be to-morrow.

"He means well," said Mr. Hopkinson, the gardener, when he retired to his pretty cottage, after showing Sir Raymond and his mother and cousin over the gardens that were in a state of almost painful precision in readiness for to-morrow. "He means well, but he 's a deal to learn yet. 'Stiff,' he called my carpet-beds, and I could see he didn't like 'em. My lady, she leaves it to me; she understands what 's what, and Mr. Vereker too. But Sir Raymond ain't like either of them, nor like any Vereker as I ever see. If I could only raise a orchid, or a seedling dahlia, as unlike the parent stock as he is, my fortune 'ud be made. A freak—that 's what we should call him in our perfession, and a very handsome freak, too; but he might show a little more consideration for a perfessional man's feelings. Mr. Vereker, he 's different; he turned round and said how well the colours contrasted in the beds, and what a eye for colour I must have, just for the sake of saying something pleasant, and showing he understood. He 's a deal more of a Vereker than Sir Raymond, though he is only a poor relation, and dependent on my lady for everything he gets."

Mr. Hopkinson wasted a sigh on Lancelot's hard fate, that would have considerably astonished the object of his pity. Dependent as Lancelot Vereker might be—nay, as he actually was—pity was the last thing he gave himself, or desired of other men. If he was dependent, it was a dependence so delicately veiled, so overlaid with kindness and consideration and true affection, as to leave no room for bitterness, but only for gratitude and love. He was dependent; but only as a younger son may be, to whom all comes by the free gift of parental affection, and his future was as well assured as any younger son's. He had been made to understand this from the first, but he was to have still further proof before the night was over.

It was one of the exquisite summer nights, when it seems as if the day that has gone for ever were only sleeping, and not dead. There is no darkness, and the tender dusk seems rather a veil than a pall. There are no shadows, for there is no light strong enough to cast them, but we can see quite clearly the familiar outlines of house and trees; the white gates stand out from the green around. As our eyes grow accustomed to the soft dim light, we can distinguish the white or yellow petals of the brighter flowers. The moon hangs a silver crescent on the low horizon; a few stars throb faintly in the sky, that is still almost blue; little birds still dart and twitter here and there; a thrush still sits full-throated on a bough close by us, and will not say good-night.

"One could fancy it was a nightingale," Lady Vereker said. She and Lancelot had come out again after dinner, for Mrs. Kenyon had intimated that she wished her grandson to remain with her, and could dispense with their society.

"And I should not like dear Ray to vex her to-night, of all nights," said Lady Vereker, as she and Lancelot went out on to the terrace, in obedience to the old lady's wish. "No shadow shall come on his birthday if you and I can help it, shall it, Lance? And my mother is always impatient with poor Ray, and sometimes, I am sure, not quite just."

"She is *never* just to Raymond," said that young man's faithful and constant defender. "Do you know what she wanted him for to-night?"

"Partly; and I think she meant me to tell you when she asked us to leave them together." Lady Vereker paused a moment, and when she went on there was a note of pain in her voice that went to Lancelot's heart. "You know, Lance, that my mother has always had your interests very much at heart, and I think she fancies sometimes that I do not quite consider them as I ought."

"Dearest and best of friends, you shall not say such things!" cried Lancelot. "Do you want to make me feel a monster of ingratitude and baseness? What does it matter what Mrs. Kenyon thinks or says? Has she ever loved me or cared for me as you have done? She has been very kind; she has given me whatever money could buy; but it is you, it is *you* who have given me your love. It is you who have been like a mother to me all these years, who have made this house the happiest of homes, who—— Oh! I have no words to say what I feel, but if ever I can show it——"

He broke off, visibly moved, and Lady Vereker was scarcely less so herself.

"Dear Lance," she said softly, "it is good of you to feel like this—my own dear boy, my other son. I hoped—I *knew*—that we loved each other too well for any doubt on your part to arise."

"Doubt! Doubt of you!" The scorn in his voice was grateful to her.

"No, no! I knew you too well! But my mother thinks—and she is right—that there should be some definite arrangement now Ray has come of age. It could not be before, when it was all in trust for him; but now the estate can be charged, and Ray will be only too glad. I ought to have seen that you could not be dependent on him just as you have been on me, but you and Ray have always been so like brothers——"

"We are like brothers—we *are* brothers!" cried Lancelot. "There is the same blood in our veins, for are we not both Verekers? And do we not love and reverence the same dear mother? If we were both your own children, could we be more entirely brothers than we are?"

"Dear Lance, I know, but I know too that my mother is right. We must talk about it to-morrow when the lawyers are here, and whatever is fair and right Ray will agree to, I know. Now, I will not hear another word! You may be content—nay, I know you are content—but you will not always be so. When you marry——"

"When I marry!" he repeated blankly. Had his precious secret escaped him unawares, and did Lady Vereker know or guess at the thoughts and hopes that lay hid so deep in his heart that hardly had he dared to acknowledge them to himself?

"You will marry some day, I hope," she said, with the vague optimism with which we all regard a future

untrammelled by any visible connection with the present, "and when you do, you will be glad to know exactly how you stand, and what your prospects are."

Lancelot breathed more freely. It was evident that his secret was safe. But the chance allusion had turned his thoughts into a channel from which they were not easily withdrawn. Lady Vereker still paced the terrace by his side, wondering a little at the silence that had fallen upon him, and perhaps even misunderstanding it; but Lancelot was scarcely conscious of her presence. The love he had professed for her, the love that had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, was real, and true, and steadfast, but it did not, it could not dominate his being as this other love that had sprung into existence in a moment always must and would. He was one of the men of whom it would always be said—"Who loved one woman, and who clave to her," and now, in the first exaltation of this one and only love, other women were for him as though they were not. Even Lady Vereker, dear friend and almost mother as she was, sank into insignificance before the vision that filled the night with the beauty of the one matchless face, and peopled the silence with the echoes of the one beloved voice.

He had not spoken of Avice to Sir Raymond yet. Anxiously as Lancelot longed to know how far his cousin was still influenced by the feelings that had seemed so strong at Easter, so strong that surely they must have burnt themselves out in the flame of their own fierceness before this, he had not found opportunity (or was it courage?) to utter her name, and Sir Raymond had been equally reticent. In the few short intervals in which the cousins had been alone together, Lancelot had been nervously silent, and Sir Raymond had talked of Oxford, and of the arrangements for to-morrow, as if he had no other interest in the world. Whether it really was so, or that he shrank, like himself, from touching a deeper chord, Lancelot could not determine, but he felt that he must know before he slept to-night. He wished that Raymond would come out, or that Lady Vereker would go in and put an end to that interminable *tête-à-tête*. He wondered irritably what Mrs. Kenyon and her grandson could be talking about so long; and then suddenly the sound of angry voices struck a discord on the sweet peaceful night. They were Mrs. Kenyon's and Sir Raymond's; hers sarcastic and bitter, his passionate and defiant.

Lady Vereker and Lancelot looked at each other in alarm, but before they could stir or even speak the voices stopped. A door banged loudly, and silence ensued. They went in and found Mrs. Keynon alone. She had risen from her chair, and stood leaning on her stick, facing them with glittering eyes.

"Mamma, what is it? Where is my boy?" poor Lady Vereker cried. Mrs. Kenyon laughed sardonically.

"Shall I tell you?" she asked. "Could you bear to know, or would it kill you, as they said it would twenty-one years ago? Your boy! That is all you can think of still. If you knew what I have dared for you, what I have borne for you all these years—the misery and the self-reproach——"

She sat down suddenly and hid her face. When she raised it, it was wan and grey, and Lancelot saw that she was shaking like a leaf.

"What have I said?" she whispered faintly, looking from one to the other. "I have said nothing, have I? I couldn't—after all these years! Your boy, Evelyn, has gone to his room, that is all. We had a little difference of opinion, as we do sometimes. You had better go to him. And, Lancelot, come here."

Something in her tone compelled obedience, low as it was. She did not speak till Lady Vereker had gone, and then she looked at Lancelot as if she would read his very soul.

"If anyone had wronged you, Lancelot Vereker, could you forgive?"

"I—I hope so," stammered Lancelot, too astonished to say more. The question was so utterly unlike anything he had expected, and Mrs. Kenyon's expression was so strange. "Why do you ask?" he cried. "Who has wronged me, as you call it? How can I tell if I can forgive, unless I know the offence, and the offender?"

Mrs. Kenyon shuddered. It almost seemed as if she shrank away from him.

"I cannot tell you," she said huskily. "Not now—not to-night—it would kill her! I thought, when that young man angered me just now, that I could do it—but not when I saw Evelyn. Do not ask me, for her sake!" And then, to Lancelot's amazement, she fell on her knees at his feet.

He stared at her in utter perplexity. Decidedly, he thought, Mrs. Kenyon was bereft of her senses. He tried to raise her, but she only clung to his hand.

"Forgive me, forgive me!" she cried. "For Evelyn's—for Lady Vereker's sake!"

"You know there is nothing I would not do for her sake," he said soothingly. "Dear Mrs. Kenyon, if there is anything to forgive, you may believe that it is fully and freely forgiven. You are not well—you are troubled—let me take you to your room."

It was some time before he could induce her to consent, but at last he succeeded, and left her in her maid's hands while he went to find Lady Vereker and send her to her mother's assistance.

Lady Vereker was with her son, and as Lancelot explained his errand, she looked at Sir Raymond reproachfully.

"Ill, do you say, Lance? Oh, Ray, you should have been more patient! You forget how old she is."

"I forgot everything but the things she dared to say of *her*," Sir Raymond said. Nevertheless, he looked distressed. The storm of temper was hardly yet passed, but anger and contrition lay always so close together in the impulsive, generous heart. "Ask her pardon for me," he said, as he opened the door for Lady Vereker to pass out. "I said more than I ought, I'm afraid. But there are some things no man can hear in silence."

Lancelot looked at him with a curious tightening of the heart. Of whom had Mrs. Kenyon been speaking, he wondered, that Ray should resent it thus?

"What was it all about?" he asked, with dry lips, when Lady Vereker had gone.

"About? Goodness knows! Mrs. Kenyon chose to

be interfering and insolent. She insulted—but there, I cannot trust myself to speak of it yet. The upshot was that she vowed she would cut me out of her will, and stick you in instead; and I'm sure I hope she will. *I* wouldn't touch her money now, and it will be in the family still."

"Nonsense! you know she will come round."

"I know nothing of the sort. I only know that neither she nor any other meddling old woman shall come between me and the girl I love."

Lancelot put out his hand with a groping action. Was it suddenly dark, or was there a mist before his eyes?

"The girl you love!" he repeated. "Tell me, Ray, who—who she is. You always tell me, you know," with a faint attempt at a laugh.

Sir Raymond looked at his cousin in undisguised astonishment.

"Why, my dear fellow, I told you ages ago! You knew all about it at Easter, didn't you? It is Avice Meredith, of course."

(To be continued.)

THE YOUNG SAILOR

BY T. C. IRWIN.



I.

HALF the earth is in shadow, the polar winds blow
O'er an ocean miles deep, amid lightning and snow,
As a vessel rolls on through the circuit of night,
With sails and shrouds shattered, in piteous plight,
Every wave breaking over the prow, as her form
Drifts slanting, o'erblown by the surge of the storm.

II.

That night in her tops, in the numb icy blast,
On his watch many hours, a young sailor was cast,
And while all around filled his heart with despair,
He breathed, while life lived in him still, a deep prayer
For those then gathered round the kind fireside of home,
Far removed from earth's chances of danger and doom.

III.

Lost in darkness and space, still he tried to retrace
For the last time, perchance, that familiar dear place,
That hour when the cottage was safe from the blast,
The windows close shuttered, the doors bolted fast,
While his mother, unconscious of danger or dread,
Joined the children's sweet hymn as she put them to bed.

IV.

As he thought o'er this scene, the wild wintry wind cold
Sudden shifted and ceased; soon the high sea went down;
From the South vapours white as the warm summer's crown
O'er the course of the warm tropic Gulf Stream unrolled;
And as the poor sailor-boy, frozen aloft,
Descended, the broad wind around them blew soft.

V.

As the crew who had toiled through the dread hours of doom,
While ocean and sky seemed a vast icy tomb,
While the moon, beaming over rich coasts and their isles
Of the South, in mid-heaven lit the wreck with her smiles,
And the morning star rose o'er the waves' rosy play,—
Ere they turned in, the men gave a grateful "Hurrah!"

VI.

And another, when—now the dark tempest being o'er,
And the vessel 't was found would by noon reach the shore—
The captain served round unto all who had borne
With such courage the perilous night overworn,
While the boy who had watched from the tops, in sweet sleep
Dreamed of Home and those dear 'mid the dawn-dazzled deep.

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO HIMSELF.

BY THE REV. PREBENDARY GORDON CALTHROP, M.A.

"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"—ST. LUKE ii. 49.



N the last occasion on which we considered together the subject of the "Epiphanies," or manifestations of the Lord Jesus Christ, I commented on the visit of the Persian Magi to the little cottage in Bethlehem. I have now to remind you that, shortly after the visit, the young child was carried by Joseph and Mary into the land of Egypt. There they remained for some weeks, or months, and at the expiration of the period returned, under Divine direction, to the land of Israel. They did not, however, settle down again in Bethlehem, but moved northward to the province of Galilee, and to the village of Nazareth, from which indeed they had journeyed, in the first instance, to the city of Jerusalem.

Now as to the sojourn in Nazareth, we believe, of course, that every minutest detail of the wondrous life of Jesus, which was the life of God manifest in the flesh, was ordered and arranged by the wisdom of the Eternal Father. If so, there must have been reasons for the selection of the province of Galilee to be the cradle of the Redeemer's boyhood, the scene of the training and education of His human character. But what were the reasons? Well, amongst them may probably be reckoned the circumstance that the province of Galilee was one of exceptional fertility and beauty. There was, we are told, a hardness—a bareness—indeed, to a certain extent, a gloominess about the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and about Judæa generally. This, no doubt, was more than compensated for by the interest attaching to the Holy City, and to the towns and villages of the adjacent locality; but in the upbringing of a child the loss of beautiful and attractive scenery would have been a more serious matter than perhaps we are apt to imagine. And if it be well for a boy to spend his earlier years in the country—where he may imbibe a love of nature, and be unconsciously led up from nature to nature's God—rather than amidst the bustle and hurry of a crowded city, we can see reason enough why the child Jesus should have been familiarised from the beginning with the sights and sounds of simple agricultural life; with the fair lakes and broad harvest-fields, and bountiful orchards and flowing streams, that everywhere surrounded Him; with the glitter of the distant snow-topped Hermon, and the noble majesty of the pine and cedar forests of the two Lebanon ranges; and with the leafy glory of the promontory of Carmel, pushing itself boldly forward into the sheen of the Mediterranean Sea.

But we can imagine another and a better reason still. In the metropolis and its neighbourhood the influence of the ecclesiastical party of the day was supreme, and the result was seen, in religious matters, in a spirit of the most narrow and exclusive bigotry. In the upper province the intellectual air was freer by far. The proximity to the Gentile races, and the tide of commerce which flowed through the principal towns, brought with them dangers, no doubt, but they brought also a greater liberality of sentiment with regard to God's general dealings with the human race, and a greater sympathy with man as man. And, again, we may say that, for one who was

to be the common property of mankind—the Saviour of the Gentile as well as of the Jew—it must have been a more advantageous thing to have been educated even in a little out-of-the-way village of Galilee than amidst the rigid nationalism and the hair-splitting controversies that disfigured the religious life of the great city of Jerusalem.

That in other ways the development of the Holy Child's character was sedulously cared for we may be well assured. We reject, of course, the figment of the immaculate conception of the Virgin. We believe Mary to have been tainted with sin; needing to be washed, as you and I need it, in the atoning blood; needing to be strengthened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God. But for all that, whilst holding this view, we are left perfectly free, as I take it, to believe also that the mother of Jesus was a woman of such a character, of such goodness, such holiness, such consecration to God, such gentle wisdom, and such intellectual ability, that to her, rather than to others, could be safely entrusted the task of training her Divine Son. And this task she fulfilled, not conscious, indeed, of the full mystery of the person of Jesus (for then she would hardly have dared to undertake at all the office of His instruction), but knowing only that He was in some sense Son of God as well as Son of Man, and that a great and grave responsibility had been laid upon her. She would teach Him His first lessons, she would help Him to lisp His earliest prayers. She would read with Him, and explain as best she could the Holy Scriptures. And when He was old enough, she would probably send Him—as other Jewish children were sent—to the little simple village school, where He would sit, a boy amongst boys, conning His daily tasks, and obeying the orders of the master placed over Him.

I. In this way Jesus passed His first twelve years, in a childhood perfectly blameless, as we know, but in other respects probably not much unlike that of other children of His age, when an event occurred which constituted a sort of crisis in His history. We have the account of it in the closing verses of the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

His parents were in the habit of going up to the metropolis every year to attend the Feast of the Passover. This year they resolved to take the lad with them. It was suitable for Him to go then, in order that He might be brought into acquaintance with His full responsibilities as a member of the covenant people. And, accordingly, when the time came, they set out with Him, in the midst, probably, of a large company of their friends and neighbours bound also for Jerusalem. They would move quietly along, traversing the fair scenery of the land, and beguiling the fatigues of the road by singing the Psalms of David, until at last they arrived within view of the Holy City. What the sight would be to the lad Jesus we can partly imagine. Even if we allow for the natural partiality of a Hebrew poet, Jerusalem was "a fair city, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." And the appearance of the Temple—that huge, majestic mass of white marble laced with gold, rising from out a sea of houses and palaces, of street and arches and colonnades—must have been magnificent in the extreme. But though the spectacle would have its charms (as we believe) in the eyes of the boy who gazed upon it, it was not the magnificence and the beauty that chiefly attracted Him. It was the thought that here lay the centre and the heart of the wondrous Jewish worship, and that this was the place in which the Jehovah of Israel manifested Himself especially to His believing and worshipping people. And this feeling deepened within Him as He trod the courts of the Temple, and witnessed the sacrifices and ceremonies, or watched the long processions of the white-robed priests, or took His part in the prayers and praises which rose up from time to time from the assembled multitude. Gradually the meaning of it all unfolded itself, and gradually the boy became so absorbed in the contemplation, that all thought of the little outer world to which He belonged passed away, and the vision of the Eternal Father alone took entire possession of His soul.

Meantime, whilst Jesus was thus engrossed, the feast had come to an end, and His parents, joining the caravan of pilgrims for Galilee, had issued from the walls of Jerusalem, and had travelled some distance on their homeward journey, nothing doubting but that the lad, who had never in all His twelve years given them a moment's anxiety, was somewhere in the company. On finding, however, that He was missing, they were greatly distressed, and returned at once to the city, seeking Him. Had they understood the boy's character, they would have gone at once to the right place; but their impulse was to search for Him amongst "their kinsfolk and acquaintance." And not until the greater part of three days had elapsed did they bethink themselves of turning their steps in the direction of the Temple. When at last they went there, there they found Him. And how was He engaged? Not as our painters misleadingly represent Him, in lifting up His hands and speaking to the company round Him, but sitting in a reverent attitude, with a childlike unconsciousness of manner, on a little stool at the feet of the aged men, hearing their explanations of the Word of God, and asking them questions for His own information and guidance.

His answer to His mother's gentle and loving expostulation is remarkable. She blames Him for the anxiety He has brought to her and Joseph. But it has never occurred to Him that He is deserving of blame, or that they would fail to understand where He was, and in what occupation He would be found engaged when they wanted to find Him. To Him it was the one thing He had to do—to be employed about His Father's business. That duty was paramount, and must of necessity override every other. And it was no want of respect or consideration for His earthly parents that led Him to stay behind

in the Temple, but the simple, and for a boy the most natural, belief in the world that they were both of them in perfect sympathy with His feelings, and would be fully aware of the cause of His protracted absence.

"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

II. Let us turn now, in the second place, to an interpretation of the narrative with which we have been concerned.

It seems clear that there must have been a period in the history of Jesus of Nazareth when He was "manifested to Himself"—that is to say, when He came to understand Who He really was, and what was the work that He was intended to do. His humanity being real, and not illusory, the infant in His mother's arms—God-man though He was even then—could not possibly have grasped the thought of relationship to God. Nor could the boy Jesus have done so. He could no doubt have apprehended the general notion of God as a Father; but the special thought of Divine Sonship, the belief that He was the Only-begotten of the Father—the Son of God in a sense in which no one else could be called "the Son"—must have required for its apprehension an expansion of the mental faculties which is never to be found in so early a stage of our human career. That this expansion did take place in the case of Jesus we are informed by the sacred writer himself. "Jesus," he says, "increased in wisdom and in stature." In fact, he tells us that Jesus was subject to the law of growth which is common to all human beings. We are justified, then, in inferring—indeed, we are compelled to infer, unless we abandon the doctrine of our Lord's true and real humanity—that the child Jesus, the youth Jesus, even the man Jesus, did not at one time understand things which He understood at another; or, to put it somewhat differently, that He came at a certain period to know what at a previous period he had been totally ignorant of. It is this thought, Christian brethren, which, unless I am much mistaken, gives us the key to the remarkable narrative before us.

Up to the time when He was twelve years old, Jesus was unacquainted with His own real self and with His real mission. I would not, indeed, say that He had had no presentiments on the subject. I believe He may have had them. He may have had ideas of mysterious greatness, of alliance with Heaven, of a wonderful future awaiting Him, floating round His mind; but not taking tangible shape and rooting themselves in it. But I mean that it was on this particular occasion that He first grasped firmly the belief of a special relationship to the Eternal Father, and of a special call to a great work for God and man. It was, in fact, the time of the "revelation of Christ to Himself." He cannot be said to have been revealed to the Doctors in the Temple, for they saw Him and yet saw Him not. What they beheld was a wonderful lad, whose insight into spiritual truth astonished them, and whose simplicity of disposition and modesty of demeanour charmed them to an unusual degree. More than this they did not perceive; His real character was concealed from them. But what Jesus saw in Himself was the Son of God, and the worker who must, as speedily as possible, be engaged in doing His Father's business. And when we come to think of it, this time of revelation must have been a most momentous crisis in the history of the Saviour's spiritual and intellectual development.

III. We turn, in the third and last place, to a few simple remarks of a practical kind.

We notice, then, the early exhibition of our Lord's devotion to His God and Father in heaven. One of the most striking features of His character is His sympathy with man; His deep and intense interest in everything that is human. This was no new feeling of His. Long before Jewish days—indeed, I suppose we may say long before the foundations of the world were laid—His delights were with the sons of men, and He anticipated with eagerness the time when they should appear on the earth.

At a later period He followed the fortunes of the chosen race, appearing among them as the "Angel of the Covenant;" and we are told that "in all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them. In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old." And when at last He appeared in the flesh, a man amongst men, He gave evidence of His unchangeable regard—in the tenderness which gathered round Him all the outcast and fallen, all the weary and heavy laden, in His making common cause with every child of Adam who was willing to come to Him and to trust in Him, in His giving Himself up with an unsparing self-immolation in order to secure the highest and truest interests of the human race. But, strong as this feeling was in the heart of Jesus, it was subordinate to another, and that other was the feeling of devotion to His Heavenly Father. Man was much to Him, but God was more. I suppose we may say that man was so much to Him because God was more than man. He loved man, in God. And here in this narrative we have the earliest recorded manifestations of what perhaps we may venture to call the "ruling passion" of the life of Jesus Christ. He whose entire existence was permeated with the thoughts of the Father; who spent whole nights in communion with the Father; whose meat it was to do the will of the Father, and to finish His work; whose greatest and most agonising trial was the overclouding of the Father's countenance, which had ever hitherto been turned to Him with an approving smile—began His career in the Temple, at twelve years of age, with an intense realisation of His own personal relation to the Father, and with a profound consecration of Himself to that Father's service.

XUM

Again, we notice the readiness of Jesus to wait until the time appointed for the commencement of His public ministry had arrived. Jesus was on fire with a Divine zeal to be about His Father's business. And who was so qualified as He to do the Father's work? But the Divine command came to Him, and immediately He withdrew His hand from the plough (for the time for ploughing had not yet arrived), and went away; went away to obscurity in a country village; went to association with the simple peasants of Galilee; went to the quiet fulfilment of ordinary and monotonous duties, to the workshop and the market-place, to thought and meditation and prayer, and the study of the Word; went, in fact, to eighteen long years of silence and patient waiting, until at last the summons came, and He was called to go forth in earnest to the work of His life.

We notice, lastly, the submission of the Saviour to constituted authority. Is it not wonderful that He should thus put Himself under human limitations? But He did put Himself under human limitations. With the Divine secret treasured in His breast, Jesus—knowing now *Who* He is, knowing Himself to be the Eternal Son of God—returns to Nazareth, and places Himself under the control of human parents, themselves encompassed with infirmities, themselves liable to make mistakes, and themselves needing to be guided by that unerring wisdom that cometh down from above. "But so," He would have said to us if we had expressed surprise, "it becometh Me to fulfil all righteousness." And certainly in this, as in other matters, He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. All through His career Jesus renounced the way of self-will, and trod the lowly path of submission and obedience.

THE HEART OF THOMAS TITT; OR, THE BIG MAN AND THE BIGGER.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER II.

IN order to see how small Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford *really* was, we must take him first of all in his individuality—*i.e.*, to put it as plainly as possible, in himself. I don't think much of you, Augustus, in that light, and there are a great many others—those who look at things, and people, with an eye to something beyond this world's things and ways—who probably would say the same.

You were small in your range of thought. If the mind be indeed the measure of the man, you did not measure much. Shakespeare tells us that "the mind has no horizon, it looks beyond the eye;" but then Shakespeare did not know *you*, Augustus; and when he said that, he was thinking of people who really had a mind, which, in the meaning of the word, you had not.

You were small, Augustus, I say, in your range of thought. Whom did you really ever think of except yourself? Your big self was so big that it took all your time and all your energies to think enough about this great subject. You really never got beyond yourself. Your mind had no room for anything, or any person, but yourself. You had some opinions, Augustus, and they were very narrow ones—but you had no thoughts. An opinion is very often a notion of our own, taken up without any thought; and so you had your opinions about this and that, which might have been altered in some cases at any rate, if only you had given yourself the trouble to think.

How about that old church, Augustus? It was your opinion that everyone should contribute alike to its restoration. Each person took up as much room in it as you did (though I don't believe that either). You didn't see why you, an individual, should do more than any other individual; they had as much benefit out of it as you. There was not a big thought in the whole of that big body of yours. Perhaps, if people thought with their stomachs, you might have had some big ideas—or with their bankers' books; but there are such things as heart-thoughts, and of these, my friend, you knew nothing. And yet, God meant men to be big—to have great thoughts—not always big head-thoughts, for many people are not clever, but big heart-thoughts, for all have hearts. "The liberal man," we are told, "deviseth liberal things"—he devises them with his heart; but you were not a liberal man, and so you could not devise anything that had any nobility in it.

Not but that you once gave £1,000—aye, a good cheque on the Bank of England for £1,000, which the cashier paid too in due course—*gave it* to the famine in Bunduckipore—when I say "gave it," I mean nobody knew that you got anything for it—but, my friend Augustus, you knew it yourself—you meant to get something for it; and you did—it helped you on, with two or three other donations of the same kind, towards being what you aimed at—that was, being Lord Mayor of London. Now, observe, Augustus, I am not saying one word against the Lord Mayor—not a word that would

take away in the smallest degree from the great dignity for the year that it lasts. I admire the Lord Mayor in his robes in the daytime, and in his grand diamond badge when I have the pleasure of meeting him of an evening. I admire him in the Mansion House when he's at home, and in his carriage when he's abroad—even if I saw him walking like anybody else, I dare say I should admire him then too; he looks well in the justice-room, and I dare say he doesn't look amiss even when, like the rest of us poor mortals, he is in bed; I only mean to say that when a man gives big charities—not for charity's sake, but to push himself on, and up, to being either a Lord Mayor or anything else, he is not working out a big thought or having a big thought—he is working all the time out of the narrowness of his own little heart, and in his own little circle; he's not having a heart-thought at all—he's not going beyond himself; and he who cannot get beyond himself is and must be small.

Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford aimed at being Lord Mayor of London; he passed altogether beyond being satisfied with having a Lord Mayor to dine with him; and so he did all such things as were likely to help him on to the desired end. Folk said of him, what a liberal and generous man he was! but they didn't know that he was only liberal and generous to himself. No, Augustus, you were not generous to yourself—not to your real self—not to the "self" that shall live long after the magnificent figure of Augustus Roundabut Swellingford shall have departed from the streets of London, and from the Mansion House, and bidden farewell to sword and mace for ever.

And as our friend was small in his thought, so of course was he small in his real actions. "Action," as the poet says, "ever treads the path in which we think we follow good, or flee from evil." Now, to follow good was, in Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford's view, to follow what would make the most of himself, and for himself; and so, looked at apart from himself, he never did a big thing. Not but that his transactions were big. Mr. Swellingford dealt with hundreds of thousands even at a single stroke; in his business transactions he had written the name Augustus Roundabut Swellingford in full at the foot of many a cheque for £10,000; but in the region in which the personality, or influence, or profit of Swellingford was not to be found, there also were none of his deeds to be found either; so that his range of influence, of life—of real life—was very small indeed.

And so, good reader, you can easily understand that, Mr. Swellingford's action, and thought, and affection being very limited, his whole being was very limited; he was big only in the make-believe of real greatness. He was big as the world, or as the unthinking part of the world, would call bigness, and that was enough for him.

Yes! Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford was small, very small in relation to heaven, and to humanity—to his kind, amongst which he had the means of being big indeed, had he been so inclined. What he was in himself, he was in his position as regards heaven and earth; he was a poor, lean, skinny, wizened, shrivelled, withered creature; halt and maimed, and blind and poor; he was no bigger than a mite in a Stilton cheese, even if he were so big, and I beg the cheese's pardon for having associated its name with him at all. Yes, all you little mites which dwell in that cheese, I beg all your pardons too, for I have no doubt you all live up to your lights, and your responsibilities, and capacities, which, so far as I know, are simply to eat cheese morning, noon, and night, and finally to disappear, I won't say where or how, only certainly to disappear, and be heard of in this busy world no more.

Farewell for a while, Augustus, farewell, until we meet again—grow bigger, and bigger—as big as a man can grow; everyone owns that you are big, at least most people—all people of your own ilk. I put this in, because you know, or ought to know by this, that "everybody" doesn't really mean "everybody." I have lived long enough to know that there are a great many people outside "everybody," and some of them very important people too. You'd be surprised, good reader, at the number of people I have met with in the world, who were not amongst the "everybodies;" and who in the world can they be?

Amongst those connected with Mr. Augustus Swellingford, I can tell you of one at any rate, though he is certainly only a very small one, and that is Mr. Thomas Titt, of Tittsville, who lived a few hundreds of yards from big Mr. Swellingford, and big Mr. Swellingford's big house, and big Mr. Swellingford's big belongings of every kind.

> 'T is the mind that makes the body rich;
> And as the sun breaks through the darkest cloud,
> So honour peereth in the meanest habit.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

> It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
> That maketh wretch or happy, rich, or poor;
> For some that hath abundance at the will
> Hath not enough, but wants in greater store;
> And other that hath little asks no more,
> But in that little is both rich and wise,
> For wisdom is most riches: fools, therefore,
> They are which fortunes do by vows devise,
> Since each unto himself his life may fortunize.
>
> SPENSER.

Yes, Tom Titt, or Tommy Titt, or Mr. Thomas Titt—it is right that we should not be too familiar, and should make the most of you (though you yourself, good soul, are the last who would make any demands in this way)—yes: you are worth all this poetry, and a good bit of prose too, which I shall not, however, give the reader; for people nowadays, if they quote much, no matter how good it may be, and how much to the purpose, are apt to be thought prosy: a deadly fault in the opinion of a sharp editor who is up to the mark.

But this much I may do: I may go back to your

earliest days, when, in the course of nature, you were smaller—aye, a good bit smaller than you are even now.

Tom Titt—Mr. Thomas Titt—you are a dwarf. You were very small when you were born, and as if that were not enough, your nurse must needs drop you, and so bring it about that you could never grow up big. There are some little babies which are like the grain of mustard-seed, the smallest among all seeds, but grow up into something very big by-and-bye; and you might have grown, Tommy. Anyhow, you might have touched five feet. I don't mean to say that folk would have wanted a step-ladder when they had to whisper to you. But five feet—that, I think, you might have got to, but for the carelessness of that woman, who, with you in one arm and hand, and her tea-pot in the other hand, actually, when she stumbled, held on to the tea-pot, and let you drop, so that the tea-pot escaped a broken snout, and you got a broken back.

I don't know whether I should hang all nurses who drop babies, but I should certainly do something dreadful to them, more especially if they did not say anything about it.

I am not alone in my opinion. Tom Titt's father held the same. He was often heard giving vent to it.

"Look here, mum," said he to the new rector's wife. "Here, mother, you strip Tommy's back. There, mum, look at that; you've come from London, mum, where there's a great many sights. I hear, mum, that the wax-works is wonderful, and a part of 'em dreadful; but did you ever see the like of that, and all through burglary, mum? 'Burglary' I calls it, and the one who did it I call a burglar, and it was a woman we had in to nurse the little boy while his mother was ill, who burgled him; and he's come out as you see him now."

"But why do you call it 'burglary'?" said Mrs. Jamieson.

"Because burglary is next to murder," said Mr. Titt senior, "and it's an awful-sounding word; and to break a boy's back is next to murdering him; there's breaking both ways—breaking into a house and breaking a boy's back; where's the difference? You break into a house and make off with a man's property—silver spoons, if he has any—and the like; and you break a boy's back, and make off with all his chances of getting on in life; the next thing to hanging is, I say, what should be done to every one who drops a child. That boy was diddled for life."

"What do you mean by 'diddled'?" asked the new vicar's wife. "I never heard the word before."

"'Diddled,' mum, is the short for 'done for'—'dished'—there ain't nothing before him in life; he can't come to anything; all that is the meaning of 'diddled,' mum." And Mr. Thomas Titt senior looked at the vicar's wife as much as to say, "Well, I'm proud at having had to turn dictionary to the like of you," and as an after-thought he gave a second look, the meaning of which was—"Let the dictionary beat that if it can."

"If that is the meaning of being 'diddled'," said the vicar's wife, opening her big eyes wide, and talking in her sweetest, gentlest voice, for she saw that she had to do with a wounded spirit, "I am very grieved to hear that such a thing should have happened to your little boy; for I am afraid that nothing can ever be done for that poor back."

"That's just it, mum; he's diddled, and the meaning of being 'diddled' is that nothing can be done for you. The Queen herself couldn't put that boy's back right: no, not with a regiment of horse or a man-of-war."

"I'm afraid not," said Mrs. Jamieson, with a sigh.

"You're very good to sigh, mum," said Mr. Titt senior, "very good, mum; it shows a feelin' heart. Most people laugh at the poor lad; and it isn't always that feelin' hearts and broken backs come together. I hope my poor lad's broken back may meet with the like going through life; he'll need, poor child, all the help and pity he can get. 'Diddling' ain't fit even for a dog. I say a man hain't the heart of a man, as would diddle a dog."

Mrs. Jamieson—the Hon. Mrs. Jamieson, as we must call her, to give her her proper rank—was the daughter of a lord; and had not been long married to Mr. Jamieson when he became the vicar of the parish in which he now was. Her mode of life and circumstances had not led her much amongst the poor up to the present, but her heart had been always amongst them; and she was delighted when she found herself by her marriage enabled to visit and sympathise with them. Indeed, it had been the vision of her life for many a year; and to help her husband in his labours was her greatest joy.

In the society in which she had hitherto moved, she had never heard the word "diddled," hence it came as a new kind of revelation to her, and a very dreadful one too. She could never have believed that one word could have contained so much misery. "Dished," too, was something dreadful. It had been used to explain "diddled," but, like many an explanation, it left what had to be explained as hard, if not harder, to be understood than before. But what could be understood was dreadful enough, and plain enough. Mr. Titt senior had said that his son Tom could never come to anything—that nothing could be done for him.

"Only to think, dear," said she to her husband that evening, as they talked over their day's experiences, "only to think that life should be so hopeless for that poor little thing: to think that he must carry that dreadful word about with him as long as he lives. It isn't as if he were an old man, with life nearly at an end, with only a short time to carry his mortifications and his sorrows; but this poor child has all life before him, and to go through it

with that dreadful word upon him, a 'dished' and 'diddled' boy—that is what the father said—it is dreadful."

"Aye, my dear, and there are many like him who have to start life 'done for,' or partly 'done for,' from the very beginning. Some are 'done for' in their minds, and some in their bodies, and some in their circumstances; some are called 'gutter children.'"

"What children?" said Mrs. Jamieson.

"'Gutter children,' because they begin to spend their young life in the slums and streets, and so from their earliest youth become accustomed to what lowers and degrades them, and from very habit prevents them from rising in after-life."

"And can't we do anything?" said Mrs. Jamieson; "can't we help? What good are we in this world if we see all this under our very eyes, and don't do what we can to change it, and make it better?"

"That's just what you've married me for, my dear," said the clergyman. "You and I have got to do our best to help all we can, to lend a hand to all the 'diddled' and 'dished' people both for this world and the next: to give them a lift on their present weary way, and to be the means, under God, of showing them at the end of it something that was worth living for, and worth bearing for, and worth striving for. That's what you married me for."

"Part," said Mrs. Jamieson.

"Part!" said the clergyman, in a tone of half surprise.

"Part for yourself, you know—anyhow, a little part," and Mrs. Jamieson felt herself getting rather rose-coloured in the cheeks.

"Yes, I do know; and now as the parish and I are one, I won't ask you how much for each. Anyhow, you have us both; and now you must make the most of us, and the best of us too. Suppose now you begin with this 'dished' and 'diddled' little Titt. This is your first day in parish work, and you can't do better than begin with such a dished and diddled scrap of humanity as this diddled Titt. But mind you, Mary, you mustn't spend *all* your money, or *all* your sympathies either, on this one specimen of diddledom; for you'll find these diddled people in one form or other only too plentiful in the world."

From that day forth our little friend Tom Titt had a sunbeam cast athwart his life. Heaven's light had come into the humble abode where he lived, and it had come in human form. Once Heaven's great light, the Sun of Righteousness Himself, came into earth's poor abodes in human form, an infant and a man; and ever since, rays of this true celestial Light come in human forms into homes of wretchedness, of weariness, of disappointment, of want. These have sunlight in their eyes and in their smiles, and on their lips; and even their very footfalls drop music across the thresholds of the sad. He who ministered in the flesh ordained that after Him, and after His example, there should be ministries in the flesh, the ministries of his followers, the reflections of the light-rays which have fallen on them from Himself. A binder of wounds is the Great Physician, and binders of wounds are they, in a world which has not only broken backs, but broken hearts, and broken hopes; and the outer frame oftentimes not half so marred as the spirit that tabernacles within. No, Thomas Titt, mercy and grace were in store for you that day, when the new minister's wife began her ministering rounds with you; and her great eyes opened wide, and her great heart opened wider, as she looked upon and took into her very soul such a "dished" and "diddled" specimen of humanity as yourself.

I must now, however, tell you, good reader, a little more about our young friend the "diddled one" himself. At the time of which I write, our little friend Tom was nine years of age. He did not look that when Mrs. Jamieson's eyes fell upon him, but by reason of his smallness he might have passed for some five or six. He was, however, nine; and had had some of the experiences of life suitable to that age. These experiences were chiefly in the form of troubles, childish troubles it may be, but troubles still; the troubles of a child are for a child, even as the troubles of a man are for a man.

And little Thomas had his share. He was destined not only to be "diddled," but to know and feel that he was "diddled," and this latter element of his bitterness was perhaps the greatest. Little Tom, it is so with us all, whether we have humps upon our backs or not; little Tom, there are many burdens as big and as heavy as humps, though folk can't see them. It is in proportion as he who has them feels them, that they are his plague through life.

It was a sorrow to little Tom Titt that a boy no older than himself, but ever so much taller and stronger, cheated him at marbles, and then added cheeking to cheating, and, squaring out before him, told poor Tommy to get them back if he could. He was wronged because he was weak and defenceless. He was so, because he was not like others who could fight for their own.

It was a sorrow to little Tom when his feelings were hurt by the boys threatening to show him as a dwarf, especially by one big fellow who threatened to sell him to the next caravan, telling him that "the showman would make a fortune out of him."

When the tears ran down poor little Tommy's face at the funeral of a little boy belonging to the Sunday-school, it was hard upon him that other lads, who were as unmoved as brass, should call him a "snivelling little idiot," and threaten, if he didn't stop that snivelling, to tie him up in his own pocket-handkerchief and throw him into the river, where he would find plenty of water.

It was hard, when others went to play football and cricket, that he should have to stay at home, or to sit down amongst the old men, who had played cricket some fifty years before, but were good for nothing now but to look on. When one and another talked of what they would do in life, and how they would

get on, did not the iron enter into poor Tommy's soul, when he felt that for "diddled" ones like himself there was no future, no getting on. Tommy had a brave little heart. He had fought the village gander in a drawn battle, and he had read of great victories by sea and land, and how quite poor boys had risen to be captains of ships, and generals, and worn medals on their breasts; and he had seen one great fellow who stood six feet two, and who had enlisted in the Grenadier Guards, come back to the village in a spick-and-span new uniform, with a cap that made him look ever so much bigger again, and this great and grand creature had said to him, "Halloo! Is that you, little one? You have not grown a bit since I was here last. Why, you ain't the size of one of our fifes." And this was gall and bitterness to one who had heart to fight that bird, of which it was said that Farmer Jones himself was afraid. Moreover, there were the home influences. They were a trial and a sorrow to little Tom. He was brought up strictly with the thought that he was a "diddled," and "dished," and "done-for" boy—that he had no future—that whatever chance there was for him in the other world, there was none in this.

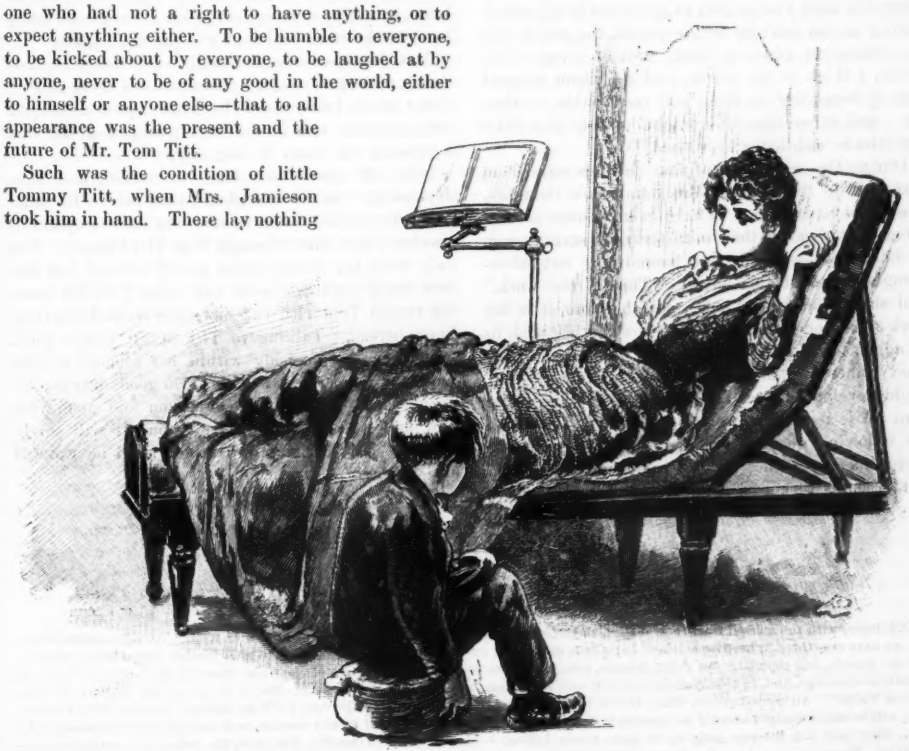
And so it came to pass that gradually the poor boy's mind fell into the groove that circumstances seemed to hollow out for it; and he felt and lived as one who had not a right to have anything, or to expect anything either. To be humble to everyone, to be kicked about by everyone, to be laughed at by anyone, never to be of any good in the world, either to himself or anyone else—that to all appearance was the present and the future of Mr. Tom Titt.

Such was the condition of little Tommy Titt, when Mrs. Jamieson took him in hand. There lay nothing before him in this world; and, for the matter of what he knew, nothing in the world to come. A little of that went a great way in the Titt household; and so not much had come to Tommy's share.

The Hon. Mrs. Jamieson's husband took an immense interest in her helping work in the parish. He was a man of good practical common sense; and though he smiled at some of her mistakes, which was quite natural, he knew that he had in her the stuff for a good helpmate, and that she would be of enormous use to him in his work. But alas! she soon came to grief; for, slipping on an orange-peel in the dusk, she sprained her ankle; and so, her parish proceedings for the present came to an untimely end.

It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and this bit of orange-peel was an important link in the history of our worthy little friend. It is possible that, but for that orange-peel, Mrs. Jamieson's attentions might have had to be divided among so many that her thoughts could not have been given to him as they now were. But the orange-peel stood Tom Titt's friend.

And I may remark, in passing, that we never know upon how small a thing depends our getting



"The lady took little Titt in hand." –*p.* 150.

harm or good. In this case, the orange-peel turned out the making of little Titt.

"Always longing to get out into the parish, my dear!" said Mrs. Jamieson's husband one day, as he sat by her sofa's side.

"Well," said she, "I long to be doing good. I read all day, and I do this and that, no doubt, with my needle and my pen; but you see, Arthur, I should like to be amongst the living, needing people themselves."

"Well," said Mr. Jamieson, "suppose you have one or two of them up here—what do you say to your little friend Tom Titt? Do you know he has been asking after you? Betsy saw him sitting outside the gate for a long time; and at last she went out to ask him if he wanted anything, and he said, 'No.' So she said—'What are you sitting there for, then?'—'I hope it isn't any harm, ma'am,' said he, 'but I thought the lady might come to the window, perhaps, some time in the day, and then I might have seen her—it does me good to see her—it does my back good—it does me good all over. How is the poor lady's foot? I wouldn't mind,' he said, 'giving her my foot, if only it would make hers well.'—'And what do you want to see her for?' Betsy asked.—'Because I love her,' said the mite; 'and she does me good.'—So I think, Mary, you had better have Mr. Titt up every day until you're able to get about in the parish again; as you can't go to the parish, the parish will be coming to you—at least, a little scrap of it. There, I'll go to his people, and tell them to send him up to-morrow as clean and respectable as they can; and worse than that might happen to a little boy who is 'diddled' and 'dished.'"

During the remainder of that day this mite Tom Titt took up the most of Mrs. Jamieson's thoughts. She might have wished to have been at some greater things in the parish than ministering to such a scrap of humanity—a single one, moreover; but afterthought corrected this idea. "This is *the* work," said she, "that is sent *me;* and therefore, it is *the* work to be done *by me*—the work which we wish to do might never be sent to us; our business is with what comes to hand. Who knows what little Titt might develop into—at any rate into something more than he is now. So, welcome, little Titt"—and on the following morning he was welcomed when he made his appearance at the parsonage, dressed in what was his very best; and scrubbed, and cleaned, until he almost shone. So pleased were the Titt family at his being invited, that they would have polished even the very hump, and made what artists call a "high light" of it, if they could.

Now, by the time that our little friend had arrived at his destination, Mrs. Jamieson had made up her mind very plainly as to what she ought to do with reference to him. She had turned him over in her mind so often that, had he been there in the flesh, he would surely have come forth in the form of a ball.

Her determination took the form of the enlargement of Tommy Titt. She would make him expand, grow, feel himself worth "something," be "somebody," "something." I need not say that this view was chiefly with reference to his mind; with the body she feared that, comparatively, at any rate, and possibly positively, little could be done.

The lady with the large eyes and the sweet voice,—the lord's daughter, the parson's wife—took little Titt, accordingly, in hand. This juvenile having been duly well washed, and dressed in his best—which was not very good even then—came up every day at eleven o'clock to be enlarged, grown, developed, and made all that he could be made of by Mrs. Jamieson.

And this to some purpose too. It was no doubt a long process. Thomas Titt did not come by all he knew in a day, or in a year either; but he did come by it in the end; and that was the main point.

Mrs. Jamieson's confinement to her sofa was more than a matter of weeks. She remained there nearly, if not quite, two years; the little injury developed into a greater one in the knee-joint; and she was a prisoner for many a long day.

Now, all good-doing has its reward, and Mrs. Jamieson's was no exception to the rule. To some of us the reward comes in one way, and to others in another; hers came through Tom Titt himself. Not only were her lonely hours partly solaced, but her own mind expanded more and more; for the more she taught Tom Titt, the more she seemed to get to know herself. Talking to Titt of all things good, something or somebody within her seemed to talk more and more of good to her. Do good, dear reader, do good; it will come back to you and upon you, how and when you know not; but it will surely come. "He that watereth others shall be watered also himself."

(To be continued.)

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.—SPECIAL NOTICE.

ONCE more, with the blessed Christmas season, there comes to us the question of the provision for our Waifs. As our readers know, we have now three, otherwise helpless, little ones dependent on us, and we should be glad to still further increase the number. Will our friends, and especially our young friends, remember these less fortunate children of the Great Master in the midst of their own Christmas rejoicings, and, in thankfulness for their own abundance, send us out of it a thank-offering to aid in the support of "THE QUIVER Waifs?" All contributions, which should be addressed to the Editor of THE QUIVER, La Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C., will be acknowledged as early as possible in THE QUIVER, and contributions of £1 and upwards will be specially acknowledged by post. Since our last list was made up we have received (from September 17th to October 21st, 1889) the following contributions:—Thankful, Warwick, 5s.; J. J. E., Govan (24th donation), 5s.; D. Hamilton, Baker Street, £2; Sunflower, Kilburn, 5s.; C. E. J., Ferndale, 2s. 6d.; Captain Mathison, £5; Esile (a friend), 5s.; J. S., Edinburgh, 5s.



MODERN DISCOVERIES CONFIRMING REVELATION.

BY THE REV. TRYON EDWARDS, D.D.

"ALL human discoveries," says Herschel, "seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths from on high contained in the sacred Scriptures." And the remark is strikingly illustrated and confirmed by the wonderful discoveries made of late years at Nineveh and Babylon, and in Egypt. One or two instances of the light thrown by such discoveries on the statements of the Bible may be both interesting and instructive.

Daniel, as the Bible tells us, for interpreting Belshazzar's dream, had a chain of gold put about his neck, and was made the *third* ruler in the kingdom. "But," says the objector, "why *third*? For he was made next to Belshazzar himself, and Belshazzar was evidently the *first* in the kingdom." And this for a time seemed a real and great difficulty; for while the Bible speaks of Belshazzar as the *last* king of Babylon, and as slain when Cyrus took the city, all the Greek historians say that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon; and *he* was *not* killed, but was with his army in Borsippa, and lived for many years afterwards; and by the Greek historians no mention is made of Belshazzar.

Now here was what seemed a serious if not an insurmountable difficulty, and objectors were not slow to make the most of it. But the monuments and records above alluded to make the matter entirely plain, and show that both statements are right. They tell us that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, and that for three years he was associated with his father on the throne; that for several years Nabonidus had remained at home and sent Belshazzar to command the army, but that in this last year he himself took command of the army, and left his son Belshazzar in command at Babylon. And this is further made plain by the curious fact, that there have been found thousands of records on the little clay tablets discovered, which have been kept for centuries in the office of the recorder of deeds in Babylon, just as we keep copies of such deeds in our county records. Out of one hundred and sixteen years, there is not a single year lacking, in which from one to thirty deeds have not been found thus recorded, every one of which is carefully dated. And *one* of these deeds—*just one*—is dated exactly in the *third* year of King Belshazzar. His first two years are credited to his father, with whom he jointly reigned, while in this, the third year, he was reigning alone in Babylon. And this third year is the only one mentioned in the Book of Daniel. Thus it is plain why Belshazzar promised to make, and did make, Daniel the *third* ruler in the kingdom. He could not make him *second*, for he himself was second, his father being the first, and so Daniel was made *third* in the kingdom.

Take another illustration of the justness of Herschel's remark. Isaiah says that Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was carried captive to Babylon. "A likely story," says the cavilling objector, "that the king of Assyria, who was reigning at Nineveh, should take his captives to Babylon!" And the statement did seem so improbable that some of the best commentators have thought there might have been a mistake in copying the original of Isaiah, and others have frankly admitted that they did not see how the difficulty could be explained.

But now, within a few years, we find the whole story of Esarhaddon's life written by himself; and in it he tells us that when his father Sennacherib died, the populace of Babylon were in such a state of excitement and ferment that he felt it best to go down and live among them; and that, in addition to his palace at Nineveh, he built another palace at Babylon, and made that place his head-quarters through all the remainder of his reign. So now it is plain why Manasseh was carried to Babylon, and not to Nineveh; for it was just for that part of his reign—not before and not afterwards, but for just that part of his reign—that the king was to be found at Babylon, and not, as before, at Nineveh, and that his prisoner was taken where he himself was.

Such illustrations of the light thrown on statements of the Bible by modern discoveries might be given almost without number, showing that God, in His providence, has been treasuring up His facts that in due time they might be found endorsing His Word, as they have done on the bricks of Assyria and the once buried but now risen relics of Nineveh and Babylon; so that at the cavils of doubt and disbelief the very stones cry out, and echo to us the truth of the written Word of revelation. Sceptics and doubters may question the records of Moses, but the body of Pharaoh the oppressor of Israel, and that too of Seti his father, whose daughter found Moses, now come up as by a resurrection from the dead, and bear their testimony to the narrative of the great teacher of Israel!

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

13. What was the first intimation our Blessed Lord gave of His ascension? Quote the passage.

14. Quote some words from the Book of Hosea which refer to the deliverance of the Children of Israel from the captivity of Egypt, yet were also a prophecy concerning our Blessed Lord.

15. What was the great sin of the Israelites which caused their forty years' wandering in the wilderness?

16. Why was the Mount of Olives known in the Old Testament as the "Mount of Corruption"?

17. What two apostles specially refer to the justice and equity of God in dealing with the human race?—and in what words?

18. Quote a passage in the Old Testament setting forth the same declaration of God's justice and equity.

19. As God is no "respecter of persons," therefore the reward of man is the result of his own acts—quote passage.

20. What was it connected with our Lord's "Sermon on the Mount" which seems most to have impressed the people?

21. What was the first great conquest David made when he became King of Israel and Judah?

22. What great counsellor of David joined in the revolt under Absalom?

23. By what prophet did God make known to Jeroboam that he should be king over Israel, and of what book was he the author?

24. In what passage of the Old Testament have we a wonderful illustration of the effects and progress of old age?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 55.

1. For that they were on the Lord's side at the time the children of Israel sinned in making a golden calf. (Deut. xxxiii. 9—11; Ex. xxxii. 26, 27.)

2. By representing the wolf as dwelling with the lamb, the leopard as lying down with the kid, and the calf and young lion playing together. (Is. xi. 6, 7.)

3. St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy—the prophet Samuel. (2 Tim. iv. 2—5; 1 Sam. xii. 3—5.)

4. The title of "The sweet Psalmist of Israel." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.)

5. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." (Proverbs viii. 17.)

6. The love of an earthly parent to his child. (St. Matt. vii. 9—11.)

7. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." (1 John v. 16.)

8. The ruby. (Job xxviii. 18.)

9. First by a cloud of glory, and afterwards by the fire which came down from heaven and consumed the burnt sacrifices. (2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 1.)

10. Because that God manifested His presence there, not in a cloud or by fire, but in the person of His only begotten Son. (Mal. iii. 1; St. Luke ii. 22; St. Matt. xxi. 12, 13.)

11. The Psalm supposed to be the last written by David. (Ps. lxxii., especially verses 10—15.)

12. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also." (St. John xiv. 6, 7.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.



"CHRIST FOR THE WORLD."

E lately heard a missionary from New Guinea speak with earnest appreciation and gratitude of the work carried on by native Christians, and of their heroic efforts as pioneers of the Gospel. "Some would dismiss all mention of these our fellow-workers as 'blacks,'" said he, "but it is to their courage and perseverance, their love and faith, that the white missionaries and the societies at home owe a debt of reverent admiration and thankfulness." One of these native Christians was refused a home upon the place he sought to evangelise, and had to live alone on an island, where his enemies hoped and expected he would die. Having no fresh water where they lived, they frequently came into his neighbourhood to fetch it, and grew surprised and indignant to find he still survived—thinner and weaker-looking, indeed, but with gentle looks and tones for them still. They poisoned the waters he would be likely to drink, but his life was mercifully preserved. At last they grew tired of their persecution, and invited him to make his home among them, to which he replied he would live with them gladly, and persuaded them to build him a church and listen to his preaching. A native evangelist from the South Seas found his way before an Australian mission committee, and offered himself for work in New Guinea. Difficulties, almost amounting to impossibilities, were presented to him, but he stood undismayed in face of them all. "Are there *men* living there?" he asked. "Yes; ferocious, wild, and savage," was the reply from a well-meaning gentleman, who was alarmed at the notion of his venturing thither. "If there are men there," he answered, "the Gospel has to be preached to them; it must be taken to every

nation, and I must go." It is recorded of this heroic spirit that he met with much to frighten, dismay, and discourage him, but he was overheard one day saying to his wife, "Whatever may lie before us—even if it be death at the hands of these people—we can bear it; we can go through anything and everything for the Master's sake." And the Lord has owned and blessed the faithful service of hearts like these, so that the way has been prepared for English missionaries to confirm and strengthen the work of the pioneers, and in New Guinea, as in countless other districts of darkness, the Gospel has brought light and order, and mercy and peace.



VISITORS IN THE TREDEGAR SQUARE CRÈCHE, BOW.

MUCH-NEEDED ENTERPRISES.

The object of the new *Crèche*, in connection with the Rev. W. Evans Hurndall's East London mission work, is to take charge of children from three weeks up to five years old, while the mothers are working for the daily bread. The *Crèche* is at 53, Tredegar Square, Bow, where the little ones are well looked after from eight a.m. till the evening, the mother being charged threepence a day, which includes the necessary food. Visitors are admitted from twelve to five any day except Saturday and Sunday. When we remember how many a mother has to take part in the daily-bread struggle, and how many young lives must necessarily have been lonely, neglected, and tearful, we realise the urgent need for such refuges, snug, bright and warm, with wholesome nourishment and careful nurses to give the children of the poor a start in life, and gladden them with toys and pictures. Mr. Hurndall's work is many-sided, fighting starvation, despair, and sin. Whether they attend the services or not, the really needy are helped by food, clothing, tools, blankets, sewing-machines, mangles, and the like; emigration has also proved a great success, as many letters of gratitude testify. One lad writes: "The good Lord has not forsaken me, though a stranger in a strange land; they have made me leader of the singing, so that I am being made of some service to them and to the Lord. I am getting on first-class with my work." Another says: "I am comfortably situated on a farm; the people I am with are good old Methodists, and very kind to me. I get four meals, so I think I shall soon get fat." One branch of this East End mission specially ministers to hairdressers and coffee-house keepers, who have special temptations to Sunday trading, and blessing and progress are reported concerning this effort. Free services are held at the Bow and Bromley Institute; these have become extremely popular, and a branch has been started now by the suggestive name of the "Bring-someone-else-with-you Society."

"THE GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME."

"How can I lose *self?*" a discontented spirit once asked a certain bishop. "Self seems to follow me in everything."—"I think," was the reply, "the place where you will lose self is the place where you will find your Saviour." Heaven does not require of us needless austerities, humiliating penances, the starvation of every yearning for the bright, the glad, and

the beautiful; but every true Christian ought to know something about self-denial, which a preacher well described as the glory laid upon our Master, and bequeathed by Him to us. There is a point at which comfort reaches self-indulgence, and becomes un-Christian, while the bodies and souls of our brethren have need. This is a matter between our own souls and our Saviour, but all honour to those lives that have caught His Spirit, and have set the Father and the brethren above all appeals of self! An East-End Mission House for the Jews was established through the quiet self-denial of a humble Christian, who brought in his generous contributions, saying almost apologetically, "I cannot live on less than a hundred a year, but I can spare £600 more for this mission." This man suffered from ailments needing continual treatment; he has since entered into rest, leaving an inspiring memory. We heard of a gentleman, described as peculiarly neat, dapper, and particular about himself, who undertook to visit some cottages. In one he found a sick woman, alone, and amid very dirty surroundings. Neighbours had formerly come in, but now everyone had given up coming, and she could not get things clean herself. That gentleman washed the floor, got everything clean and tidy, and when all was in order proposed to read the Bible to the poor sufferer. Before she died, the invalid bore witness it was his absolute self-forgetfulness for Christ's sake that made her at first believe in the religion her heart afterwards accepted.

ALL ABOUT HYMNS.

All who work among the young know the added interest that is given to a hymn if something can be told of the circumstances under which it was written, and the life-story of its author. One teacher who has made it a practice to tell the children in his school any little fact bearing on hymns and their authors that seems suitable for their hearing, says that more than once he has been met with the query at the end of the day, "Is there nothing to tell us about any of the hymns to-day?" All teachers who wish to do so may now learn with ease something about the principal hymns in general use among all Christian bodies if they will turn to "The Romance of Psalter and Hymnal," which has just been published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. The work is divided into three parts. The first two are from the pen of the Rev. R. E. Welsh, M.A., one being devoted to the story of the Psalter, so far as possible telling, in a few words in each case, all that is known or can be ascertained as to the circumstances under which the Psalms were written; while the second part deals in a similar manner with the hymns best known and in most general use, and affords much deeply interesting and attractive reading. The third part of the work consists of biographies of eight of the best known of modern composers of hymn-tunes by Mr. F. G. Edwards. The work as a whole should prove very popular among all who take an interest in the "service of praise."—From the same publishers (Hodder and Stoughton) we have also received a new and popular edition of Mr. Thayer's readable biography of General Grant, under the title "From Tan Yard to White House," a book that all boys and teachers of boys ought to read.—The boys again will be glad to welcome a new story—the last, alas!—by their old friend Mr. W. H. G. Kingston, issued by the same publishers, under the title of "Roger Willoughby: a Story of the Times of Benbow," full of adventurous interest, and copiously illustrated.—Two other stories for young people from Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton are also on our table at the present moment. The first is one of Mrs. G. S. Reaney's telling stories under the title of "Dorothy Belle." All who know Mrs. Reaney's work know what an influence it may have on the young, and we need only say that this last work follows worthily in the line of its predecessors. The other story is "The Thrales of Redlynch," by Nehemiah Curnock, a quaintly worked-out story, to which some of the chapter-headings give an added interest. Both these books are admirably suited for the Sunday-school library shelves.—In quite another vein is "The Atheist Shoemaker" (same publishers), in which Mr. Hugh Price Hughes tells for the benefit of older readers a touching story of his work in the West London Mission, a story in which Mr. Hughes has infused his own fervour and dramatic power.—It is a good sign in many ways that so many new books of family devotion are issuing from the press on all hands. We trust that this movement is but the indication of a deepening interest in the family altar. The latest addition to the series is "The People's Prayer Book," by the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., published by Messrs. Hazell, Watson, and Viney. In this Prayer Book will be found a series of prayers, together with suggestions for their modification to meet special circumstances, and short services for those who cannot attend the public worship of the Lord, together with some features ordinarily associated only with the Family Bible. To all who are in need of the help such a work as this can give we commend it most heartily.

A CHEER BY THE WAY

As a little in-break of brightness amidst the sad tidings still almost daily arriving from the famine-stricken regions of China, comes the intelligence that several of the missionaries who have been doing such noble work as relief distributors in Shantung were, on leaving the scene of their labours, presented with red umbrellas (a very great honour in native estimation) and other testimonials. One lady of the mission band was carried through the city in a sedan-chair, followed by a great procession of *literati* with their red buttons (an honour greater still). Here are pleasing proofs that gratitude is not, as some suppose, an unknown virtue among the Chinese; and also

that the great wall of Chinese prejudice against the foreigner is tottering to its fall.

MORAVIAN MISSION TO LEPERS.

During the discussion of a case of need, a gentleman cried out: "I feel *five hundred pounds* for this case; what do *you* feel?" The heroism of one who gave up his life for lepers has recently evoked the most tender sympathy on behalf of the poor leper, the special object of our Lord's compassion, and the devoted missions to lepers ought to receive a grand impetus from the self-sacrifice of him who became a martyr for Christ and for his brethren. Not to detract from the glorious memory of other workers, but to record the self-denying ministry of Moravian missionaries for seventy years, the London Association in Aid of Moravian Missions (29, Ely Place, E.C.) has republished the account of the work carried on among lepers in South Africa and Jerusalem. In 1818 the Moravian pastors began to preach the Gospel to those in the hospital of Hemel-en-Aarde, and in 1822 a missionary was sent to manage the enlarged asylum, and to instruct the inmates in the truths of Christianity. The chapel of stakes and unburnt bricks was built by the patients, and here worship was carried on, till four years later a church was given by Government. Mr. Leitner, the devoted missionary, who had constructed an aqueduct, and cultivated the ground with the help of his charges, was taken home to his reward while in the act of baptising a convert. During six years he baptised ninety-nine adults, most of whom passed before him into that land where there is no more pain. The institution was afterwards removed to Robben Island, whither the lepers were accompanied by their pastor and his wife; one after another poor sufferer was led to seek and find comfort in the Redeemer, and this field of labour met with rich and fruitful blessing. When in 1867 the Colonial Government appointed a chaplain of the Church of England to this district, the Moravian missionaries prayerfully gave up the work to their successors, and about this time another field of usefulness was opened up in connection with the lepers of Jerusalem. Here devoted men and women have carried on a tender work of compassion and mercy, awakening hope in place of despair, and doing everything possible for the comfort of body and soul. The patients have shown also unselfish heroism among themselves; of one Lativé, herself a sufferer, we read that she insisted on sharing the room of a poor woman extremely ill, on whom she waited devotedly. The dying words of this woman must have been her reward, "Oh, let me alone now—I am no longer here—I am in a place where everything is beautiful, so beautiful." One of the patients has written to the workers on behalf of the rest, "Our kind reception into your hospital has shown us we are not forsaken by God, the Highest." It is a matter of great thankfulness that the Moravian missionaries and nurses can show a perfectly healthy record as regards infection.



THE LEPER HOME AT JERUSALEM.

SILENT FORCES.

Hurry has been said to be the work of the flesh, —Quiet, that of the Spirit. How we weaken our spiritual life and harm our power for good by our restless, feverish, dissatisfied mind! How little we esteem that prayerful quietude which would be far more receptive of the gracious influence of God's Spirit, and which would more truly promote our heavenward growth! The Lord seeth not as man seeth; it may be that the busy, bustling life admired and praised by all, is making less real

progress Christward than the still, unnoticed one, laid aside to fulfil the ministry of patience and of prayer. "Study to be great" is the motto with too many of us, instead of "Study to be quiet." Who can tell the might of nature's silent forces working on even when we speak of everything as dead, and so little activity is apparent in the world of vegetation! We must not judge only by outward, visible signs; a scientist records that "forces almost unknown to us are active in the silent life of vegetation." Gloom and inactivity are manifest to us, but the Lord of all is working quietly, mightily, and the days to come will show what He has wrought even through these wintry days. Winter's text is not earthly decay but God's eternity—Love working through mystery—the Kingdom of Good even amid seeming ill. May our hearts, with throbs of thankfulness, recognise "not the weariness of mortality, but the strength of divinity," and may we take home the comfort that when God strikes a silence through our busy work, and bids us be quiet and still awhile, we may yet be growing surely, sweetly, blessedly, by reason of that power which is outside ourselves, and which no change can weaken, no touch of death destroy.

IN THE TRACK OF THE FAMINE.

"Famine fever is raging here," writes a missionary at Moukden. "Last week I heard of about fifty families, refugees from Shantung, who had taken shelter in an unused inn, and amongst whom this malady was spreading, several deaths having already occurred. Dr. C—— accompanied me thither. We took six bags of American flour and some fever remedies. The inn-yard was crowded with people, many sick, all without food. We did what we could for them. Returning after two days, we found six had died meanwhile, but the appearance of the rest was improved. General Tso-pao-kwei, who during the famine has had charge of the soup-kitchen here, has now, at our instance, provided a large compound for a fever refuge, appointing soldiers to keep guard and report all death cases to him. Our only responsibility will be the nursing of the sick." No light duty this, following on the arduous relief labours of the devoted missionary distributors, one of whom has himself lately been brought to death's door by this most infectious famine fever.

PRIZES AND PRESENTS.

This is pre-eminently the season for the making of presents and the giving of prizes. From parents to children, and from children to parents, the pleasant interchange of seasonable gifts goes on, but each year the difficulty arises anew of how to select a gift that shall be alike novel and suitable. No gift can be more suitable in the case of a young teacher than one of Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode's "Teachers' Bibles," which contain, particularly in the Variorum Bibles, a veritable library of useful information for teachers, bound up with the text of the Scriptures, so as to be always accessible for ready reference. These Bibles are made up in so many different sizes and forms that all tastes and all sights may be easily accommodated. One special edition is prepared for the use of members of Bible Unions, and is admirably adapted to meet their wants. In the provision of seasonable gifts this firm does not forget the little ones, for they have issued a series of charmingly illustrated little booklets, in which are told the Bible stories of Ruth, of Joseph, and of the Prodigal Son, in each case with a preface by the Bishop of Ripon. A more ambitious work is a daintily bound and tastefully executed little volume of "Children's Prayers," than which any prettier present for a child could not be imagined. Older readers may perhaps find relaxation and amusement for their leisure moments in Mr. Ernest M. Jessop's quaint illustrations of the ever-popular "Jackdaw of Rheims," which form a valuable *chef-d'œuvre* in the way of artistic printing.—For a present to a boy, either Mr. R. M. Ballantyne's brightly written adventure story, entitled "Blown to Bits; or, The Lonely Man of Rakata" (Nisbet and Co.), or his less ambitious work, "The Crew of the *Water-Wagtail*," ought to win general approval; while for girls the same publishers have issued another of Miss Agnes Giberne's pretty stories, under the title of "Number Three, Winifred Place."—Of "Laurel Crowns" (same publishers) it is almost enough to say that it is from the pen of Emma Marshall. But the work aims at doing something more than merely telling a pretty story for boys and girls, since it seeks to enlist their sympathies on behalf of those who are working among the toiling fishermen. In such a form the work ought undoubtedly to do much good.—Two more stories from the same publishers are "The Yarl's Yacht," by Jessie M. E. Saxby, a stirring story of life on and by the great waters, and "Geoffrey Hallam," a quaint story, in his own well-known style, by the Rev. J. Jackson Wray.—All children love fairy tales, and they, and those who love children too, will be pleased to welcome "The Blue Fairy Book" (Longmans and Co.), in which Mr. Andrew Lang has collected all the dear old stories that have charmed successive occupants of so many nurseries in the years gone by. To say that Mr. Andrew Lang is responsible for the work is to say it is well done, and when lessons and work are done, or in the holiday-time, there could not be a pleasanter companion than this tasteful little volume.

A FEEDER OF THE CHURCHES.

Such is the Open-air Mission, which during last year brought the Gospel within the hearing of about three millions of people, and which from time to time has added very many to the ranks of professed believers. One congregation is mentioned, with a membership of nine hundred and seventy-one, as owing no less than six hundred to the work of open-

air preaching. The Bishop of Sherborne, in the seventh century, could not get a congregation, so he went out as a minstrel, and quickly secured an audience. They listened as he played and descanted of heroic deeds, and then he told them of the Saviour's love. A simple and successful plan is this—when the people will not come to the preacher, for the preacher to go out into their midst; thus our churches will be better filled by-and-bye, and our congregations will not only be increased, but stirred up to take part in definite evangelistic work. The vicar of Old Ford remarks that there is a growing need for open-air ministry, after the manner of our Lord; for the enemies of the Gospel resort to open-air gatherings to spread their opinions, and the followers of the Saviour must be bold to avow Him publicly. In the report of the Open-air Mission many striking instances of good accomplished are set forth. We read of a tram-car man brought into light and peace by a wayside hymn, of a gambler for whom a mother had offered prayer, apparently in vain, but who tore up his betting-book, when convinced of sin, in sight of all the people; and of an open-air service in bitter weather, amid the wintry snow, heard by listeners from the windows of their homes, and blessed to eternal issues. At a seaside resort a lady sitting behind her curtains heard the preacher on the sands talking of repentance and salvation; and though he went home from that service saddened because of persecution, some years after he met his unseen hearer, who gladdened his heart by her testimony that his preaching had led to the awakening and conversion of her soul.



"Busy together in ministries of love."

FOR DARK AND RAINY EVENINGS.

There is perhaps a danger lest the multiplicity of outside engagements during the winter break up the home circle evening after evening, and cause those near akin to know less of each other's needs than of the claims of strangers. Prayer and love and wisdom must guide us as to the time we can give outside the home without wronging those within. A few short years, and circumstances will of necessity alter the home-circle concerning which the Master has made us now responsible; let us lay it to heart that the young folks carry with them through life memories of the old home fireside, endeared by helpful readings, inspiring converse, ever-ready sympathy. "Do the work that is nearest," might be whispered with advantage to many of us at times; let us not give all our care and energies to outside vineyards, while our own vineyards are neglected and unkept. No fairer picture can exist in these dark, long evenings, than children and parents busy together in ministries of love, preparing that Christmas-tree which is to delight the poor, mending old toys for the orphaned babes, arranging bright pictures for sick children, tidying old story-books to delight another generation, knitting warm garments for the chill bodies of the aged and infirm. In such a home-circle surely He is present, who loved the family at Bethany, and His blessing will never depart from those boys and girls who delight themselves in remembering the poor. We heard lately of a new branch of benevolence which might well be multiplied by the good-will of our young people—a toy-lending society, which passes on from one poor home to another the charms of novelty as concerns puzzles, donkeys, dolls, and the like. Of course, careful precautions must be taken against the spread of infection, but, all being well in this respect, such a society seems to open up to the children of the poor quite a vista of cheer and enchantment.

AT WORK AND AT HOME.

We have spoken, and with commendation, of the previous volumes of "The Biblical Illustrator," issued by Messrs. Nisbet and Co. Mr. Exell's volume on St. Luke, in this series, is now before us. It follows the line of its predecessors, and is no unworthy

successor of them.—Our contributor the Rev. George Everard has prepared a series of evening meditations, which is also issued by Messrs. Nisbet, under the title of "In the Evening," which ought to help and stimulate not a few readers.—Dr. Sparrow Simpson, the Sub-Dean of St. Paul's, has written a very valuable series of "Gleanings from Old St. Paul's," that Mr. Elliot Stock has published. To all lovers of Church history, and especially the history of our metropolitan cathedral, this interesting volume should prove acceptable.—From the same publisher we have received "The God of the Children," in which Mr. Bedford Pollard has given a number of suggestive little chapters for the use of mothers in the religious instruction of their children. The aim of the chapters is to show how the Creator works through all His creatures, and the lessons are clearly pointed and well chosen.—Each year as it comes seems to mark an improvement in the production of Christmas cards and other seasonable gifts, though possibly the number of designs does not increase materially. We are glad to see that Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons have provided among their cards for this season a number which are specially designed to illustrate passages of Scripture appropriate to the season. Two such series of cards are entitled "Christ the King" and "The Light is Come," and in each case the designs are by Fanny Bowers, and the verses by Jetty Vogel. All the coloured cards and booklets issued by this firm are remarkable for the beauty of the workmanship and the taste displayed in their designing, qualities which are perhaps nowhere more marked than in the wonderfully perfect reproductions of celebrated pictures by great masters, for which this firm is famous.—In "Israel My Glory" (Mildmay Printing House) the Rev. John Wilkinson, who has been for so many years connected with Christian work among the Jews, has set forth with admirable clearness both the mission of the Lord's ancient people, and the necessity for, and aims of, Christian missions to them. The subject is an important one, and in Mr. Wilkinson's hands it is adequately dealt with.

THE "SANTA CLAUS" SOCIETY.

Few, perhaps, of our readers are aware that "Santa Claus" has a society of his own, concerning which we hear that a welcome would be given to more dolls, toys, balls, scrap-books, rattles, furry animals, and the like, for the little ones, and shawls, work, books and other suitable gifts for adults. "Santa Claus" carries on a diversity of cheery agencies through the medium of Miss J. F. Charles, Hillside, Southwood Lane, Highgate. The objects in view are to provide dolls and toys for hospital children at that glad season which "comes but once a year," and to send poor children and adults for a country change in the summer. Last summer several convalescents were thus assisted, and it is to be hoped that this branch of the work will be yet further developed. Doll-dressing competitions are held amongst the friends of the society; some of the productions are quite works of art, and they are exhibited and sold for the benefit of the agencies, those remaining unsold forming part of the gifts to the hospitals. Those who undertake the work of distribution give gladdening accounts of comfort and cheer brought to many in trial and sickness, of little faces sharing in Christmas sunshine even though in



A "SANTA CLAUS" DOLLY.

homes of sickness, and of poor women delighted with gifts of wool and work prepared for their employment. One little boy who discovered that his soft wool lamb "talked" when its head was pulled down, became quite pink with excitement; a little mite of three and a half insisted on "somefin in a box," and was made happy by a pretty cardboard box containing muffetees, which he much preferred to trumpet, squeaking cat, or furry animal. A little blind girl sat *feeling* her doll all over, and treasuring her rattle with musical bells. Miss Charles will send the rules of the "Santa Claus" Society to anyone desiring particulars and enclosing two stamps.

IN SORROW AND IN JOY.

True as it is that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," consolation in time of bereavement or loss of any kind may come, and often does come, from outside, so it is probable that many will find in the "Treasure Book of Consolation" (Fisher Unwin), compiled and edited by Benjamin Orme, M.A., clearer ideas and fresh notifications of the One Source from which, in our times of trouble and anxiety, all our solace must come.—In "Alone with the Word" (Hodder and Stoughton), the Rev. G. Stringer Rowe gives a series of notes to accompany daily Bible-readings in the Gospels. Sometimes the notes consist largely of quotations from other parts of the Scriptures, but whatever their source their object is the same—the elucidation of God's teaching—and their value is always great.—Space will not permit us to do more than refer temperance readers to Mr. E. R. Barrett's able prize essay on "The Truth about Intoxicating Drinks," which has just been issued from the National Temperance Publication Dépôt, a work admirably classified and arranged.—"East Coast Days and Memories" (Longmans and Co.) is the latest work of "A. K. H. B.," in which not the least interesting chapters—if only in contrast with the rest of the work—are those on the two diverse lives of Principal Tulloch and Lord Chancellor Westbury. The rest of the work consists of essays in the writer's well-known style.—All readers, young and old alike, will find among the coloured books issued by Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner some gift acceptable not only for the well-chosen verses, but especially for the beauty of their exquisitely finished illustrations. Where all are so good it is difficult to select one or two for special praise, but perhaps the palm ought to be given to "Cradle Songs," illustrated by Joseph Clark and Mary Bousfield, or to Ernest Wilson's pretty drawings accompanying S. Rogers's "A Wish"—but these are only specimens of the whole series. In the matter of seasonable cards, Messrs. Hildesheimer are issuing some very quaint designs—birds, boxes, and fans all being used to carry the Yuletide greetings. And among folding cards we do not remember any prettier than some designed for this firm by Mr. C. G. Noakes, and displaying across the opening a spray of ivy, that only serves to cover a most beautifully rendered landscape within.—"More Echoes from a Village Church" (J. F. Shaw and Co.) is the title which the Rev. Frederick Harper gives to a series of very earnest and evidently heartfelt sermons originally delivered, as the title shows, in a Berkshire church. We trust that now they are addressed to a wider audience they may prove equally acceptable and useful.—"The Christian Portrait Gallery" (Morgan and Scott) is a useful collection of portraits of eminent Christian workers, accompanied by short biographical sketches.



SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE READING SOCIETY.

BIBLE READINGS TO DECEMBER 31.

DECEMBER.	MORNING.	EVENING.
9.	St. John vi. from ver. 58.	St. Matthew xxvi. 46—56.
10.	Jeremiah viii. 5—9; xiv. 7—12, 19—22.	Hosea xiii. to ver. 10.
11.	Hosea xi.	Hosea xiv.
12.	Numbers xiv., to ver. 12; 19—24.	St. Luke xxii. 31—34; 54—62.
13.	Psalm lxxviii. 29—41.	Psalm lxxviii. from ver. 50—62.
14.	Isaiah xxix., to ver. 15.	1 Corinthians x. to ver. 13.
15.	1 Kings xi. 4—13.	1 Kings xi. 26—43.
16.	Romans ii., to ver. 16.	Psalm lxxxix. from ver. 30.
17.	St. Matthew vii. to ver. 14.	St. Matthew vii. from ver. 15.
18.	Deuteronomy x., from ver. 12; xi. ver. 1.	Lamentations iii., 31—50.
19.	Psalms i. and 2.	Isaiah iii. to ver. 13.
20.	Ecclesiastes viii. 4—13.	Psalm xxxvii. from ver. 27.
21.	Proverbs iii. 13—26.	1 Corinthians i. from ver. 19.
22.	1 Kings xi. 26—43.	Psalm cxlv. to ver. 13.
23.	2 Samuel v. 1—12.	2 Samuel vi. 1—12.
24.	2 Samuel vii. 18—29.	Psalm xxxii. 1—11.
25.	2 Samuel xv. 1—12.	2 Samuel xviii. 18—33.
26.	2 Samuel xxii. 47; xxiii. 7.	1 Kings iii. 3—15.
27.	1 Kings viii. 12—16; 54—63.	1 Kings x. 1—13.
28.	1 Kings xi. 4—13.	1 Kings xi. 26—43.
29.	*Review Sunday.* Ecclesiastes xii.	Daniel vii., from ver. 13.
30.	Daniel ii. 31—44.	Philippians ii., to ver. 11.
31.	Psalm xc.	Psalm cxvi.

*** For greater convenience of reference, the whole of the Bible Readings for 1890 have been printed in THE QUIVER Illustrated Sheet Almanack, which is suitable for hanging on a bedroom wall, and may be obtained at any bookseller's or direct from the publishers, Cassell and Co., Limited, La Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. Price 1d.

The Editor begs to acknowledge the receipt of 10s. for the Children's Country Holiday Fund from Mrs. Gibbs, Mill Hill. The amount has been handed to the Society.

A PATIENT HEART.

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



ALL of us want to give something to God. You hear of others giving time, money, service, and it is a grief to you that you have nothing to render to the great and tender Physician for whom others are so busy. Once you *could* take your place in His vineyard and feel yourself of some little use to God and man, but now something whispers to your heart that you are a cumberer of the ground, and can render nothing to the Lord for all His benefits toward you. Those wise men must have rejoiced: they could bring the new-born Saviour gold, frankincense, and myrrh; but a little Sunday-scholar said to me once, "The shepherds did better still—they gave Christ *themselves*."

It is in your power to-day to bring to the Master a very precious offering, whatever your circumstances may be, and however weak you may feel. If He needed you just now in the vineyard, you would be there; if He required money from your purse, He would have first put it therein; if He required the service that health and strength can render, His loving Hand would not have weakened your strength in the way. This little verse will show you what you can render to the Lord:—

> "My full day's work is done,
> And this is all my part—
> I give a patient God
> *My patient heart.*"

Or is it an *impatient* one you offer to Him just now? Perhaps you feel inclined to say, "Did you know all, you would not wonder at my fretfulness. There is this worry and that worry and the other, and infirmities have laid hold upon me, and nothing goes on as it would do were I well enough to see to things. Nobody cares about a poor creature like me, and I am all alone." But even if it were possible that not one of your fellow-creatures cared about you, which I think in your heart you know they *do*, still you would be the object of untold love, unbounded compassion, everlasting remembrance. You *are* the object of such love; at this moment, amid all the pain and anxieties and weakness, it is as true that God loves as that God lives; and as to your being all alone, do not forget that the great, wise, merciful Lord has said, "Certainly I will be with thee."

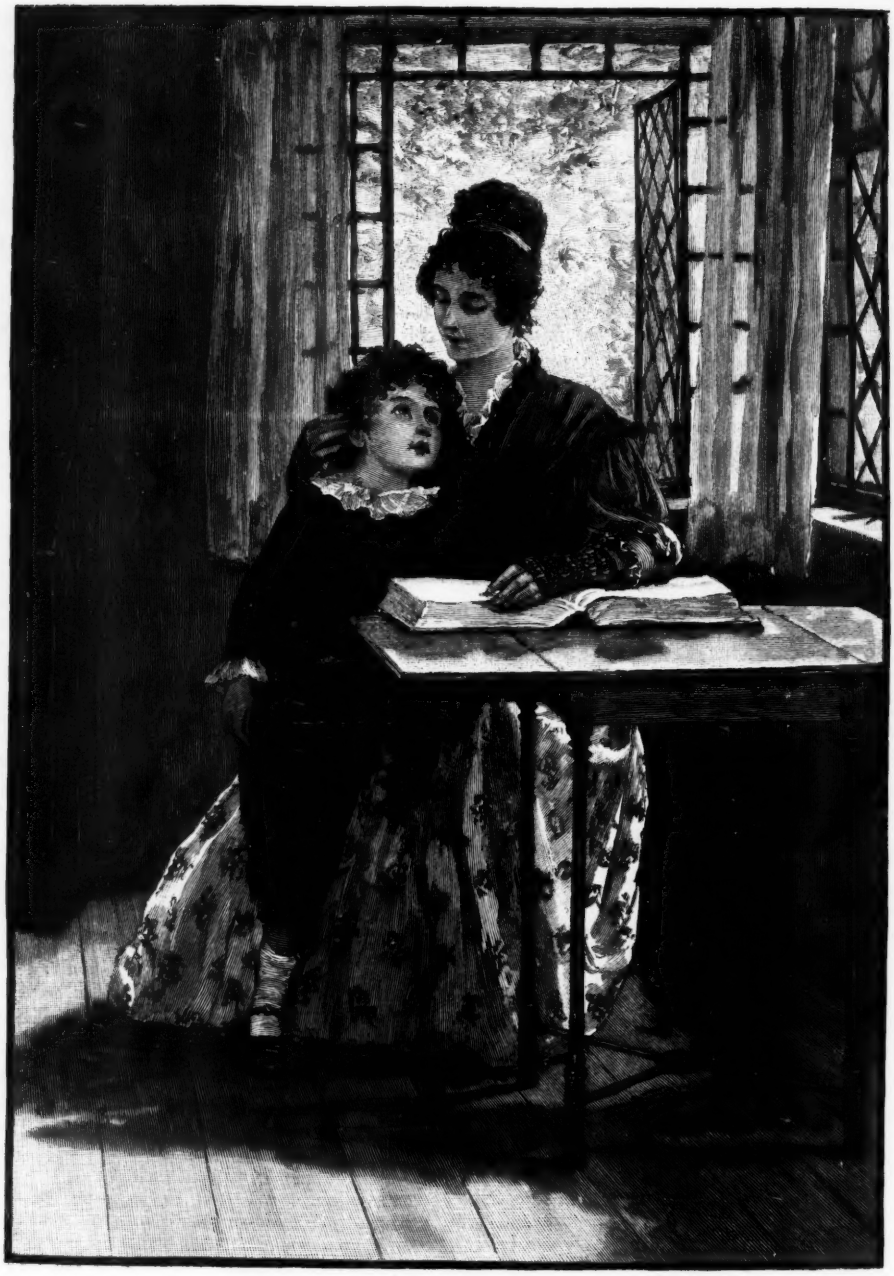
Friend, if your Master loves you so truly, and is with you now, can you not bring forth the fruit of patience? True, the way seems long and mysterious, and past your finding out, but what He is doing He will explain to you hereafter; just now what He asks of you is patient faith. "I sometimes envy the flowers by my bedside their freedom from pain, and wonder why I should suffer so, and they should look so fair and calm and untroubled," said a Christian whom God chose for the furnace of affliction: the beautiful roses could not respond to His teachings of pain, but *her* immortal soul could and did, and he was shaping her into His own glorious image while she was acquainted with grief.

Ah! those words remind us of a wonderful cure for impatience. Since the dear Lord has Himself been a Man of Sorrows, since Jesus wept, shall the disciple murmur to tread in His footsteps and learn what it is to watch and wait in Gethsemane? Ask the Redeemer to teach you the prayer He lifted there; breathing those words in sincerity, the fever of fretful unrest will leave you, and you will show to others how, even in tribulation, God can give to His children a calm and patient heart.

It will help you likewise to be patient when you remember that the roughest, hardest post is given to those whom the commander most trusts and honours. The hardest lesson is given to the scholar who will do the teacher most credit. It is not because you have *failed*, but because you have glorified God in the sunshine, that now He gives you the highest training of all—to be made perfect through the things you suffer. All things work together for good to them that love God, and when you take the assurance of God's Holy Word that even this pain, this weakness, this trouble is working out for you blessing and joy and sunlight unspeakable, will you not put by the fretting, and, lifting holy hands of prayer, humbly, trustfully, adoringly bring to-day to your patient God a patient heart? "Oh, impatient ones," cried a good minister now in the Land where there is no unrest, "do the *leaves* say nothing to you?" He pointed out that their glory is not the creation of an hour: every leaf-stem has a cradle in which is an infant germ, and rocking winds and rain as well as sunshine will cause its beauty by-and-bye to unfold. And thus is God working for *you:* accept His winds and His rain, believe in His present love and in His unshadowed Hereafter, and deny not to Him who is mindful of His own *a patient heart.*

XUM





THE FAMILY BIBLE.

See p. 181.

WITH THE CREW OF THE "SHAFTESBURY."



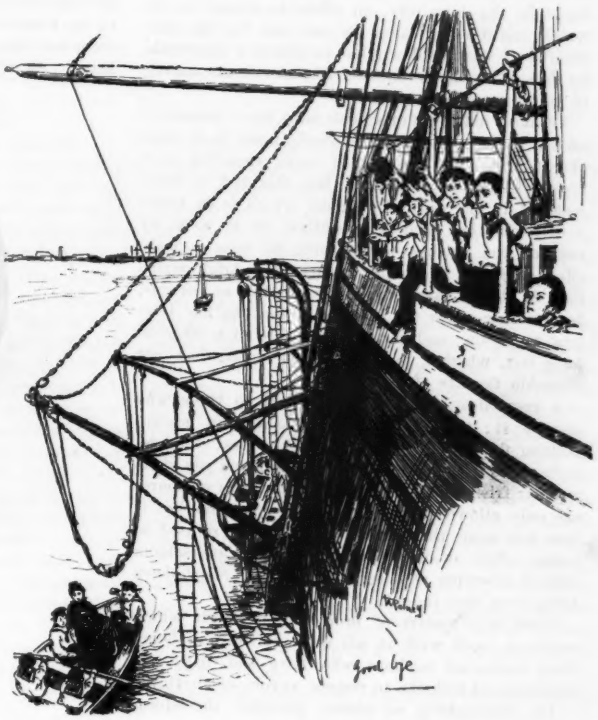
THE *Shaftesbury* training-ship lies in the Thames, a few miles above Gravesend, on the Essex side, off what was until lately the pretty and quiet village of Grays Thurrock. Grays, as it is now called, has lost part of its name and much of its beauty, having been built about with a suburb of hideous little houses during the making of the new docks at Tilbury. But there remains still the quiet beauty of the wide river sprinkled with shipping, and the wide sky bending down to the green Essex country; and when, looking at these on a warm summer's day, one thinks of the sultry London streets, one has no wish to quarrel with the surroundings.

The Raw Material

It is out of those London streets that the three or four hundred boys on board the *Shaftesbury* have come; and the condition in which they sometimes arrive would not encourage a modern Whittington to a search for the pavement of gold. Dirty and ragged, ill-fed and ill-grown, they have been but poorly prepared for the battle of life so far as their bodies are concerned; while their very committal to the *Shaftesbury*, which serves as an industrial school to the London School Board, implies that their moral preparation has in many cases been slighter still. Not one of these boys, indeed, has been in the technical sense "convicted" of crime; but many, if not all, have been rescued from the path which surely leads to conviction, though many, perhaps most, might plead that this path was not entirely of their own choosing. It is sometimes, but not always, a boy's fault that he wanders the streets by day, and sleeps on benches or in closets by nights; that after sharing the fortunes of young thieves and juvenile beggars he comes in time to beg, and probably to steal, himself. It may sometimes be from his own inordinate propensity to vice. But it may also be because his father is a drunkard, and his father's wife a stepmother; and there are cases in which a child seems scarcely to have known a home until he has been sent to school.

For the physical failings of the recruits it is comparatively easy to provide a remedy. Good air, abundant food, healthy exercise, wholesome occupation, are, as the Indians might have said, "great medicine," and the acquisition of a clean body, with a clean and handsome sailor's dress upon it, must make as great a difference to the acquirer, as it certainly does to those who meet him.

The ordeal of washing is indeed said to be at first far from agreeable to the little Londoner, who is not accustomed to it. But he must soon become accustomed, for on the *Shaftesbury* there is a great deal of it. Every morning the whole crew, after a preliminary dabbling in soap and water, are sent in swift succession through a huge bath on the lower deck: in at one side and out at the other, a process which must be amusing to the spectators, and, since the bath is warmed in winter, still more amusing, one would think, to the principal actors. Still, most people have forgotten what was their candid opinion of their first wash. The *Shaftesbury* boys have certainly a very cheerful and healthy appearance, though they perhaps strike a visitor as looking on the whole



smaller than boys ranging from twelve to sixteen might be expected to look. Their usual age at admission is twelve to fourteen, and their usual length of stay not more than three years, which may do much, but cannot be expected to do everything for them, that in their earlier years was left undone. Only the very best of them are, in the opinion of the Captain-Superintendent, Captain Scriven, physically equal at the end of their time to good country-bred lads of the same age.

Of their moral improvement it is of course more difficult to judge, as also indeed of their moral condition at the time of their arrival. The good boy is the variety of the species perhaps least likely to present himself; but bad boys are not necessarily very hardened sinners, and Captain Scriven seems to take the cheering view that those poor little children of misfortune who, if vice be hereditary, should be vicious, are rather mischievous than anything worse. He notices among them a strange restlessness, caused, perhaps, by the uncertainty of subsistence in the unhappy hunting-grounds of the streets, as the ferocity of carnivorous animals is supposed to arise from a continual fear of starvation in the want of regular meals. He thinks also that they are inclined to treat each other with cruelty; but public-schoolmen, at any rate of an older generation, are not entitled to say much on this head, except that it is difficult to see how cruelty, or indeed any form of serious vice, can have much chance for development on board the *Shaftesbury*. For whether by day on the upper deck, or at night in the dormitory, an officer is always on the watch, and if a boy leaves his own rest for the dear delight of cutting down his neighbour's hammock, he does so at the imminent risk, almost amounting to certainty, of detection.

The most indulgent of schools must have "bounds;" and an industrial school especially must be to some extent, and runs the risk of being regarded to a greater extent, as a prison. But this risk is much lessened in the case of a school which is on board a ship and has bounds prescribed, as it were, by nature; the flowing water being at once a more effective and a pleasanter gaoler than brick walls. Care is always taken to remove, as far as possible, from a new-comer the impression that he has been sent to prison; and certainly the life of a *Shaftesbury* boy, whether on land or on water, does not resemble the life of a prisoner.

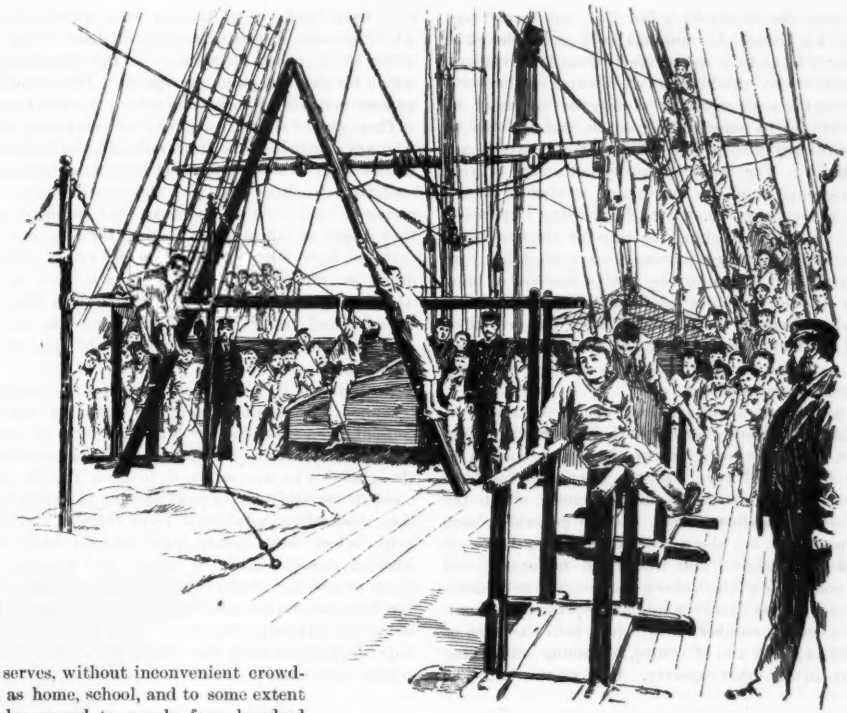
A great deal of liberty is allowed to those who deserve it; they go sometimes ashore in parties picking flowers or gathering blackberries; they receive visits from their friends on board, and pay visits to their friends on shore. These privileges of course are only allowed to those who deserve them, but it does not seem that practically they are refused to many, while it does appear that they are seldom abused, attempts at desertion from the *Shaftesbury* being very rare indeed.

There is a system of promotion by merit which seems to work well in all ways, self-respect being thus implanted in boys who have had little encouragement hitherto to respect anyone or anything.

The *Shaftesbury*, of course, provides the education given in the Board schools of London, one division of the boys being engaged on their lessons, while another is employed in the nautical and other tasks peculiar to the place. Only a very keen educationist derives actual pleasure from the sight, encouraging as no doubt it is, of a number of boys engaged in spelling or arithmetic; and the spectacle on board the *Shaftesbury* does not greatly differ from the spectacle anywhere else, though one notices with pleasure that the air seems to be present in just as many cubic feet between two decks as in many school-rooms built expressly for its reception. But the upper deck of the *Shaftesbury*, where the boys were spending the interval after dinner in a kind of extemporised cricket, with sunshine and air and a pleasant view of the fields and river, was decidedly a more cheerful place than the brick-bounded playgrounds in which they would have had to take their pleasure had they remained in a London school. Even the two or three little culprits who had misbehaved themselves at dinner, a meal at which great decorum is expected and maintained, and who were, as a punishment, made to stand at attention apart from the games of their innocent fellows, did not seem altogether to be pitied while they had this pleasant view to look at. Whether they looked is perhaps another question.

The *Shaftesbury* is an old Peninsular and Oriental ship, which, in the days of her wanderings to and fro, was known to the inhabitants of several climes as the *Nubia*. Now she has retired from active service; and her adventures are presumably at an end, though in the famous snowstorm of January, 1881, she broke from her then moorings and was nearly driven on shore. An additional deck has been given her, and





Recreation Time.

(*From a Photograph by Mr. R. W. Thomas, 121, Cheapside, E.C.*)

she serves, without inconvenient crowding, as home, school, and to some extent as playground to nearly four hundred boys.

There is also a playing-field on shore, where cricket can be practised on a grander scale than the upper deck allows, and some cottages near the bank in the village of Grays are used as a hospital.

A much more ornamental, if not more useful, appendage to the ship is her tender, the schooner *Themis*, in which those boys who have made satisfactory progress in seamanship can enjoy the pleasures, and perhaps learn some of the hardships, of an actual cruise, going down the river to the open sea, and sometimes as far as the Channel. A party went even to Spithead for the naval review in the Jubilee year. The aspect of this little vessel is attractive, and her crew on their return from a cruise wear an appearance of heal and contentment. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a prospect more inviting to the youthful mind than that of a voyage in a ship for the most part manned, if one may use the expression, by boys. One might, no doubt, wish, at any rate on starting, that the voyage could be to the Pacific Islands rather than merely to the mouth of the Thames; but very possibly the desire might soon be modified by experience. Not all sailor-boys are lucky enough to make their first acquaintance with seafaring life in friendly company, and neither at tedious length nor in time of tempest.

There is a small number of *Shaftesbury* boys who, from the first, display incapacity for a nautical life, and there is a considerable number of boys who, for other reasons, never arrive at one; but the life on board is, of course, designed as a preparation for the sea. It is therefore not the plan of the *Shaftesbury* to teach special trades to the pupils, except so far as this object can be attained indirectly by making them sailors; for it is generally understood that the British sailor can do anything, and, if a Jack-of-all-trades, is usually, to all appearance, master of a good many. The boys, of course, do not all attain to the same level of seamanship, but when it is mentioned that "grummets and cringles" are among the mysteries tackled by those who have got only so far as the third stage of instruction, it will be readily gathered that those who reach the fourth must have entered a region where few landsmen can hope to follow them. Indeed, to be able to swim, to row, steer, and sail, to knot and splice, to cook and to sew—for all boys acquire the art of using a needle, and all sails and awnings used in the *Shaftesbury* or her tender are made on board—is to possess an amount of ability that any member of the human family might envy, particularly the born Londoner, that most helpless of mortals, who, according to a recent critic, grows up as a rule fit for nothing but to sell newspapers.

It must be remembered, too, that, while learning all

these arts, the *Shaftesbury* boy has not been "neglecting his education," but has spelt and ciphered as diligently as, and not less regularly than, if he had been living on shore. And instead of listening at the street corner to the soulless clatter of the grinding organ, he may have learnt something of music, and whether he has learnt anything or not, will certainly have heard a good deal. For the *Shaftesbury* maintains a large and vigorous band, the inspiriting strains of which make a somewhat unexpectedly pleasing impression on the visitor approaching the ship for the first time. The small sailor-boys beating time with their bare feet while they puff into the festive bassoon or blow blasts on some big brass instrument with a mouth big enough to take in the musician, afford pleasure alike to the eye and, what is a point of greater importance, to the ear; for the time and spirit of these youthful performers are excellent.

It seems that about one-half of the boys trained on board the *Shaftesbury* end their course by going to sea. Of these, very few are fortunate enough to enter the Royal Navy. For the navy requires from its recruits not merely a good character, which the *Shaftesbury* candidates can, and do generally, earn for themselves, but also a satisfactory account of their friends and origin; and this, from reasons beyond their control, few *Shaftesbury* boys are able to produce. The army is less exacting in this respect, and accordingly a certain number of boys pass into the army as band-boys; they are, of course, too young on leaving to join in any other capacity. Half of the half who turn their backs upon the sea, or a quarter of the whole number, are satisfactorily disposed of in the army or in other situations, in the procuring of which for them no pains are spared. The remaining quarter consists of those who return to their friends.

There are, of course, no means of preventing a boy who has served his time from returning to his friends if they wish to have him; and it seems at first sight creditable to them that they should wish it, as it is certainly creditable to the boys that in many cases they retain an affectionate feeling for relations who too often have done but little to deserve it. Still it must be remembered that a boy is sent to the *Shaftesbury* often as a way of saving him from his friends; and results show plainly that his need of protection is not much lessened at the time of his discharge.

No boy can be sent to sea, or enter the army as band-boy, without the consent of his parents; and this consent, even when the boy himself desires it, cannot always be obtained. Of the number—one-quarter of the whole—who are returned to their friends, about one-half are said to return at varying intervals to the ship, demanding help for a fresh start in life. This help, when three years have elapsed from their leaving, cannot legally be given; but whether it is given or not, the second start is evidently made under far less favourable conditions than the first. It is not at all surprising that four or five per cent. of the boys discharged from the *Shaftesbury* are found to relapse into crime.



Of those who leave with happier prospects there is no reason to doubt that most continue with credit in the paths marked out for them, though it is only a few that have both gratitude and energy enough to keep up communication with those friends on board to whom they owe their position. Some, perhaps, are glad to conceal and forget what was in its origin not a creditable connection; and it must be remembered that the *Shaftesbury* boys travel far out into the world, and that, however well they may have attended to their lessons, they do not belong to the letter-writing classes. But it may be hoped that many feel the gratitude which a few express for the honourable and useful life made possible to them, whose original bringing-up gave much chance of dishonour and little or none of usefulness. E. J. Webb.

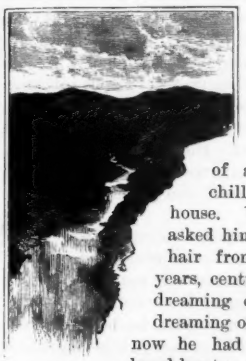
WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

IN HONOUR BOUND.

"But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border."—Burns.



Lancelot Vereker went out from his cousin's presence stunned and dazed. He was like a man who goes suddenly from the brilliant light of a summer noon to the chill obscurity of a charnel-house. Was it an hour ago, he asked himself, pushing the damp hair from his brow, or was it years, centuries, ages—that he was dreaming of Avice Meredith, and dreaming of her for himself? And now he had heard that his cousin loved her too, that Sir Raymond's feeling was not the boyish fancy he had believed it to be, but a love deep and earnest as his own. In the light of that revelation his dreams stood confessed for the empty folly they were, if indeed they were not something worse. He ought to have known that a day would come when Raymond would love with a man's love, not a boy's; and surely he ought to have known that if any woman could inspire the stronger and more enduring affection, it would be Avice Meredith. He ought to have known, he ought to have understood, and he had not done either. He had let his own hopes blind him to the facts before his eyes, his own wishes father the thoughts he had hugged to his breast.

But if he had sinned, he told himself passionately that he had not sinned consciously. It *was* true that he had not understood, that he had disbelieved his cousin's protestations; and Sir Raymond's own conduct was abundant justification of his unbelief. And for the other count in the indictment his conscience brought against him, was not Avice herself the best and surest vindication of his love? Who could see her and not love her? thought Lancelot, with a sigh that was almost a sob. Had he not as good a right as Raymond to feel the magic of her beauty, to own her power, and lay his heart at her feet? There was no treachery to his cousin when he had not known that Raymond loved her, or, at least, when he had not understood all that the words had meant. And now that he knew, what could he do? He could not tear her beautiful image from his heart, he could not cease to love her, because his cousin loved her also. It was for Avice to decide between them, as even Raymond must admit.

If he had known, if he had only known that his cousin was in earnest, there would have been no harm done. The knowledge in itself would have been as a panoply of steel; or if Avice's eyes had pierced even that, he would have fled from her presence before it became too dear. But now, Avice must decide. Sir Raymond could not ask more than a fair field in which to win her favour, Lancelot told himself, for he must know that the advantage was all on his side. Raymond had been first in the field; he was the handsomer of the two, as Lancelot freely admitted, cleverer in every way, and gifted besides with the dower of song, which must of itself open up such a wide field of sympathy and mutual delight. And beside all these natural advantages, there were the adventitious ones with which Fortune still further weighed down the scale. If other things had been equal, there remained to his cousin the superiority of rank and wealth.

And yet—and yet——!

Lancelot owned that every advantage was on Sir Raymond's side, and yet in his heart he refused to despair. He did not think that Avice loved his cousin *yet*. If she had done so, surely she could not have spoken of him just as she always did. He did not think that any girl could have kept up that tone of quiet friendliness—a friendliness that was only another name for indifference, Lancelot thought scornfully—unless she had really felt it. If Mr. Vereker did not add, even to his own heart, that no girl who loved his cousin would have tones or looks for himself quite like those on which he had lived for the last three weeks, it was because coxcombry in any shape was alien to his nature, and his love was humble in exact proportion to its strength. He did not tell himself that he believed his love was returned—how could he, when he had not yet declared it?—but under all the struggle and conflict and pain, something beat and throbbed, and sounded a faint clear

pipe of irrepressible hope, as a robin sings under bare November boughs.

But even as the robin's note seems to emphasise the surrounding silence, that quick upleaping of hope seemed only to point the hopelessness of Lancelot's dreams. Suppose it were true—suppose that, half unwittingly, he had won the love that Raymond sought—could he put out his hand to take it? The hand that sought Avice Meredith's should at least be pure and stainless, and what would his be if he were capable of this? He knew well enough what other men would say of the confidant who undermined his principal; nay, he knew what he would say himself were the case another man's. He had known of his cousin's love, and he had treated it as if he had not known. Raymond had confided in him from the first, and the very frankness of his cousin's confidence had made him indifferent and sceptical. There was a distinct shadow of dishonour upon it all that made all the blood of all the Verekers surge into his face. He sat staring blankly before him in a maze of doubt and pain, that lasted far into the sweet summer night. Not the robin's note only, but summer's full chorus of thrush and blackbird, of lark and linnet and finch, was waking and swelling in the early dawn before Lancelot's vigil came to an end. He got up stiff and weary, and even cold, and threw himself on the bed without undressing, and counted the hours till the house was astir, and it was possible to go down-stairs without provoking comment or question. Then he went out into the freshness and beauty of the early morning, and plunged into the clear, cool Avon, and felt new life and courage dart into his veins.

Whatever the cost, whatever the pain, he must be true—not only to Sir Raymond, but to himself. The thought of treachery to his cousin was only less intolerable than the thought of dishonour to himself. He could not, and he would not, wrong the confiding boy, who had been as a brother to him, whom he loved as a brother still. If there had been no other thought to save him from such foul dishonour, how could he ever look in Lady Vereker's kind face again? He had prated of gratitude and devotion, and was he to ride roughshod over the ruins of Raymond's happiness to his own?

Happily, it was only his own that was involved; whatever hopes had been kindled by Avice's looks and tones, by the tremor in her voice, or the welcome in the sweet shy eyes, he had not the monstrous conceit to imagine that they betrayed anything but the merest possibility of future regard. He was glad, he was thankful, to remember that there would be no suffering for her. If her feelings had been involved, how perplexing and difficult of solution would the question of his own duty have been! and now it was so clear and plain.

The sophistries with which he had bewildered himself last night would not bear the light of day. The question was not if he had been sincere in doubting Sir Raymond's love: it was, what he was prepared to do now that doubt was no longer possible. It seemed to Lancelot Vereker that only one answer was possible to that.

He must give up Avice—or rather, he must give up the attempt to win her. That was all he had the power to renounce, the only form in which it was possible to think of renunciation. If she had been his——! But he had no right to call her that, no right to think of his hopes as anything but the faintest sweetest dreams that ever stirred the soul of man. It was so little to renounce, he told himself bitterly—but the struggle to renounce that little was the hardest fight that Lancelot Vereker had ever fought.

The bathing-place was some distance from the house, and when he came back there were already people stirring in the grounds. Mr. Hopkinson's satellites were busy sweeping up whatever leaves had fallen in the night, or rooting up whatever weeds had ventured on a futile struggle for existence; men in white linen caps were moving about the refreshment tent; and under Sir Raymond's window, a troop of children were being marshalled by the village schoolmistress, and were evidently about to wake the echoes in his honour. Lancelot stood and listened. He was in the pause of thought that succeeds a mental strain and found a factitious interest in every trivial incident. He remembered always afterwards the wonderful faces one small boy made, and how one of the girls had a hole in her pinafore, which she was evidently anxious to conceal from her schoolmistress's eyes. The children sang lustily, but the voices were coarse and rough, with a pronounced Warwickshire twang, and the effect could not be called good. However, Sir Raymond's window opened, and the singers pressed forward with a chorus of "'appy returns!" and possibly with some expectation of largesse.

But unluckily this matutinal serenade was not in the programme, and was indeed a private enterprise of Miss Pearson's, who plumed herself not a little on the brilliant idea. Sir Raymond knew nothing about it, and he knew very distinctly that he had just been awakened from his sleep by sounds whose dissonance offended his sensitive ear. It was not a shower of money that proceeded from the window he threw up, but a fusillade of boots and shoes, accompanied by the uncouth cries with which disturbed sleepers endeavour to disperse the nocturnal assemblies of "the harmless, necessary cat."

Schoolmistress and scholars fled in dismay, and Lancelot, unmirthful as his mood was, could hardly speak for laughing. When he could, he did his best to excuse his cousin. "Sir Raymond did not know, he had not been told—he would be quite distressed when he discovered what he had done," Mr. Vereker assured the discomfited singers. And then he turned out his pockets for the children's benefit, and walked down the drive with poor Miss Pearson, who had escaped any contact with the flying missiles, but whose wounded feelings seemed quite unable to recover from the fact that she and her patiently trained scholars had had their performance mistaken for feline caterwaulings. Even Lancelot's ingenuity could not put the circumstance in a complimentary light. He could only aver that his cousin would be as sorry as he was himself, and then he opened the gate for Miss Pearson with a bow lower than he would have accorded to a duchess.

He stood leaning on the gate, and looking after the

quaint little procession with the same artificial interest with which he had regarded Ben Pittaway's grimaces, and the hole in Jenny Dawes' pinafore, till mistress and scholars disappeared in the direction of the straggling rows of whitewashed cottages that constituted the hamlet of Verecroft. There was no church in the village, as it was generally called, nor indeed nearer than Buddington, but Lady Vereker had built a school-house at her own private cost, and it was one of the dreams that she and Lancelot had dreamt for their boy that the school-house should have a church beside it when Sir Raymond came to his own. Lancelot found himself thinking of this now, and wondering if it would ever come to pass. It seemed difficult to believe that anything could go on just the same, that any of their old plans and projects should survive the moral cataclysm that had fallen on his life.

He looked at the children clattering after the little schoolmistress across the rustic bridge, at the familiar turret of the little school-house peeping through the trees, with a curious sense of strangeness and unreality. Was it only last Sunday—only two days ago—that he had been reading a sermon of Jeremy Taylor's to the old people who could not get as far as Buddington? Lancelot was in the habit of holding a little service in the school-house for the old and infirm on Sunday evenings, and sometimes the vicar came over and



"It disclosed a dress of softest, purest white."—*p.* 171.

preached, and sometimes Lancelot read a sermon to them. He remembered quite well the one he had read last Sunday, and parts of it came curiously home to him now :—

"Now God hath bound thy trouble upon thee, by His special Providence, and with a design to try thee, and with purposes to reward and to crown thee. These cords thou canst not break; and therefore lie thou down quietly, and suffer the Hand of God to do what He please."

The young man, reading this counsel to the old people, who knew so much more of trouble and trial than he did, had thought the sermon much more applicable to them than to himself. He had admired its eloquent simplicity, as one might admire the sonorous rhythm of a Greek ode, even while ignorant of the meaning of "its solemn *ois* and *ais*," but now it seemed as if the words he recalled so vividly had been a preparation for the trial that had come upon him. If he could only take it in such a spirit as this! *If* he could——! Renunciation ought to have been so easy, he thought, with a miserable sense of ingratitude, and behold! it was so hard, so utterly beyond his strength. Had he not boasted, only last night, that there was nothing he would not do for Raymond? But then he had not known it would be *this!*

He heard a step on the gravel behind him, and turning round, saw Lady Vereker, astir like himself, though the happy smile that curved her lip showed that her wakefulness had quite another cause.

"Up already, Lance?" she cried gaily. "Surely there is nothing that needs seeing to now? I thought all your preparations were complete?"

"Oh yes—but it was too hot to sleep."

"My dear boy, you look as if you had found it so indeed," said Lady Vereker, looking at the pale face and haggard eyes with sudden concern and sympathy. "You are not going to be ill, are you, Lance?—to-day, of all days in the year!"

Lancelot lightly disavowed any such untoward intention; and then he told of the discomfiture of the schoolmistress and her poor little scholars, and so drew Lady Vereker's attention from himself and his looks.

"Really, it was very excusable, wasn't it?" she said, as she heard of Sir Raymond's unfortunate mistake.

A cynical listener might have wondered within himself what Ray had ever done, or left undone, which his mother had not thought "very excusable": but Lady Vereker's listener was not cynical, and assented with an accent of conviction that was pleasant to her ear.

"They *did* make a fearful noise," he said, with another laugh at the remembrance, "and it was impossible for Ray to see them, for the cedar shuts out his view of that walk."

"I am sorry they woke him," said Lady Vereker. "He was up so late last night."

"Late? It was only just eleven when I left him."

"I went to him after that, and we had the sweetest talk! I never knew what my boy was before, Lance—I never did him justice, indeed. How we have laughed at his fancies, until, I think, we almost persuaded ourselves he would never know anything deeper than a fancy all his life. But now that he has—that he does—how it seems to ennoble and dignify his whole nature! I am not jealous—oh, no! how could I be?" as she wiped away some suspicious tears. "I am not jealous, Lance, indeed! I am only happy, and proud, and thankful to be the mother of a son who can love like that."

"He has told you, then?" Lancelot found voice to say, after a little pause.

"Oh yes, he has told me! And it is as we thought—I will not say, as we *feared*—for a girl who could win a love like that must be more worthy of it than either of us knew. My mother is vexed, but we must stand by him, Lance—you and I. After all, a Vereker may surely please himself; and if it were not so, what would wealth or rank matter so long as Raymond was happy?"

"No," said Lancelot slowly, with a curious far-away look, "nothing would matter, would it?—if we could only be sure of that."

He bent down and kissed the kind face raised to his. Lady Vereker knew that the kiss had something strangely sweet and grave about it, but she did not know that it was the sealing of a vow of solemn renunciation, that would alter the current of all their lives.

CHAPTER X.

IN SILK ATTIRE.

"There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white."—COLERIDGE.

"WHICH shall I wear?" said Avice Meredith in a tone of deep perplexity, in which a moralist might have found a fine example of the irony of circumstance.

Two men at Verecroft were awaiting her coming with tragic intensity of passionate expectation, and her own anxieties seemed limited to the colour of her gown!

Fortunately for the solution of this distinctly feminine question, Miss Meredith's wardrobe did not admit of much variety of choice. A white muslin that had seen better days, a cream cashmere that had been the round of various tennis-parties, a pink "zephyr," made by her own hands, and, though neat and well-fitting, lacking just the artistic touches that lift a cotton gown from homely usefulness to the *ne plus ultra* of the dressmaker's art, were all that offered themselves to Avice's anxious eyes.

Daisy, whose cashmere had seen so much less service than her sister's as to be quite fresh and presentable still, looked on with sympathetic distress.

"If they had only washed that muslin better!" she said sorrowfully; but the sound of pity roused Avice's spirit.

"It does not matter," she said cheerfully, taking up the despised garment, and endeavouring not to see the traces of the laundress's unskilful iron and too evident starch and "blue." "It only makes one feel how *detestable* it is to be poor—to have to waste so much thought on what one wears, and—and to mind so much about it," ended Avice, in a tone of humiliation.

"I thought you never did mind," said Daisy. "You never did before."

"I know—and that is why I hate myself now." A wave of colour swept over the proud, beautiful face, and Daisy kissed it tenderly.

"I know, dear, I know," she whispered tenderly. "But it will be all right, Avice. *He* will not care what you wear. He will think—as *I* do—that whatever you wear will look just the very best and rightest thing that anyone could put on. It always is so, Avice, indeed. You *always* look better dressed than anyone else, however shabby your frock seemed before you put it on."

Avice laughed, but it was impossible not to be a little consoled by the tender flattery. "It would be nice to think so, when *this* is what one has to put on," she said, shaking out the stiff inelegant folds.

"It *is* so!" protested Daisy stoutly; "and you know Sir Raymond will think so too."

"Sir Raymond? Oh, perhaps—but it does not follow that everyone is as silly as Sir Raymond."

"Ah!" said Daisy, "it is all very well for you to call him silly—but I wonder what you would say if I agreed?"

Avice did not answer, and in the little silence there was a rap at the door, and Emma, the small parlour-maid, entered, carrying a parcel almost as large as herself.

"Lady Rosalie's love, miss, and would you please wear it to-day? She 's awfully sorry it were so late in coming, being promised faithful last night, and disappointed her till now. And she hopes it isn't too late to put it on, and if it is, she 'll keep the kerridge waiting," ended Emma breathlessly, depositing her burden at Avice's feet, and beginning to unpin the huge white wrapper.

Unpinned, it disclosed a dress of softest, purest white, at the sight of which Daisy uttered a scream of delight, while Avice gazed with eyes of wide surprise.

"How good of her! How beautiful! Avice, do try it on!" Daisy cried impatiently; but Avice did not answer till the maid had gone. Proud as she was, she had not the fierce, ungracious pride which refuses to receive a favour from a friend, but there was something that almost seemed to savour of humiliation in a gift like this.

"I don't like to have my *clothes* given me," she said at last; but Daisy would not listen.

"That is nonsense," she said decidedly, "when it is Lady Rosalie. No one else would do it, and Lady Rosalie wouldn't, only she wants you to look nice at Verecroft to-day."

A relenting smile crept about Avice's mouth, that Daisy was quick to see.

"Put it on, Avice," she cried. "What are you waiting for? Isn't it *sweet* of Lady Rosalie? *This* is what she wanted that old black dress of yours for, I am sure. She said it was for a widow with five children, but I don't believe in the widow, or the children either. Oh!" cried Daisy, dancing round her sister, as the soft folds fell into their places, "it couldn't have fitted better if you 'd tried it on a dozen times. And see! it is Madame Pontet's work: here 's her name on the band. Isn't it good of Lady Rosalie? I will never say she is not nice again, will you?"

"She is very kind, but that we always knew. And certainly she has done this both nicely and kindly," said Avice. "See what she says in her note."

Daisy took it and read:—

"My Dear Avice,—I have your mother's permission to ask your acceptance of the dress I send with this. Please let me have the pleasure of helping you to look your best to-day, and wear my little gift for the sake of your old friend, Rosalie."

Daisy read it aloud, and Avice felt that it was impossible to refuse a gift so delicately offered, whatever her own private feelings might be.

It was consoling to find that her mother was entirely of that opinion, and certainly it was comfortable to feel so suitably attired for the Verecroft fête, at which the poor washed muslin would have seemed so woefully out of place. Nevertheless, Avice would have liked it better if Lady Rosalie had been less effusively delighted with the success of her present, and less prodigal of her assurances of Sir Raymond's admiration.

"Do you think I want his admiration?" Avice asked proudly.

"I can't say, my dear," said Lady Rosalie drily, "but I think you are uncommonly likely to get it. The way you and your frock set each other off is too delightful. I told Madame Pontet it would be the best advertisement she ever had, and she ought to make it for nothing!"

Avice laughed, but she leant back in her corner of Lady Rosalie's comfortable carriage with a very happy face, while Lady Rosalie congratulated herself on the success of her good-natured forethought, and pleased herself with imagining the sensation Avice's beauty could not fail to create at Verecroft.

And indeed, a general thrill of curiosity and admiration stirred the distinguished guests assembled on Lady Vereker's lawn, as Avice followed Lady Rosalie across it.

Miss Jackson and Daisy were just behind, but every eye was fixed on the tall graceful figure, draped in shining folds of white, and crowned with a coronet of soft fair hair.

"*Who* is she?" whispered a great lady, who thought herself above good manners, in a loud aside to Mrs. Selwyn, the vicar's wife. "Meredith? Not one of the Compton Merediths, I'm sure? *They* all look like dairy-maids or cooks, but this is quite a *beauty!*"

"This is a Miss Meredith of Leamington, I believe," said Mrs. Selwyn, with a nervous glance round to see if any of the Compton Merediths were near enough to have heard Lady Marcelby's unflattering remarks.

"What! the girl young Vereker wants to marry?" asked the old lady sharply.

"H'sh! they 'll hear us, I'm afraid," pleaded poor Mrs. Selwyn; but the dowager only stared disdainfully, and observed that she had never given Sir Raymond credit for such good taste.

And meanwhile, Lady Vereker was welcoming Lady Rosalie and her party with pronounced cordiality, and Sir Raymond, with all his heart in his eyes, was

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bending over the beloved hand, and Avice was glancing shyly round, and looking a little—what was it?—a little disappointed, Lady Rosalie thought; or was it only that she was startled and shy?

But whatever the shade on the beautiful face might mean, it was gone directly, and Miss Meredith was only just a thought more dignified and stately than before. A murmur of admiration was heard on every side, and Lady Rosalie's satisfaction knew no bounds.

"And where is my young friend Lance?" she asked a little later, when Sir Raymond, who hovered between his post of duty by his mother's side and the seat where Lady Rosalie and her little party had established themselves, had taken advantage of a lull in the arrivals to follow his eyes in their direction. "I haven't seen him since we came."

"Haven't you? Oh—I know! He went off to see to the cricket just as you came in. You see, I can't be in two places at once, and the village boys are all so fond of Lance, he really does quite as well."

"Not *really?*" said Miss Meredith, with a laugh that sounded a little sarcastic.

"Really! And is twice as good a cricketer. Oh, I know what you meant—and it did sound horribly conceited. But you see, just for to-day, I can't help the force of circumstances. Lance is twice as good a fellow as I am, but he doesn't come of age to-day, and that's what makes the difference."

"Of course—I quite understand," said Avice, smiling very kindly on the young man's eager excuses.

"What a fine fellow he is!" said Lady Rosalie, when Sir Raymond had gone back to his post. "I believe he really does think his cousin a sort of walking perfection, though to my mind there's no comparison between them, is there, Avice my dear?"

"None at all," said Avice demurely.

"Ah, we all know what you think!" laughed Lady Rosalie. "You stand fire very well, but you can't keep your blushes in order.—Isn't it an improvement to her, Hilda? As good as a touch of rouge."

Miss Jackson disdained to understand the allusion, but there was no doubt as to the picturesque effect of Avice's mantling cheeks.

"Handsomest girl I've seen in Warwickshire," said a fine keen-featured old man to a group of officers, who were regarding Miss Meredith with evident approval. "Is that your Leamington beauty, Phil?"

"That is Miss Meredith," said Captain Hallam. "She's very beautiful, no doubt, but a little too statuesque for my taste."

"Not a bit of it!" cried the old beau, who was none other than Lord Blackstone, the "law lord." "She reminds me of a classic heroine."

"Just so," said Philip Hallam. "You couldn't fancy her sitting the other side of the fire, or darning your socks—or—or—being domesticated in any way."

"I wasn't regarding her from the matrimonial point of view," laughed the old man; "though even then there's something to be said in favour of so handsome a *vis-à-vis* for your dinner-table, Phil."

"Ah, very likely," said Phil indifferently; "but any way, Miss Meredith's bespoke—or so, at least, people say. Vereker's awfully gone on her, you know."

"Which Vereker? Not the baronet?"

"That's the story, but I don't know how far it's true. Any way, that's the sort of thing that would suit her style, I should say. One could fancy her sweeping across 'lordly halls,' and all the rest of it, but something on a smaller scale would suit a man better who has to follow the drum."

The old lord laughed.

"And pray, Master Phil, have you found this duodecimo edition of all the domestic virtues?" he inquired.

But though the father and son had walked on together, Captain Hallam only shook his head inscrutably.

"I'll tell you if ever I do," he said, and Lord Blackstone pressed him no further. He only made a mental note that a captain in Her Majesty's service could blush like a girl, and he looked with unusual interest at every woman his son approached, especially if she was below the average height.

"For if a man can see a girl like *that*"—with another admiring glance in Avice's direction—"and not fancy himself in love with her, he is probably in love with someone else," the astute old man reflected. "Pretty creature! I believe I'm in love with her myself! I'll go and get someone to introduce me."

Which he did, and Avice, who was standing by, retracted her opinion of law lords on the spot, and even felt more kindly disposed to Captain Hallam for being the son of so charming and courtly a father.

"I do like Lord Blackstone," she said to Sir Raymond, when at last that young man was able to make his escape from guests who must be welcomed and congratulations that must be acknowledged, and devote himself to the guest whose presence was to him the sum and crown of all.

He had constituted himself *cicerone* to Lady Rosalie's party, as they wandered enchanted amongst the beautiful grounds that were almost as unknown to Lady Rosalie and Miss Jackson as they were to Avice and Daisy themselves. Verecroft was an ideal place for a garden-party, and the day was an ideal day. The weather was perfect, the sky a brilliant blue, with masses of fleecy white clouds sailing slowly across it; the trees were in fullest verdure; the Avon wound its silvery way through lawns of deepest, vividest green, and trees that laved their drooping branches in the slow-gliding stream; there was just breeze enough to stir the leaves and make the river sparkle in the sun. A few enthusiastic tennis-players had brought their shoes, and were sending the white balls flying in the full glare of the afternoon sun, but most people preferred to sit under the elms on the lawns, or follow the shady paths that sloped down to the river-side.

It was down one of the shadiest and least frequented of these that Sir Raymond and Avice were making their way. "We must not lose Lady Rosalie," Avice had said, once or twice; but Sir Raymond had not found it difficult to lose a *chaperon* who was perhaps not unwilling to be lost.

"We shall meet her by the river," he said

confidently. "Everybody meets down there." And with this apocryphal information Avice had to be content.

Almost unconsciously she quickened her steps. A *tête-à-tête* with Sir Raymond Vereker was the last thing she desired, and she could not help a suspicion that she was being entrapped into one now.

"I *do* like Lord Blackstone," she said, with a feeling of avoiding dangerous subjects. Even Sir Raymond could hardly get sentimental on this. He looked a little puzzled at her enthusiastic tone.

"Yes," he agreed. "Awfully jolly old boy, isn't he? Looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth now, but I believe he used to be called the 'hanging judge' when he was on the bench."

"He looks as if he could be severe, but I think there is something very fine about him."

"Yes, I dare say," said Sir Raymond indifferently. He could not be jealous of the old law lord, but he did not want to waste his time in talking about him. It was so long since he had seen Avice, and now that Lady Rosalie had been good enough to leave them together, it was too exasperating that she would do nothing but talk about that stupid old man.

"Do you know that it is three months—three whole months since I saw you?" he said, with a thrill in his voice.

"Is it? It does not seem so long," said Miss Meredith unkindly.

"Perhaps not, to you," said Sir Raymond, with a reproachful look. "It has seemed a great deal more to me."

Avice would have laughed at the tragic tone, but for its evident sincerity. She knew well enough how to parry a compliment or snub an over-bold admirer, but she never quite knew how to answer Sir Raymond Vereker. He was not like any of the other men she knew, this ardent, impetuous boy, with his dark pleading eyes, and eager fluent tongue, and air of being so desperately in earnest.

She liked him very much when he was not silly, but something about him now made her think that he might be going to be very silly indeed. This, at least, was how Avice put it to herself. She did not tell herself, as so many girls in her position would have done, that it only rested with herself whether she should be Lady Vereker or not; she only looked at the young baronet's speaking face and glowing eyes, and felt that he was quite capable of the folly of asking her to be so.

"I wonder where Lady Rosalie is?" she said nervously. "I begin to think she must have lost her way."

"It does not matter; she will easily find it again."

"Oh——? But I am sure we ought to go back."

"That would be the way to lose her in earnest. And besides, there is something I wanted to say."

For a moment Avice's step quickened; and then she stopped abruptly. There was something so undignified in running away.

"What do you want to say?" she asked, with disconcerting directness.

What did he want to say! He wanted to tell her how he had dreamed of her by night, and thought of her by day, ever since they met; he wanted to tell her how beautiful and peerless he thought her, how truly and deeply he loved her; he wanted to ask her for her love in return, to implore her to be his wife. But he could tell her none of these things while she stood and looked at him like this.

The slim girlish figure, in its robes of shining white, seemed something so far from him, so far above him, the young man thought. The fair sweet face, with its starry eyes and ripples of shining hair, was more like an angel's than anything of earthly mould. He could not tell her what he wanted, but he would have fallen down before her, have knelt at her feet, and kissed the hem of her garment, if the starry eyes had been less coldly questioning, and the curve of the beautiful lips less stately and severe.

"Why do you look like that?" he cried appealingly. "Have you forgotten Easter, and all I told you then?"

"I thought you would have forgotten all that nonsense now!"

"Forgotten? Do you think you are the sort of woman a man forgets so easily? I could not forget you if I tried, any more than I can help loving you, as I have done from the very first day we met. You know—you *know* how I love you! And you stand there so cold and white and silent, you might be an Ice-maiden, or an Undine out of the river, a creature who had never as much as heard of love."

"Why should we talk of love?" said Avice, with an impatient look up and down the little path for the *chaperon* who seemed to have deserted her. "Surely there are plenty of other things——"

"There is nothing else that concerns me when you are by," he interrupted. "You would not hear me at Easter; you called me a boy then, but I am not a boy now. I am not a boy to-day—I am a man, and the first act of my manhood is to ask you to crown it with your love, Avice—my darling!"

The dark handsome face was almost on a level with her own as she stood a little above him, where the great tree rose upward from the path. She leant back against it, and put out her hand with a gesture that forbade him to approach.

"Hush!" she said, in a tone of decision that sent a chill to his heart. "You must not call me that! I cannot and I will not listen to you. I would not have come to-day if I had thought you would be so foolish. It is worse than foolish—it is humiliating both to yourself and me. You remind me of Easter; and did I not tell you then that I would not accept any man's love against the wishes of his family? What do you think Lady Vereker would say if she could hear you now?"

"But she knows! my mother knows!" he cried eagerly. "Avice, dearest Avice, if this is what comes between us, dismiss the thought, now and for ever, from your mind. My mother knows and approves; surely her welcome to-day was proof enough of that? If this is all——"

He was springing forward, flushed with joy and hope, but the small white hand checked him again.

"Sir Raymond—indeed—you do not understand."

"But what is there to understand?" he asked, with

a puzzled, crestfallen look. "If my mother approves, what more can you ask?"

"Nothing—if it were that. But it is not."

"Not that? Then what is it?"

She did not answer, but the silence was, or seemed, significant. Sir Raymond staggered back as if he had received a blow.

"Do you mean that there is someone else?" he asked in a voice that was choked with pain.

Avice grew red from throat to brow.

"No—oh, no!" she panted passionately. "You—you have no right to say such things!"

She was moved as he had never seen her before. There was outraged pride and quick resentment in her tone, and an ineffable expression of offended maidenliness in every line of face and figure. She turned away, as an affronted princess might have turned, and began to descend the path without vouchsafing him another word or look.

Sir Raymond followed, eager to make his peace, and not a little consoled by the indignation he had excited. If there was no one else, he need not despair, and hope leapt the higher for the momentary ebb. He would not risk refusal by persistence now, but in this resolve there was all the difference between a strategic retreat and a hopeless flight. Another time, another day, he would speak again, and would not be put off. He could afford to wait now he knew there was no one else!

Impetuous as was Miss Meredith's descent, he caught her up before she reached the river-path, where Lady Rosalie's parasol flashed red amongst the trees.

"Will you forgive me?" he asked, with a humility that touched her.

He was the hero of the day, the king who had come to his own, the master of the great house behind them, of wood and meadow and stream, far as the eye could reach—and he stood bare-headed before her, pleading for her pardon as if it were his only hope in life. Avice looked at him with eyes still wet with the tears that had almost blinded her in her precipitate descent, but the anger died out of them as she met his pleading gaze.

"I was wrong too," she said frankly. "You did not mean to vex me, I know, and I ought not to have been so angry."

"Then we forgive each other?" he said, with the sudden gleaming smile that most women found so irresistible.

"Yes, I suppose so. Only, if you please, you must not think—*that!*"

The words were so vague that he might not have understood them, but for the blush that flamed over cheek and neck and brow. He laughed a happy little laugh.

"I will not think you care for anyone else unless you tell me so," he promised. "Do you think I want to think—*that?*"

And then the scarlet parasol advanced towards them, and they could only hope that Lady Rosalie was too much occupied with her own voluble apologies to notice the disturbed looks of which they were so uncomfortably conscious themselves.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. KENYON'S SECRET.

"Silence, more dreadful than severest sounds!
Would she but speak, though death, eternal exile,
Hung on her lips!"—LEE.

"MY dear people, I can't think how I lost you," Lady Rosalie protested, with a laugh in her eyes that rather belied her words. "It wasn't my fault, I assure you, for really one path is so like another."

"Just so," said Sir Raymond; "no one blames you, I am sure."

And then he muttered something about not being his own master to-day, and disappeared up the woodland path with a celerity that allowed him to hope there had been no time for Lady Rosalie to take note of his confusion.

"How like a man!" commented that too acute person. "Runs away himself, and leaves it all to you. But I won't ask you anything, my dear. I'm afraid I spoilt an interesting *tête-à-tête*, but you shall only tell me as much or as little as you like."

"There is nothing to tell," said Avice, calling all her pride to her aid, and looking as superbly indifferent as the consciousness of her too-bright cheeks would allow. "It was a pity you missed your way, Lady Rosalie. And where are the others? Have you lost them too?"

"Oh, my dear, don't ask me!" cried this easiest of *chaperons*. "Captain Hallam took Daisy away to see the cricket in the park—they say Mr. Vereker's bowling is quite equal to a professional's. And as for Hilda, I really don't know where she is. She was so jealous that Captain Hallam took Daisy instead of her, and so cross with me—though really I'd nothing to do with it—that she would hardly speak to me, or hear a word I had to say. She vowed she'd kill the captain, or Daisy, or herself—I wasn't clear which—and when I suggested that the river was handy, and would hold them all, she looked as if she'd like to add me to the list."

It was impossible to help laughing, though Avice wished that Captain Hallam had been true to his allegiance to Miss Jackson. Her sweet innocent Daisy was altogether too fresh, and pure, and good to be exposed to the blandishments of a man whom Avice regarded as a professional flirt; but Lady Rosalie had evidently no regrets in the matter.

"It was the prettiest comedy you ever saw," she told the anxious sister. "Daisy trotted off as pleased as Punch, and I believe Hilda would have torn her hair, if it could only have been warranted fast! She consoled herself at last with the new sub, and I came down here to wait for you. Well, where shall we go? I can't have it on my conscience that I kept the Queen of the Revels talking to an old woman like me."

"I quite agree with you, when the old woman talks such nonsense as that!"

"Come along, then. I believe there's quite a miraculous luncheon set out in the big tent—if you can call it a luncheon at four o'clock in the afternoon. Any way, I hear the viands are A 1, and I do adore an aspic of ortolans, when I can get it. What do you say?"

"I—I think we ought to find Daisy first."

"Daisy 's all right, and won't thank us for interfering—unless you 've any other reason for wanting to go in the park?"

But this Avice indignantly disclaimed. She made no further protest, but followed Lady Rosalie to the tent, and as half a dozen eager cavaliers had joined them on the way, they had no difficulty in finding a snug little table, where Lady Rosalie was made happy by ortolans, and Avice ate the savoury little birds with small appreciation of their merits. Some late strawberries and a sparkling tumbler of iced water were much more to her taste, and as she ate the refreshing fruit, she began to realise that she was hot and tired, and was glad, both physically and mentally, of the quiet and the rest.

Sir Raymond was safe at the other end of the tent, and by his side she could see his mother's fair sweet face, glowing with love and pride. Mrs. Kenyon was not there. The excitement of the night before had been too much for her, and she had kept her room all day. Lady Rosalie was full of sympathy and concern; but Avice, who had heard a good deal of Sir Raymond's eccentric grandmother, suspected that her absence was not entirely to be deplored. And, indeed, both Sir Raymond and Lancelot were conscious of a distinct sensation of relief, while Lady Vereker was content to be perfectly happy without analysing too minutely the cause of her unalloyed felicity. Never was a more proud and joyful mother seen. Her eyes followed her son with utter and abounding satisfaction and delight. When his health was drunk, she looked with artless gratitude at everyone who acknowledged the toast; when he stood up to thank his friends, his mother's eyes rested on him as if for the first time the world had been given assurance of a man; when he spoke, she listened to him as if for the first time she knew what eloquence meant.

And, apart from the question of a mother's partiality, there was no doubt that Sir Raymond was eloquent. He had the gift, uncommon to men of his race and age, of fluent and picturesque speech, and he had none of the false shame which would have prevented most English lads from using it. There was poetry and pathos, fire and grace, in the little speech, and Avice could not resist a thrill of pride to think that a man like this had laid his heart at her feet. He was a suitor for any girl to be proud of, this handsome young baronet, with his courtly manner, his eloquent tongue, his grace of bearing, his handsome face. His Murillo-like beauty seemed all the more remarkable amongst the fair or ruddy faces round. There was nothing in these Warwickshire squires and their sons like the pale clear olive of Sir Raymond's cheeks. There was nothing like the kindling glance of his great black eyes, or the intensity of tone in the black moustache and hair, in the men who stood about, and cheered the young heir's speech in voices so much less liquid and melodious than his. These bronzed and sunburnt men, with frank grey eyes and stalwart limbs, these blue-eyed, downy-lipped boys, with skins that were still almost as pink and white as their sisters', were all of a different type from Sir Raymond Vereker. They were a good-looking, well-favoured set of men, with the clear and wholesome complexions peculiar to Englishmen; but if some of them were of a distinctly higher type than the handsome young baronet, most of them were his inferiors both in outline of features and grace of manner.

"Did you ever see such a handsome fellow?" Lady Rosalie whispered to Avice. "My dear, you ought to think yourself a lucky girl."

Avice raised her eyes for a moment, and then cast them down again, and smiled a strange sweet smile, that exasperated her friend. Lady Rosalie was always exasperated by anything she could not understand, and she felt that she could not understand Avice's smile any more than she could understand the sudden colour in her cheeks, or the soft wistful look in the beautiful eyes.

"Is there—*what* is there?" she asked impatiently, craning her neck round to see if any explanation presented itself.

But there was nothing at all. Only Lancelot Vereker and two or three other men standing in the doorway of the tent, and cheering Sir Raymond vociferously, like everyone else. Lancelot had come back from the cricket just in time to hear his cousin's speech, and add his voice to the cheers that greeted it. He had not meant to come near Avice—how could he trust himself to do so till he had given himself a little time in which to forget?—but the tent was crowded, and she and Lady Rosalie were so near the door that he could have spoken to them without raising his voice. He did not speak; he only lifted his hat and walked away, fighting down the pain in his heart, and wondering when he would find strength and courage to meet her as Sir Raymond's bride.

Avice looked after him in hurt surprise. What had she done? the girl thought passionately—what had she done that he should behave to her like this? It might have been only a coincidence that he should have gone away into the park just as Lady Rosalie arrived, but now, what was she to think? Just for a moment he had looked so glad; there had been in his eyes the look she knew so well, the look she had never seen till she saw Lancelot Vereker coming into Lady Rosalie's little drawing-room, and looking at her as she sang. And then it had gone quite suddenly. The gladness had died out of his face, and the light out of his eyes, and he had gone away, as if, somehow, it hurt him to look at her.

The smile faded from her own lips, and the colour from her cheeks. Lady Rosalie, who had been absorbed in a vain endeavour to decide which flavour she preferred in her striped Neapolitan ice, cried out in startled anxiety—

"My *dear* girl, what *is* the matter? That 's the worst of tents—they 're always so stuffy! But come, I 've quite done now, and I do really think I like the pineapple *best*—though certainly the coffee-ice in the middle is too delicious. But let us get outside—you 've no more colour than your dress, I declare."

Outside the tent a pleasant breeze was blowing; a military band was playing; people were promenading up and down the lawn. Avice's cheeks regained their natural colour, and Lady Rosalie commended herself for leaving the stifling tent, while Avice was glad to ascribe her momentary pallor to



"'Will you forgive me?' he asked, with a humility that touched her.'—*p.* 174.

that satisfactory cause. She was too angry with herself, too ashamed, too humiliated, to admit even to herself the possibility of any other. Of course, if Mr. Vereker chose to give himself airs, it was nothing to her. He would see that she could be quite as indifferent as himself!

"You're sure you're all right now?" asked Lady Rosalie anxiously.

"Right? there really was nothing wrong."

"If we hadn't come out, you'd have been in a dead faint in another minute," said Lady Rosalie. "Tents are horrible things; but I don't see how they could have done without one to-day. Big as the house is, it wouldn't have held a quarter of the people that are here. I wish we could go over the house; I should so like you to see it. If I could only get hold of Lancelot, I'd ask him to take us round."

"Pray—*pray* don't think of such a thing!" exclaimed Avice, in real alarm. "I don't care about seeing the house at all."

"I suppose you think you can afford to wait," laughed Lady Rosalie.

"I don't care to see it to-day, certainly. I would rather see where Daisy is."

"Didn't you see her in the tent? Oh yes, in the corner to our right. *I* saw her, and Captain Hallam too. Hilda will be furious, but she may as well make up her mind to it, for unless I am much mistaken, her chance is over in that direction. There! they are coming out now, and Lord Blackstone with them.

Pretty little thing! If she wasn't your sister, Avice, she'd be called a beauty herself."

The two men between whom Daisy was walking would entirely have agreed. Beautiful as her sister she certainly was not, as each would freely have admitted, but Philip Hallam found a charm in the younger sister's face that he did not in the elder's, beautiful as it was; and Lord Blackstone had already taken occasion to whisper to his son that he was glad to find the "pocket cookery-book was so daintily bound."

"The pocket cookery-book?" said the puzzled captain.

"Yes, the duodecimo edition of the domestic virtues, you know!" said Lord Blackstone, in the same mysterious whisper. And then he astonished Daisy, and covered his son with confusion, by inquiring if she could make pies and darn stockings.

"And—and what was the other thing, Phil?" said this incorrigible old man.

But Captain Hallam would say no more, and favoured his father with a look which reduced the peer to silence.

"But I tell you what it is, Phil," the old man said, when Daisy was at last restored to her *chaperon:* "she's as nice a little girl as I've seen for many a long day. She'll do, Phil—she'll *do*, sir, and I wish you joy."

"Isn't it a trifle premature?" said Philip. "You see, I don't know what she would say about it—and I don't even know if I'm going to ask her."

"Then the sooner you make up your mind, the better," retorted Lord Blackstone, "and if *you* don't ask her, Phil, *I* shall."

And the father and son went off together, looking hugely delighted with each other, and laughing at their own small jokes, as only very happy people can.

"Isn't Lord Blackstone a *dear?*" Daisy said, enthusiastically. "He has been so kind to me, Avice, and I do like him so much! And I do think you're mistaken about Captain Hallam—I really do. He doesn't flirt and talk nonsense, or pay stupid compliments. He is only sensible and kind, and when we couldn't find Lady Rosalie, he asked his father to come into the tent with us, because I told him I knew you wouldn't like us to go in alone."

"What an innocent darling you are, Daisy!" the elder sister said. "I think it would have to be a very bad man indeed who would try to flirt with you."

The two girls were standing by themselves, for Lady Rosalie had suddenly darted across the lawn. She had caught sight of Lancelot Vereker, and had flown after him to ask him to show them the house. It was in vain for Avice to protest. When Lady Rosalie once took an idea in her head, she was like an Exmoor pony with the bit between its teeth.

"Nonsense, my dear! you *must* see the drawing-rooms, at all events, and Lady Vereker's boudoir. It was furnished for her by her husband—blue satin and medallions of Sèvres—old-fashioned now, of course, but in the most exquisite taste, and she won't have anything touched. I wonder which way Lance went? —Oh! there he is, talking to Lady Faulconer, and, luckily, I know her."

She was off before Avice could stop her, and brought Lancelot back with her, as blind to his unwillingness as she had been to Avice's.

His determination to shun Miss Meredith's society was not proof against Lady Rosalie's attack, and though there was a constraint in his manner which Avice was quick to feel, Lady Rosalie saw nothing, and was radiant at the success of her mission.

But it was not to be. As they approached the house Mrs. Kenyon's maid ran out from a side entrance, and rushed up to Lancelot. She was a grave elderly person, of staid demeanour, but just now breathless with distress and fright.

"Oh, Mr. Vereker!" she panted, "would you please to come at once? Mrs. Kenyon is taken ill, and wants to see you. We can't make out what she says, only your name, sir; but she keeps calling for you all the time, so I thought I'd best come and find you."

"Quite right," said Lancelot; "I will come at once. You had better come back with me, Stevens—we must not alarm Lady Vereker or Sir Raymond, unless there is real occasion."

He left Avice with Lady Rosalie, and went rapidly into the house, and they did not see him again.

"I wonder if she is really ill?" said Lady Rosalie. "I believe she takes all sorts of fancies."

But they were not left long in doubt. Lady Vereker and Sir Raymond were summoned in haste, and a doctor who happened to be amongst the guests. It was evident, everyone agreed, that something very serious had occurred, and carriages were ordered round, and coachmen and grooms driven wild with a dozen orders at once.

And meanwhile Mrs. Kenyon lay in a darkened room, calling at intervals for Lancelot in thick, unnatural tones, and seeming conscious of no presence but his. It was an attack of paralysis, the doctor said, and already the vocal chords were so affected it was all but impossible to understand what she said. That she was anxious to be understood was painfully evident—as evident as it was that it was Lancelot to whom she wished to speak.

"Not Ray—*Lance!*" she said again and again.

Sir Raymond bent down and kissed her, and went away with a hurt look in his soft dark eyes. His presence only excited his grandmother, Dr. Gray said, and it was better he should go, but he felt acutely that the partiality she had always shown for Lancelot should be shown at a time like this. He went away, but Mrs. Kenyon did not look satisfied.

"Not Ray—*Lance!*" she repeated, with increasing indistinctness.

She looked wildly round the room, as if in search of Lancelot, who was standing close by her pillow.

"I am here," the young man said. "Dear Mrs. Kenyon, what is it? Is it anything I can do?"

She shook her head feebly.

"Is it something you want to say?"

There was an eager sound of inarticulate assent, but though Lancelot bent his ear to her mouth, he could

make out nothing but a few incoherent words, in which his own name and Sir Raymond's and Lady Vereker's could be distinguished, and very little else.

"For *her* sake," Mrs. Kenyon said, in her thick, indistinct voice. "For Evelyn—secret—but now—tell Lance—not Ray—Lance!"

She looked at Lancelot with a piteous beseeching glance. Perhaps it was Lancelot's remembrance of the curious scene of the night before that made him distinguish the last words she spoke.

"Lance—forgive!" she said, and Lancelot knelt down, and took the helpless hand in his.

"As I hope to be forgiven," he said earnestly.

And even as he spoke, the laboured breathing ceased. Mrs. Kenyon died with her secret still untold, but with a smile of peace upon her lips.

(To be continued.)

THE MUSICAL MATERIALS OF THE EARLY PSALTERS.

THE history of the literary materials of the authorised English metrical Psalters having been already told in these pages, it is our purpose now to deal with the musical materials which accompanied these works. At the Reformation the two external elements in the ordinance of praise—the words and the music—were both provided under the direction of the Church. As a rule these elements were combined in one volume, which proves that the music was regarded as a proper subject of public interest. It will be remembered that the version of Sternhold and Hopkins was completed for the English Protestants in 1562, and that an edition was published in that year by John Daye. This was the first English Psalter with notes. It was provided with sixty-three tunes, forty-five of which were set to the Psalms and the remainder to hymns. The melodies of the tunes only were printed at this time, but in 1563 a collection appeared which gave the harmonies in four parts, each part being issued in a separate volume.

In 1579 William Damon, one of the musicians to Queen Elizabeth, harmonised for the use of a friend the Psalm-tunes then "in common use," to the number of about forty. Another edition of this work was published in 1591; and in the following year came the Psalter of Este, under the title of "The Whole Book of Psalms, with their Wonted Tunes in Four Parts." The harmonies in this latter collection were by ten of the most eminent musicians of the day, including George Kirbye and John Dowland. A folio Psalter was issued by Allison in 1599, and in 1621 appeared the important edition of Ravenscroft. With the publication of Playford's complete Psalter in 1677 the musical materials connected with the Sternhold version may be said to end. It should be noted, however, that some of the collections we have named cannot properly be classed among the Psalters. The works of 1563, 1579, and 1599 all contain only specimen verses set to the tunes, and there is therefore a marked difference between them and the editions prepared for ordinary church use. The Psalters of Este and Ravenscroft embody the whole Psalms; but they were evidently private undertakings, intended chiefly for choirs and musical proficients.

The first complete edition of the Scottish Psalter, mainly that of Sternhold and Hopkins, was published in 1564. This edition altogether outstrips the English work of 1562 in the number of its tunes. Of these it has no less than 105; so that the instances of one tune being assigned to two or more Psalms were far fewer than in the English edition. Various issues of the Psalter were printed in Edinburgh after this. One—that of Andrew Hart, 1615—is notable for the first introduction of a distinct class of tunes, entitled "Common," to which we shall refer again. Up to this time there does not appear to have been any edition of the Psalter issued except from the capital; but in 1622 a printer named Edward Raban set up his press in Aberdeen, and there several editions were subsequently published. The best-known and most important of the Raban Psalters is that of 1633. A special feature of this edition is the appearance of harmony for the first time, though this extends only to the fifteen "Common" tunes which the book contains in addition to the "Proper" tunes. These are the earliest printed specimens of harmony that appear in the history of the Scottish Psalter, but of course it has to be remembered that Raban's work was nothing more than a private venture.

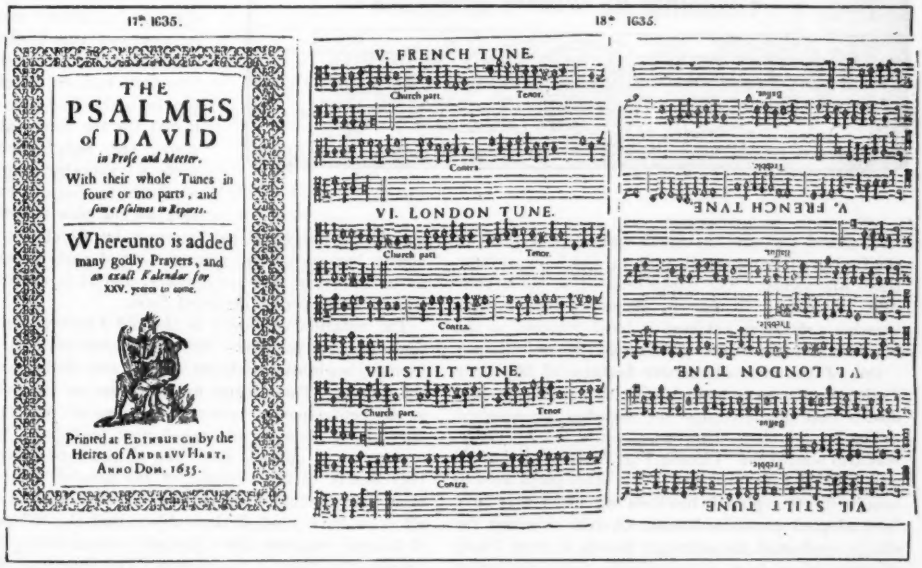
Each of the Western Protestant Churches seems to have considered it quite sufficient at first to provide the people with the melodies only of the tunes. The earliest editions of the French Psalter of Marot and Beza had no parts, and until the year 1635 there had been no official harmonised edition of the Scottish Psalter published. So far as can be ascertained, there was no edition of the English Psalter corresponding to the Scottish of 1635—that is, having the ordinary "Proper" tunes and no more, but accompanied with parts. Yet it is quite plain that "harmony was practised in England from the first formation of the Protestant Church, and was probably considered so much a matter of course as to require no express sanction or regulation." It seems, in short, to have been left pretty much to the care of the professional musicians. In Scotland the case must have been to some extent the same, for we know that copies of the parts were multiplied by the pen in the very earliest
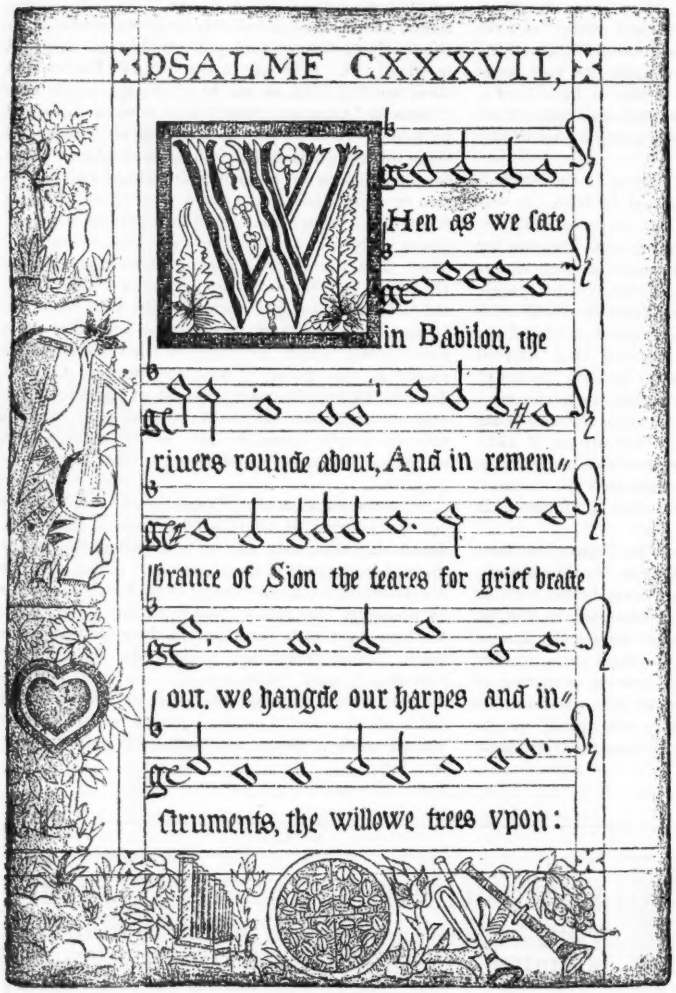
stages of the Psalter's history. There is in existence a beautiful set of harmonies "noted and wretin" in 1566 by Thomas Wood, who styles himself Vicar of St. Andrews. Wood himself records that the task occupied him four years; and it seems to have been a laborious employment, as our readers may judge from the illustration which we give of a single page of the manuscript.

We have said that the first edition of the Scottish Psalter with harmonies was issued in 1635. It was "printed at Edinburgh by the heires of Andrew Hart," and is notable among harmonised Psalters for its upside-down position of the parts, as seen in our illustration. This arrangement was evidently made to allow of four persons singing from one book—each his part—seated two and two on opposite sides of the old-fashioned square pews. It had been adopted several years before—1599—in the English Psalter of Allison; but it is sufficiently curious to have caused many people to suppose that it arose through some defect in the printing-press! This edition of 1635, we may add, has been made available to students in a splendid folio reprint published at Glasgow, under the care of the Rev. Neil Livingston, in 1864.

In the early Psalters most of the Psalms had their own particular tune, to which alone they were sung; and this tune was distinguished solely by the number of the Psalm with which it was connected, as the 1st, the 100th, etc. Such tunes were technically known as "Proper" tunes. By-and-bye there came another class of tune. The "Proper" system, requiring so many distinct melodies, was found to be unsuitable for the great mass of the people, who could not be expected to learn more than a comparatively small number of tunes. Hence arose the "Common" tune—a tune which was limited only by its agreement with the spirit or character of such Psalms as it would metrically fit. It is only in the Scottish Psalter, and there not till 1615, as we have already noted, that "Common" tunes are ranked in a separate class and printed by themselves. In the English Psalter all tunes are alike attached to individual Psalms. Yet in several editions we see not a few tunes assigned to two or more Psalms, and these must be regarded as "Common," though the term is not applied to them. There is, besides, evidence to show that "Common" tunes, though unofficially recognised, were yet used by the people. In the dedication to Este's Psalter, 1592, the following passage occurs:—"In this book the Church-tunes are carefully corrected, and other short tunes added which are sung in London and other places in this realme;" and the title to Allison's Psalter, 1599, mentions "tenne short tunnes in the end, to which for the most part all the Psalmes may be usually sung, for the use of such as are of mean skill, and whose leysure least serveth to practise."

We have said that the "Proper" tunes were known by the number of the Psalm to which they were attached. Obviously no such expedient could be applied in the case of the "Common" tunes, and thus the attaching of names to the latter became a matter of necessity. In Este's Psalter, already referred to, we first meet with these names, three tunes in that work being designated respectively "Chesshire," "Kentish," and "Glenburnie." In the Scottish Psalter the practice appeared first in the edition of 1615, the twelve "Common" tunes of which are named chiefly, though not exclusively, after places.





In England the same expedient was adopted fully in the Psalter of Ravenscroft, 1621, in which above forty tunes are named. The names selected, so far as they refer to places, it may be supposed, were not altogether arbitrary, but bore a local relation to the composers of the tunes themselves.

One of the most distinctive features of the early Psalter music, as compared with that of the present day, is that in the former the melodies are assigned to the tenor voice. This part, while led by males, was also termed the "Church Part," implying that all who could not perform any of the other parts were to join in it. The plan, it has been suggested, may have been adopted from the Roman Church, in which the clergy conducted the singing; but it is more likely to have arisen from the conviction "that the larger half of the people would sing the melody only, while the harmony was intended to afford scope for the attainments of the skilful few, and thus became merely a graceful appendage." What was then called the treble part was probably sung chiefly by boys, though it would of course be suitable also for females. There must, however, always have been a considerable number of women who were unable to perform any of the harmonic parts, and these would undoubtedly join in the tenor, although that part was professedly for male singers. The custom of giving the melody to the tenor voice survived to a much later period than is generally supposed. We find it as late as 1791, in Harrison's "Sacred Harmony;" and in the third edition of Webbe's "Collection of Psalm Tunes," first published in 1808, the author speaks of having been apprehensive that the circulation of the book "would be considerably impeded by deviating from the common but absurd usage in works of this kind of converting the melody into the tenor, and of employing only the treble or G clef for the three parts above the bass." Some modern writers have urged a return to the old custom, on the plea that the melody in the tenor can be sung by all classes of voice; but our present arrangement of parts appears to be in every way satisfactory, and it is unlikely that it will ever be departed from.

The notation employed in the old Psalters was in some respects peculiar. The notes used were six in number, beginning with the "long" and ending with the quaver. Their forms are the same as are found in all contemporary music. The absolute value or duration of these notes cannot now be defined, but experts are of opinion that "the minim corresponded very nearly to the crotchet of the present day, the other notes being in proportion." It is admitted by all who have studied the subject that the old rate of singing was not slow; probably a second was the average duration of the minim. The sharp and flat

XUM

were made use of as at present, but the natural was unknown, a flat being used to restore a note which had been sharpened. There are no bar-lines till the time of Playford's Psalter, 1671, but the semibreve rest is used to mark the ends of lines. The slur is never found; but as the tunes were mostly syllabic, its absence could not have been greatly felt. Leger-lines occur in only a few instances. The number of keys was very limited, those mostly used being C, F, and B flat. Probably this was intentional, for the difficulty of reading the music would be lessened considerably by the limiting of the keys. No doubt the singers would adopt whatever pitch suited their voices, quite independently of the notation. On this point Mr. Havergal remarks: "As to the pitch at which tunes were *sung*, some of the Introductions to Singing published in the last century leave us in no doubt. They disclose the fact that the keys, or scales in which the tunes were set, were no criterion as to the pitch in which they were sung. They were mostly set in only two or three keys, to suit the convenience of the printer as to leger-lines and accidental sharps or flats; but they were sung at any pitch which best suited the singers." The typographical inaccuracy of some of the early Psalters is very great. "The press, in some instances," says the writer just quoted, "can hardly be said to have been corrected. Most of the errors arise from a mere inversion of the metallic block in which the note was fixed; so that by turning the page upside down the true reading will appear. One common error is the dropping or elevating the note exactly a third out of place. Hence in most cases of deviation from the true reading, it is easy to discern what was intended; for the printed note is so inconsistent with the melodic progression, and so disconnected with either the note before or the note after, that the error well-nigh corrects itself."

The style of the old Psalter tune was entirely different from that of its modern representative. The latter partakes but too frequently of the character of the part-song, and thus requires for its performance the aid of singers who have been specially trained. The Psalter tune, on the other hand, was nothing if not plain and easy. Those who set the first metrical Psalms to music evidently kept in view the principle that the whole body of the people should take part in the service of song; they regulated the style of tune to the capacity of the general population. The syllabic partition of the music was probably preferred just because of its simplicity, though it may have been adopted also in order to produce greater distinctness in the utterance of the words. The same principles regulated the addition of harmony. Plain chords, as distinguished from the fugal style which had hitherto prevailed, are the leading characteristics of all the early Psalter harmonies. A few modest ingenuities were, indeed, occasionally introduced, but as a rule anything difficult of execution was expressly stated to be for those who were possessed of some skill in music. We have advanced greatly since the times of which we write, but on the whole our churches have not received anything better fitted to be the medium of hearty singing than the old Psalter tunes. Our modern hymn melodies are frequently beautiful; they are also as frequently beyond the reach of the great mass of the people.

J. Cuthbert Hadden.

THE FAMILY BIBLE.

THIS volume, when my life was young,
And speech first faltered on my tongue,
A tender mother read to me,
Whose tones come back in memory!
A child once more, beside her chair,
I feel her hand caress my hair,
And, glancing from the sacred Book,
I meet her fond and gentle look,
In those sweet hours I used to know
Of faithful counsel long ago!

I turn a time-worn yellow page;
Here, legible though faint with age,
I see the marriage entry stand—
My father's bold, decided hand,
My mother's graceful characters!
And something in my bosom stirs
Of love and grief, to find a name,
The record when my sister came,
The first-born to her parents given,
Who followed in their steps to heaven!

Thy children, Lord, abide in Thee,
In earth and heaven, one family!
This Book had the unceasing trust
Of hearts that long have turned to dust.
Yet from the grave they seem to say,
"We triumph in eternal day!"
For still the Father's love prevails,
Though darkness falls, and death assails—
While faith discerns, beyond the strife,
The promise of the Word of Life!

J. R. Eastwood.

THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE.

BY THE REV. A. A. CAMPBELL, MINISTER OF CRATHIE, AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO HER MAJESTY IN SCOTLAND.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—ST. MATT. v. 16.

THESE words were first addressed to our Lord's disciples, who, at the time this charge was given, were almost the sole members of the Kingdom which He had come to establish upon earth. But while in their primary application many of the great Teacher's utterances were local and partial, they yet involve such deep and world-wide principles that we cannot confine them to the occasions which called them forth. They are not meant for one place and one time alone, but for all places and all times. It is so with these Divine words. Though first addressed to the early disciples, they yet speak with equal distinctness and decision to the whole Christian world as at this present moment it exists. To all who have the light of Heaven enkindled in the soul, do they bear a message. They seem to come to them across the intervening years, reminding them that the light that is in them is not to be used for any purely private or exclusive purposes, but that the whole world is to benefit by their shining. By precept and example, by the power of a holy living and pure conversation, they are to shine as lights in the world, in company with, though in subordination to, Him of whose light their own is but the reflection—who Himself is "*the Light* of the world."

Between the Christian world and the world at large there is, we may observe, a much closer connection than many might be disposed at first sight to admit. There is a certain class of Christians of a very exclusive temperament, who would draw a line of complete demarcation between the two; who delight to call themselves the chosen few; and who would leave the rest of the world standing out in the dark and in the cold. Now doubtless between the Christian world, and the world at large, there *is a* separation, yet it is not the separation of total isolation; it is not the separation which entitles any Christian to keep within himself, or within his own circle, the flame of spiritual light, while the rest of the world is left to grope and stumble in the dark.

We shall better understand this apparent contradiction—the thorough separateness of Christians from the world, and yet their close connection with it—if we have regard to the comparison which our Lord here uses to indicate the relation between the two: "Ye are," He says, "the *light* of the world."

There is a singular beauty in this comparison, for, if we but think of it, there is nothing *in* the world that is yet so little *of* it—so thoroughly free from its defilements—as is the *light*. It retains its purity amidst all the impurities with which the world abounds. This it does, not by avoiding all contact with them. The beauty of it is that it can come into closest contact with them and yet remain uncontaminated by them. It is a beautiful emblem of what Christian light is, or ought to be, in the world. Retaining its own separateness and purity, it ought to diffuse itself, with the penetrating and all-pervading power of light, through a sin-darkened world; shining out upon the surrounding gloom; chasing from their lurking-places the sins and impurities that love the darkness, and forcing them for very shame to flee its presence. Christian testimony and Christian example are mighty powers in the world, and there is a heavy responsibility implied in our Lord's words when, addressing Himself to all Christians, He says, "Ye are the light of the world."

Looking simply and practically at our subject, we may consider:—

1. The manner in which the Christian's light ought to shine, and

2. The end for which it ought to shine.

1. The manner. If the flame of spiritual light has truly been kindled in the soul, it will in some way reveal itself. A living fire within, it will become a shining light without; manifesting itself to all men and helping to guide them in the true path. "I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart," says the Psalmist, "I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation; I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation." What he himself held in happy possession he desired that all should share.

But whilst every Christian must manifest to the world, in some way, the fruits of the power that is at work within him, he is by no means confined to any particular way of doing so. Just as the Holy Spirit, who at first kindled the spark of spiritual light, has different ways of bringing His influence to bear upon the darkness of the soul, so the enlightened soul may, in its turn, bring its influence to bear, in different ways, upon the darkness of the world around it. Take, for example, St. John and St. Paul. Each was a burning and a shining light, yet in what different ways did they let their light shine before men! St. John's power as a light in the world lay in the saintliness of his life. By his holy living and pure conversation men were arrested and attracted. There was not so much of the missionary spirit in him as in the other Apostle. It seemed rather to be his calling to stand like the lighthouse upon the rock, not running after men so much as bringing to bear upon them the light of a holy life when they came within range of his influence. The beacon light serves its purpose better by burning steadily on the spot where it has been kindled than were it to move about to the rescue of individual ships by lighting them on their dark and perilous way. And so it is with some Christians. They serve God better, and

benefit their fellow-men more, by living pure and godly lives in the sphere which Providence has assigned them, than were they to set forth with the intention of enlightening and converting the world.

Others, again, by following a different principle, may let their light shine with best effect. St. Paul, as we have said, let his light shine before the world in a different way from St. John. St. Paul's was eminently a missionary life. There was a zeal, an energy, almost a vehemence about him which could find vent in no other way than in a life of incessant work in the cause of his Master. While St. John's life was a contemplative one, St. Paul's was an active one. He could not wait till men came within range of his influence. His calling was to go forth, torch in hand, to the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. By being instant in season and out of season, by reproof, rebuke, admonition, he roused men from their indifference, and drew them or drove them from their sins.

In very different ways, then, did these two Apostles let their lights shine, yet who can say in which case with most effect? Let not then the Christian of St. John's stamp accuse the Christian of St. Paul's stamp of being a busybody and interfering because he is instant in season and out of season, ever ready to reprove, rebuke, and admonish. Nor let the Christian of St. Paul's stamp accuse him of St. John's stamp of want of zeal in the cause of his Master because he may mingle less freely in the din and thick of the battle of life. Let every Christian rather, with care and consistency, trim his own lamp, replenishing it with the oil of daily grace drawn from Christ Himself, the great source of supply, and so let him let his light shine before men in the way most suited to the circumstances in which God has placed him and the dispositions and abilities which He has given him. Noble is he who speaks out for Christ! whose lips, having been touched with a live coal from the Altar of God, will not be restrained from declaring in face of the world what great things God has done for him. But no less noble is he who, unable to give *lip* testimony for Christ, gives *life* testimony for Him—doing much, or bearing much, if saying little—and thus holding up a lamp whose light shall serve as a guide to all who are seeking the way to God.

But while, in a sense, there may thus be a difference in the manner in which Christians manifest their light, there are yet certain characteristics which must mark the shining of all alike. Their light should shine, for example, as far as possible with steadiness. We say "as far as possible," for perfect steadiness can never in this life be reached. Just as the light that is placed in the draught *will* blink and flicker in spite of its best efforts to burn with a steady flame, so the best Christian, placed as he is in the open world, exposed to its draughts and counter-draughts, will often exhibit a fitfulness in his shining which cannot but detract from his usefulness as a light in the world. Again, as a neglect to renew the supply of oil in the lamp causes a feebleness in the flame, so a neglect on the part of the Christian to have his lamp replenished with the oil of daily grace will have a like evil effect on his burning. And further, as the drop of water falling upon the light will bring it down to a very glimmer, so the love of the world, and the cares of it, have a damping and dimming effect on the light of the best Christian; and when men look, expecting to see a being all aglow with love to God and zeal for His cause, they are met with the spectacle of much worldliness and coldness and deadness of heart. From all these causes is the light of the Christian apt to suffer, to say nothing of the graver sins which at times would almost seem to threaten it with total extinction.

But while all this is true, it is just as true that, under the enlightening and regulating power of God's Spirit, the Christian's light may at least approach to steadiness; and the more it does so, the better it serves as a guide. The lightning-flash may startle and dazzle, but it does not guide; it rather bewilders. And so in higher things. To manifest an unusual measure of goodness at times will not make up for fitfulness. Not by periodic displays of devotion and zeal for the cause of truth is Christ's Kingdom advanced, but by a well-sustained, though it may be humble, witness for it. And there is no surer way, we may be certain, of adding strength and brightness to the light that is in us than by letting it shine before men. To hide it is to put it in danger of extinction. The free open air may cause the lamp-light to blink and flicker, yet, at the same time, is it not the very life of it? And so while in the world's draughts there may be that which tries the Christian's light, there is also that which gives it vigour. There is no place so well suited as the open field of duty and love—ay, of trial and disappointment—for freeing his light from feebleness and sickliness in its burning. Growing, brightening, strengthening under every influence, it develops at last into a flame which no blast can extinguish, which the hurricane of adversity itself can only fan into a brighter glow.

2. We consider, further, the end for which the Christian's light ought to shine: "That men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In these words we have it most unmistakably intimated that it lies in the Christian's power to promote the glory of God and His cause in the world. Through his influence and example men may be constrained to admit the power and beauty of a Christian life, and so be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven. In all this there is implied a heavy responsibility on the part of the Christian, for in his hands, so to speak, is placed the credit of religion; and that credit is maintained just in so far as he is able to make his practice and profession correspond. The world *will* form its estimate of religion from him who professes it. In this the world may be acting unjustly, for nothing can be more unjust than to lay at the door of religion the faults and failings of the Christian. If these exist, it is not because of religion, but in spite of it; hence the injustice of making religion answer for them. Still there is ever a tendency to identify a cause with him who supports it, and through his shortcomings the cause must suffer. When, from some high profession of religion, a man returns to the world, only to give way to bitterness and wrath and clamour and evil-speaking, only to manifest feelings

of selfishness and uncharitableness—to say nothing of the many other and perhaps more flagrant sins, which the Christian may sometimes have to mourn—is he not giving a handle to the world which it well knows how to use in opposition to God and to truth? In presence of all this, how solemn does the Divine charge appear —"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven!"

And let no one imagine that it detracts in any way from the glorious Sun of Righteousness that his own feebler light should shine with all possible brilliance. There are some who would altogether shade their own light as being unworthy to shine in company with His who Himself is the "Light of the World." But is it not the case that there is far more self-consciousness in a false humility than in a frank appreciation and acknowledgment of whatever virtue or power for good we may be possessed of? In the Apostle Paul we find nothing of that sickly self-depreciation which is anything but true humility. If he had light in him, he was willing that it should shine, and that the world should benefit by it. "Brethren," he says, "be followers together with me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Yet no one would dream of accusing of vanity the Apostle who could at the same time say, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended." It does not detract from the glory of the sun that the moon should shine with all possible brilliance; so far from this, does she not add to it in a sense? for, reflecting as she does the greater light, she is a standing witness to a glory brighter than her own. And so with the Christian. Bright as his light may shine, he too is but bearing testimony to a yet more glorious Light; and the brighter his own light shines, the nobler is his witness. Never was a higher place assigned to disciples, nor their true calling more clearly set forth, than by the Master Himself when He said: "Ye are the light of the world." And what saith the Apostle? "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

STUMPY: A CHRISTMAS STORY.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—CHRISTMAS EVE.



"H, I say! I must get out of this somehow!" cried Teddy breathlessly, and forthwith darted headlong under an archway, and took refuge beneath a sort of deep portico belonging to a set of big warehouses.

This was a blinding storm of sleet and snow and hail, that lashed his face pitilessly, threatening to drench his thin garments, if he chanced to be exposed to its fury for any length of time.

It was Christmas Eve, so the warehouses had long been closed, and the court in which they stood was quiet and deserted. Not a creature was to be seen moving along the narrow strip of pavement on either side of the roadway, and the roar of traffic from the great thoroughfares all round reached the boy's ears in a continuous murmur, whilst in his immediate neighbourhood absolute silence reigned.

It was growing dark; lamps were being lighted all down the busy streets. Shops were gay with their festive Christmas bravery, and there were crowds of people passing in and out, making final purchases for the coming day.

Teddy thought of all this as he sat on the top step under the friendly shelter of the porch, nursing his knee, whilst his sharp thin face and bright brown eyes were turned towards the one dull lamp that glimmered overhead.

"Ah, it must be a very fine thing to be rich!" he said half aloud, and there was none of the street-boy twang in his speech; indeed, his whole appearance, poverty-stricken as it was, betokened a certain amount of quiet refinement. "Don't I wish I may be rich some day! And won't I have good times if I can, and give other folks good times too! I'd like to dress Tiny in velvet and fur, and Daddy should have a coat lined with sealskin, and as many books as he liked to read; and I'd have some skates, and a big knife with half a dozen blades, and a new bat, and——" But there Teddy paused and heaved a long sigh, for these pictured glories were a terribly long way off yet.

"It takes such a time to grow up, and I can't do anything till I'm a man; and things are worse with us than ever they've been, and if Dad can't get any regular work I don't know what will become of us. Folks do say that when things are worst they begin to mend, and I'm sure I hope they will with us. But it's not much of a Christmas we shall have. I'll make my sixpence go as far as it will with things for Tiny; but sixpence isn't much. Hallo! What's that?"

This exclamation was evoked from Teddy by the feel of a damp, cold touch upon his hand, and hastily stretching it out to ascertain the cause, it came in contact with a mass of wet matted hair, and the boy

became aware that his retreat was shared by a dripping and disconsolate Skye terrier, apparently in the last stages of misery and starvation.

"Hallo!" cried Teddy again; "you *are* a poor wretched beast! Come, cheer up, old chap—never say die! What, you want to get on my knee? All right; there you are. Poor old fellow! Have you been used to better days too? You look like it, somehow; and have you been lost or stolen, or something, or run away from home? Yes, you're a nice doggie; and if you were dry and clean, I dare say you would be handsome too. Oh, so you can wag your tail, can you? Good dog!—what a wet stump of a tail it is! But, Stumpy my dear, I must go home as soon as the rain stops, and what am I to do with you? Oh, please don't look at me so beseechingly, because, Stumpy dear, we really *can't* afford to keep a dog—we can hardly keep ourselves. It isn't that I don't love you, but——"

But the more the boy talked, the more the stumpy-tailed dog seemed to confide in him, nestling up against his shoulder, and finally lifting a wet nose to lick his down-bent face. And that dumb caress seemed to finish the business, for Teddy started suddenly to his feet, clasping the damp dog closely in his arms.



"A warm bath was quickly prepared."—*p.* 186.

"Oh, bother it all, Stumpy! How you do get round a fellow! I expect you've been used to children, somehow. Anyway, I can't resist you. Now just listen a moment, old fellow, and I'll explain the situation to you. I can't *keep* you—I really can't. Why, on the first of January there would be seven-and-six to pay for a licence for you—just think of that! But I'll take you home to-night, and we'll keep you over Christmas at least; and I'll spend my sixpence on food for you, and Tiny will have to do without her present. I know she won't mind—she would rather you should be

fed, you poor starved dog. You shall have a happy Christmas, at least. And then we'll wash and comb you, and make you look your best, and try and find a good home for you, with people who will be kind to you. And that's the best I can do for you, Stumpy dear, and if I was rich you should live with me always; but anyhow you shall have a nice Christmas visit."

All the while he was talking, Teddy was trudging along with his damp burden in his arms; and the poor dog cowered close against him, as if only dreading to be set down. At length the little lad turned into a dim side street in the heart of the great city, and entered a bright little shop, where milk and bread and eggs were sold, and where he seemed well known to the buxom proprietor of the place.

"Good evening, Mrs. Mason," he said, in his bright fearless way. "I've had an adventure, and I've found this poor starving dog, and as it's Christmas-time I've promised to keep him just for a few days; and I've got a sixpence of my own"—here the coin was produced and laid upon the counter—"and I want to know if you'll be so very kind as to take and keep it, and let me have a little stale bread and a drink of skim-milk for Stumpy whilst he stays with us. I don't want him to be a burden on my father, and I *can't* leave him to starve in the streets on Christmas Eve. Oh, thank you, thank you—oh, isn't he hungry, poor fellow!"

For the kind-faced woman, after one glance at the dog, had begun feeding him with scraps of bun and bread and biscuit, and the famished way in which the poor fellow consumed these dainties plainly showed how ravenous he was.

"Poor doggie, poor doggie! There my man, there. Yes, he shall have a good supper, that he shall, and a bone by-and-bye as well. Nay, Master Teddy my dear, you shall keep your sixpence; but I'll find a bite and a sup and welcome for the poor dog whilst he stays with you. It would be hard to grudge him that at Christmas-time, and me so fond of dumb animals, too."

"Oh, how kind you are! Isn't it nice to see him eat? Why, he looks quite perky already. Oh, that milk! Doesn't he like it? See how he wags his stumpy tail! There! why, he really seems to have had enough. Now I must take him up to Tiny. He's a kind of Christmas present for her. She *will* like him!"

So Teddy picked up his new pet, and walked off up the narrow staircase to the top floor of the little house, which his father rented of kind Mrs. Mason.

The little parlour was quite dark, save for the flickering of a small fire; and upon the thin rug lay a little pale girl, propped up with old cushions and a pillow. For though Tiny was not exactly ill, she had been very weak and ailing all through the cold weather, and could not run about and play, nor get out of doors at all.

"Why, Teddy, how late you are! Did the snow keep you? And what is that bundle you have in your arms?"

"It's your Christmas present, Tiny!"

"Oh, Teddy! A present! For me! Oh, what can it be?"

The little girl sat up in her excitement, and the next moment something warm and damp and heavy was deposited in her lap.

"Oh, Teddy, it's alive! It's a cat—no—a dog! A dear little darling doggie! Oh, Teddy, tell me, where did you get him? Is he really yours?"

So then Teddy told his tale, to which Tiny listened entranced, hugging the dog the whole time, and breathing words of tender endearment into his ears.

The children's delight over their new treasure was pretty to see. A warm bath was quickly prepared, and all the mud and dirt washed from the thick coat, which soon showed how silky its natural texture was.

Stumpy had evidently been used to ablutions, and quite luxuriated in feeling himself clean and combed again. As he lay basking before the bright little fire his coat grew fluffy and silvery at the ends, and his tail, so far from being stumpy, was quickly transformed into quite a feathery appendage.

"He oughtn't to be called Stumpy any more," cried Tiny, who had not thought the name good enough all along; but somehow it clung to him, as names will, and Stumpy he remained with them to the end of the chapter.

About eight o'clock, up came Mrs. Mason with two plates in her hands. One contained bones and odds and ends of fat and grease for the dog, and the other a nice little pudding for the children's supper—a gift from the kind motherly landlady.

"Bless me! Whatever have you done to the dog? Why, he looks another creature! Oh, yes, my pretty, you shall have some supper; but there's too much here for one meal; I'll put half by till to-morrow, and you shall have the rest now. There, you impatient little fellow! Well, you are a beauty, and no mistake! Now eat up your pudding, dearies; you want supper as well as Stumpy. And where is your father all this time?"

"Helping Crook and Co. with their books. They took him on for a week, because he is such a good accountant, and they are extra-busy just now. But he finishes to-night. He will bring money to pay up the rent, Mrs. Mason, and we shall have something for Christmas too. But I do wish he could get some regular work again."

"So do I, and so he ought, such a clever man as he is, with his foreign languages and all, and a real gentleman to boot. Well, well! we live in hard times, but we must all help one another.—Yes, little man, you agree with that sentiment, don't you? You look a very different creature since somebody helped you."

These last words were addressed to Stumpy, who, after demolishing his excellent supper in double-quick time, had expressed his gratitude by jumping upon her knee.

"Well, young man, it is plain you have come from a good home, you take so kindly to petting. I very much suspect, sir, that you *have* been stolen. Ah, yes; now I am sure of it! You have been stolen, and have had the sense or spirit to escape from your captors, though you could not find your way home, poor little chap!"

"How do you know? How can you tell?" cried Teddy, coming up greatly interested.

"Why, look here at his poor little head; his ears have been hurt—almost torn—that's because he's had a collar forced over them to get it off. I suspect he wore one of those pretty plated collars that fasten with lock and key, and the cruel folks who stole him pulled it off by main force, as they couldn't unfasten it. Some men have no heart at all. But this little fellow has had a good home somewhere. He 's been a regular lady's pet—it doesn't take two eyes to see that plain enough."

"He is a darling!" said Tiny softly. "How I wish we could keep him always!"

But she and Teddy and kind Mrs. Mason all knew that this was impossible. The little visitor must not stay on as a permanence. It would be out of the question to take out a licence for him; and the landlady could not keep him, on account of her two precious cats.

"But look here!" cried Teddy, with sudden animation: "if we can't keep him ourselves, we might try to find his real home to send him back to! Why, I'd tramp London all over, asking people if they 'd lost a dog. I 'd——"

"Stop a bit, Master Teddy my dear; there's a better way than that. If he 's had a good home, and has belonged to gentlefolk, ten to one they will have advertised for him in the *Times*. Most likely he was stolen so as to get a reward when it was offered; but the little chap has cheated the rascals out of that. Serve them right too; but there's not a bit of reason why you shouldn't find out what you want—and get the reward too. That's a good idea. It really is."

"I don't want any reward—only to find Stumpy's real home, and take him back. But oh, Mrs. Mason, how can we find out?"

"Why, by hunting up back numbers of the *Times*, to be sure. Your father can do that after the holidays are over, at one of them Institute places, where they keeps all the papers. Bless you, we 'll make it all out, never fear. Maybe this bit of a creature—or your kind heart, Master Teddy—will bring you a bit of good luck one of these days!"

CHAPTER II.—CHRISTMAS DAY.

Tears on Christmas morning! Whoever heard of such a thing! And from a little girl, too, standing in front of a table literally heaped with pretty presents.

The snowy breakfast-cloth was on the table, the silver urn hissing and spluttering its homely greeting, and the kind faces of papa and mamma were bent anxiously upon their darling, as, after exchanging the morning greetings, she went forward to her own place, to look at the pile of tempting boxes and parcels that were attractively arranged around it.

But the strange thing was that there was no look of glad eagerness on the child's face, no animation in her movements, or pleasurable excitement in her blue eyes. She stood at the table, not putting out her hand to touch one of the pretty things displayed there, her face quivering and her eyes filling, till at last a bitter little sob escaped her, and, laying her head down upon the table-cloth, she fairly cried and wept.

"Oh, papa—mamma—I don't w—want to be naughty, but I can't care for anything now poor T—Towzey's lost!"

The parents exchanged troubled glances. These bursts of overwhelming grief had occurred three or four times a day for the past ten days, and were really undermining the child's health. Little May, from being an only child, had been brought up surrounded by every luxury and indulgence, and hardly knew what an ungratified wish was. This petting and consideration had not spoilt her in the ordinary sense of the word, for her disposition was naturally very sweet; but it had not braced her character, nor taught her how to bear troubles, and so when the first real sorrow of her childhood had come to her, in the loss of her favourite dog, she broke down utterly and uncontrollably, and, without intending to be selfish, caused great trouble and anxiety to her fond parents, who were sadly distressed by her wild bursts of grief and inconsolable sorrow.

"I would give his weight in gold to have the dog back!" said Mr. Travers, looking across at his wife, and speaking almost impatiently in his anxious regret. "The child will fret herself downright ill if this goes on much longer. I'm sure it can't be for want of offering a high enough reward. Ten pounds would buy the creature three times over. But I'd give twenty for him sooner than see the child go on like this."

May sobbed on with unabated bitterness, and Mrs. Travers looked helpless and distressed. Her gentle, soothing words fell on unheeding ears. May had no thought to spare for the fact that she was spoiling her kind parents' Christmas morning. She could only think of her lost Towzey, and weep tears of sorrow for him.

There was little eaten at the breakfast-table that day. Mr. Travers did his best to make a good meal; but May could hardly be coaxed to touch her food, and the mother was too anxious about her darling to have any appetite herself. She tried, by opening the many parcels, and displaying the tempting contents before the child's eyes, to win back smiles to the tear-stained face. But May only gave languid attention to the show of pretty presents. She was too



"The little girl listened at first with great surprise."—*p.* 189.

much used to receiving costly gifts to feel any great excitement about these. She had everything she could possibly want, and her whole suite of nurseries was so crowded out with her possessions already, that it was almost impossible to find space for the new acquisitions always pouring in. Poor little May was cloyed with luxury before she was ten years old, and the healthy joy of an ordinary child over a new toy was a sensation she could hardly remember.

"It's very pretty—it's very kind," she repeated mechanically, as presents and loving greetings were unfolded before her; but there was no lighting of the mournful face or tear-dimmed eyes. Nothing could please the child now Towzey was lost.

Indeed, Towzey had been the most healthy element in this child's hot-house existence. The little Skye terrier, despite his warm affection for his little mistress, had a decided will of his own, and one which he was not always prepared to yield to hers without a struggle. Towzey brought an element of healthy friction and "give-and-take" into her life which it otherwise lacked; and then the dog depended upon her for everything, and was a companion in her walks and play-hours. He slept at the foot of her bed at nights, and was like a sort of shadow.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the little girl missed him, and grieved for him sadly. It could not have been otherwise. Only, had she been taught a greater consideration for others, she might have made a little more effort to struggle against her grief, and preserve an outward semblance of cheerfulness. But it had never occurred to May that there was any need for her to consider grown-up people. She had been used to be the great object of consideration to them, and it would have seemed a subversion of the existing order of the world if she had begun to think for them, or put any pressure on her feelings on their account. Unconscious as the selfishness was, it still was selfishness, though the

child's parents were as little aware of it as she herself.

But it seemed a melancholy thing that Christmas Day was to be spoilt; and yet this appeared inevitable. It was evident that May was quite unfit to go to church, for the tears had brought the headache that always followed these outbursts of ungoverned weeping. So the child was tucked up on the dining-room sofa beside a blazing fire, with all her presents round her, whilst her parents went off to morning service, hoping that she would sleep, and awake to restored cheerfulness later on.

But May was not disposed for sleep; she lay looking out of the sunny window, and still thinking of her lost pet, and the tears were on the point of coming back again, when a knock at the street door, and the sound of a familiar step in the hall, made her start up with a little exclamation of pleasure.

"It's Uncle Walter! He's come to go to church with us! Perhaps he'll stay at home with me now. I should like that! He gave me Towzey. He understands my feelings."

Walter Travers was one of those nice young lively uncles that are so popular with the young people who are lucky enough to be their nieces and nephews. May was exceedingly fond of her Uncle Walter, and this fondness was reciprocated by the young man.

"Hallo, Mayflower! Laid up on Christmas Day? Why, whatever is the matter?—sprained an ankle, eh?"

"Oh, no; I've only got a little headache. I suppose it was crying for Towzey brought it. Please, Uncle Walter, you haven't heard anything of him, have you?"

"No, indeed I haven't. I went to the Home for Lost Dogs again yesterday, but he'd not turned up there. I'm awfully afraid you'll have to learn to be happy again without him. I'll give you the nicest dog I can get presently, when we have quite given up hope; and you must try and be a brave little woman."

"Thank you, Uncle Walter," said May, in accents of calm conviction; "but I don't want another dog, and I never shall be happy any more again."

And as Uncle Walter gave vent to his feelings in a long, low whistle, May broke down once more into passionate weeping, and out came the burden of her sorrow.

"If he had died, I could have borne it better; but he ran away or was stolen, and he may be starved, or beaten, or ill-treated, or anything—and I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

Uncle Walter lifted her on his lap, and let her sob out her troubles on his shoulder. Plainly, there would be no going to church that Christmas morning for him; but here was work for him to do, and he meant to try and do it.

But he began by giving very real sympathy to May in her trouble, not trying to make light of it, or argue it away, but entering into it fully; only showing her that there was an almost equal chance that the lost dog had got into good hands as into bad ones; and that if any professional dog-stealer had taken the animal, he would have been restored by now. It was quite possible he might have been run over or killed—quite possible, too, that if lost, he might have found a good home somewhere.

And as Uncle Walter talked, May grew gradually calm; and then the young man took a new line, and the little girl listened at first with great surprise, and by-and-bye with a sense of shame and contrition she hardly understood.

Uncle Walter was learning to be a doctor, and his work took him into all kinds of places, where he saw want and misery, disease and trouble of almost every kind; and he told his little niece of some of the sights he saw day by day, of the poor little children—ill, and suffering, and hungry—and the troubles and privations that were a part of their daily lot. He drew his pictures so vividly that May felt as if she had been with him into some of those miserable places; and as nobody else had ever told her of anything painful before, she wondered why Uncle Walter did so now. But she was soon to learn.

"And after seeing and hearing all these things," he continued gravely, "I come to a beautiful home in a big airy square, and find a little girl, richly dressed, surrounded by lovely presents—a little girl with everything she needs—kind friends, loving parents, faithful servants, everything in the world to make her happy; yet she is not happy, but miserable, and she makes the whole house anxious and miserable too; and the trouble is, that she has lost a dog! Now, of course, it *is* a very sad thing to lose a favourite dog. I'm the last person in the world to deny it. But, then, there is reasonable sorrow as well as unreasonable; and this little girl is unreasonable, because she ignores and forgets all the many, many causes she has for thankfulness and happiness, and hugs her trouble, and thinks of nothing else. If some of my poor, hungry, ill-clad, miserable little friends could look into this room now, they would say that the little lady who could not be happy here, was the most curious little lady in all the world, and I think they would be right!"

"Oh! Uncle Walter!"

"Yes, little Mayflower, I do indeed. It is not right of you to give way so, when God has given you so much, so very much to be thankful for."

"Oh, Uncle Walter, I never thought of it like that. I don't want to be naughty. Tell me what I can do."

"You can try and put on a cheerful face, and keep your thoughts from always brooding over the trouble; but the best medicine of all will be to lose your own trouble by helping other people out of theirs."

"Oh, Uncle Walter! could I?"

"I think you could make a beginning."

"Oh, I should like that—I should indeed, Uncle Walter! Will you help me?"

XUM

"I will indeed, little niece, for I should like better than anything to see you begin to take an interest in anything outside your own little luxurious life."

"And can I begin soon?"

"As soon as ever you like—the sooner the better."

So Christmas Day in that big house passed more cheerfully than it promised to do. The smiles came back to May's cheeks, and no more tears were shed; for though poor Towzey's fate was still wrapped in gloom, the child had begun to realise that there were worse troubles afloat in the world, and to feel that there might still be some satisfaction in life if she could help those whose need was greater than her own.

CHAPTER III.—BOXING-DAY.

"PLEASE, sir, there's a little boy wants to see you. He says he's come about the lost dog."

Walter Travers looked up from his dinner, and said—

"Well, show him up, Martha; though I don't suppose for a moment it's our dog."

The young man was in his own rooms in the city, near to the hospital in connection with which he worked. It was to his address that the finder of the lost Towzey had been referred by the advertisement, as Mr. Travers felt certain that dozens of wrong dogs would be brought up to claim the reward, and was anxious that his little daughter should be spared the perpetual disappointments that were almost certain to be inflicted during the course of inquiries.

And, indeed, Walter had had so many dogs brought for inspection, that he had small hopes of any result of this application, though he looked up with a pleasant smile as a bright-faced little lad stepped into the room, pulling off his cap as he did so.

"Well, my boy, and where is the dog?"

"Please sir, he's just round the corner, in the street behind this. I thought maybe you'd come and look at him. I was afraid I might lose him in the crowd, he's so frisky and full of play since he got fed up, and we've only had him since Christmas Eve, and Tiny's *that* fond of him already, I don't know how she'll bear to lose him. But when father saw the notice in the paper at a friend's house yesterday, he thought we ought to come about it to-day. For he *is* a Skye terrier, and he *has* got a little mole under his chin, and one tooth with its point knocked off, and he *does* answer to the name of Towzey, though we call him Stumpy, and he answers to that too. So would you please come and look at him, sir? and then we shall know."

All this sounded so promising that Walter rose at once and donned his overcoat, whilst his bright little companion launched out into an animated recital of the finding of the starving and miserable "Stumpy"; and, indeed, before the two had reached their destination the young man had learned the main facts of the boy's family history—how mother was dead, how father had lost his situation as clerk through the failure of some great city house, and how Tiny's health was suffering through privation, and the wolf was hardly kept from the door.

Not that Teddy had any idea of telling a pitiful story. He merely answered the gentleman's questions in a frank, cheery way, despite the fact that what he had to relate was by no means of a cheerful nature.

In five minutes' time they reached Mrs. Mason's little shop, and passing through this, they ascended the staircase to the top of the house, and entered a small, bare room, spotlessly clean and neat, despite its air of poverty.

A careworn man, with a refined and gentle face, was sitting reading at a window, and by the fire lay a little pale child, clasping a fluffy Skye terrier closely in her arms.

But the moment the new-comer entered the room, the dog uttered a little cry of joyous recognition, leaped frantically upon him, barking and jumping and testifying his delight by every means in his power.

There was no need to claim Stumpy. Stumpy had claimed him, and the little girl, watching the meeting with a smile of eager interest, could not restrain the tears that stole quietly down her face; for of course now Stumpy must go, and she loved him so dearly already that the parting, inevitable as it was, seemed hard.

And Walter saw the tears, and, taking the child upon his knee, soon found out the cause; for he had a kind, bright way with children that always won their hearts.

"So Stumpy is a pet and a favourite already, is he? Well, then, I will not take him off at once; but you shall keep him till his little mistress comes for him, and we must see if we cannot find you a comrade and a playfellow in his place. And as for you, Teddy, you have not claimed the reward yet. Do you know that there are ten gold sovereigns due to you for finding Stumpy, as you call him?"

But Teddy flushed, and put his hands behind him, and said—

"Oh please, sir, I couldn't take any money for that. It is Mrs. Mason who has fed him, and we have loved him so. I am only so pleased to give him back to the little lady who has cried for him—though Tiny will miss him, and so shall I."

So Walter smiled, and left the children caressing Stumpy vehemently, whilst he talked for ten minutes in low tones with the father by the window. Then he took himself off, saying that he should be back before very long with the little mistress of the foundling.

May was rather surprised to see Uncle Walter dash up to the door in a hansom cab on boxing-day, because he had said he should not be coming; and in a moment she rushed out into the hall to meet him, for it had occurred to her that he might bring her news of the lost Towzey.

"Well, May, I thought we'd begin the new work to-day. I've found a little girl who wants cheering up, and would be mightily pleased with that tabby kitten you want a kind mistress for. So run along

and put your things on, and get the kitten and anything else you think you can spare for a poor little sick child, who has had no nice Christmas presents to cheer her up. I'll go and talk to papa and mamma, and then we'll start off together."

For a moment the light died out of May's face, as no mention was made of Towzey; but, recovering herself by an effort not lost upon her uncle, she answered him by a bright smile, and ran off eagerly upon the first labour of love that had ever entered into her young life.

Walter went straight to the parents and told his tale, which evoked almost as much pleasure from them as he would have done from the child herself, had he thought fit to tell her all.

"But," said the young man, "I want the little one to see what life is like in other homes. She wants a wider range of interest, and these people are *most* respectable. I found out that much from their landlady. It will do May good to be interested in lives less shielded than her own, and the dog will be the best link between her and the little sick child."

The parents agreed more heartily to this than they would have done a fortnight ago. Their darling's abandonment of grief over her lost pet had awakened in them a vague feeling that there must have been some defect in her training, and that something should be done to overcome it. Also their own interest in the poor family was aroused, for Mr. and Mrs. Travers were kind-hearted people.

"I'll take the man into my own counting-house. I can do with another clerk now trade is looking up again. One feels glad and thankful to do anything for those who have been the means of bringing back the child's favourite, besides the pleasure of helping a deserving case. I'll come with you, Walter. I should like to see the meeting between Towzey and his mistress, and I'll see the man's credentials, and have a talk with him, and he can start work on Monday. And we'll find quarters for them nearer his work and this house, and May shall take her first lesson in the realities of life in befriending these lonely children. Perhaps we have kept her too much shielded, too much self-centred. Certainly a healthy interest outside her own life may do the child good."

So when May descended with a sweet blue-eyed kitten in a basket, and quite a load of pretty gifts carried by the nursemaid in her wake, it was to find that the carriage was at the door, and that papa was coming with them.

Although there was no thought of Towzey in the child's mind, her face was bright, and she talked eagerly to Uncle Walter all the time of the poor little girl, who had had no Christmas presents, even though she was ill, and told of the things that she had packed up for her. She had not shown so much pleasure or interest in anything since the sad days of Towzey's loss, and the good father felt that his brother had been right in the method he had taken for rousing the little girl from her too great sorrow.

Arrived at the little shop, Uncle Walter took May by the hand, and nodding to the smiling woman behind the counter, led her up the staircase, the father following with the heavy basket of presents.

"Now, May," said the young man, throwing open a door on the top landing, "are you prepared for a great surprise? There! What do you think of that?"

"Towzey! Towzey! My own Towzey! Oh! oh! oh!" shrieked May. "Oh, Towzey, my darling—my love! can it really be you? Oh, papa! Oh, Uncle Walter! Did you really know? Oh, Towzey! I don't know what to say." And May sank down on the floor, and gathered her lost pet in her arms, whilst his shrieks and barks of joy drowned all other sounds.

And then what a hubbub of childish voices arose! for in the confusion the blue-eyed kitten escaped from the basket, and fled precipitately into Tiny's arms, in mortal fear of the terrible barking dog. And Tiny gathered the little thing into a warm embrace, and covered it with kisses, and when she heard it was really to be her very, very own, her delight knew no bounds, and she was amply consoled for the loss of Stumpy.

"Because, you know, we *couldn't* have kept him, really; but we can keep a kitten—there's no tax for them; and oh, he's such a darling, with such lovely blue eyes;" and Tiny stopped short to kiss and fondle her new treasure, for Teddy was pouring the story of Stumpy into May's eager ears, and in the tumult of voices the little invalid's was quite lost.

"But he isn't Stumpy, he's Towzey!" cried May, clasping her darling in her arms, whilst he licked her face all over unrebuked, as he had seldom been able to do before, as his mistress was rather a particular little lady.

"Then, I'll tell you what—puss shall be called Stumpy now, in remembrance of to-day, Tiny. And so if you take Towzey away, we shall still keep Stumpy!"

And in the gladness of their hearts the children all laughed merrily at this compromise, and grew so intimate in the eager pleasure of the giving and receiving of the pretty presents May had brought, that they soon felt like old friends; and such a happy red-letter day had never perhaps been marked in the short calendar of any of their young lives before.

So that was the beginning, but by no means the ending, of a childish friendship, that was the source of much pleasure to all those concerned for many years to come, and from which the rich child gained quite as much as the children of the poor man.

Mr. Travers took the father into his office, where he soon became a trusted and valued servant; and May spent a whole delightful week in furbishing up and adorning the new rooms into which the family shortly moved.

She and kind Mrs. Mason are regular visitors to that now comfortable and prosperous little home. Tiny's cheeks are no longer wan and white, and she can run to and from school in all but the worst of weathers.

Teddy is top of his class, and almost ready to leave school; and there is a place in Mr. Travers' office waiting for him, from which it is to be hoped he will rise in time to a clerkship.

May and Tiny meet regularly every Saturday afternoon, and enjoy a happy hour together; and Towzey and Stumpy are almost as fast friends as their respective little mistresses, to whom they are so devotedly attached; and May has learnt to be thankful for the happy lines in which her life is cast, and to forget her little cares and crosses in ministering to the sorer needs of others.

E. EVERETT GREEN.

THE IMAGE WHICH FELL DOWN FROM JUPITER.

(ACTS xix. 35.)

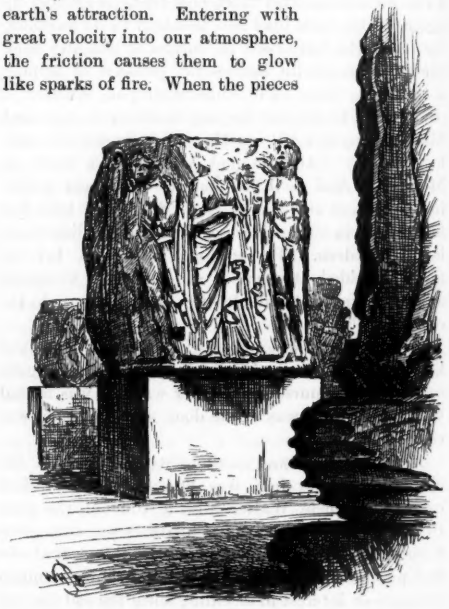
BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.



DIANA OF EPHESUS.

IF you visit the British Museum, you will find in one of its rooms, among a number of noble statues and other works of ancient sculpture, several enormous masses of white marble. Though much broken and discoloured by the ravages of time, these marble fragments still retain much of their old beauty and grace. You look at them with great astonishment before you know anything about them, for they are like the ruins of buildings that have been erected by giants. But your interest is much deepened when you are told that these pieces of marble once formed part of the pillars of the great temple of Diana at Ephesus, and were excavated and brought to this country a quarter of a century ago by Mr. Wood, who wrote an admirable book upon the subject. In the days of the Apostle Paul the temple of Diana was the glory of the city of Ephesus, and one of the seven wonders of the world. It was raised in honour of Artemis, or Diana—not the famous goddess of hunting of the Greeks, but the Asiatic mother of all animal life, under whose protection the city of Ephesus was placed. When the temple stood in all its magnificence, if you visited it and passed into the inmost chamber, you would find there an image of the goddess; and you would have been greatly disappointed. You would see an ugly little figure of black stone, with the rude indistinct outlines of a woman's shape, and a marble crown upon its head; altogether monstrous and deformed. This idol, grotesque as it looked, was regarded as an object of peculiar sacredness, for it was believed to have fallen down from heaven from the hand of Jupiter himself, and pilgrims from all parts of the world came to worship at its shrine.

What was this image which fell down from Jupiter? If you go to another part of the British Museum, you will get an explanation. In a room devoted to minerals you will see a collection of dark stones of different shapes and sizes lying about, weighing from a few pounds to several hundredweights. There is one enormous mass that weighs three and a half tons. These stones are what are called meteoric stones. You have seen shooting stars on clear winter nights. If you go out about the middle of November before going to bed, and look up at the sky, you will see countless fiery sparks, with long streamers of light, falling in every direction like a brilliant display of rockets. These are pieces of solid matter, supposed to be bits of a comet or a broken planet, coming within the influence of our earth's attraction. Entering with great velocity into our atmosphere, the friction causes them to glow like sparks of fire. When the pieces



"Enormous masses of white marble."



"The Temple of Diana was the glory of the city of Ephesus."—*p.* 192.

are small they are completely dissipated ; but large fragments occasionally reach the earth in a solid form. There are more than two hundred specimens in the British Museum, which fell from the sky in different parts of the world at different times ; and other museums are largely supplied with characteristic examples.

THE WORSHIP OF METEORIC STONES.

THE image that was worshipped in the splendid temple of Diana at Ephesus was doubtless a meteoric stone of this kind. It probably fell from the sky in the very place where the temple was afterwards built ; for being originally a marsh, we can hardly suppose that such a site would have been voluntarily chosen without such an association ; and some rude likeness which it presented to a woman's figure, especially when subsequently improved by carving, suggested that it was the image of Diana, made in heaven itself by the hands of the great ruler of the gods. The old Ephesians were not the only people who worshipped a meteoric stone. The inhabitants of Pessinus in Galatia gave to an embassy, sent from Rome for the purpose, a celebrated sacred stone which had fallen from heaven, and was worshipped by them under the name of Cybele, the great mother of all things. The possession of it was supposed to be necessary to the safety of the Roman Republic during the Carthaginian war. It was taken by ship to Ostia, the harbour of Rome, and from thence was carried to the city by a solemn procession of Roman matrons. The day of its arrival, the 4th of April, was ever afterwards kept as a festival, at which games were celebrated. When I was in Rome I happened to be walking on the 4th of April on the Appian Way—outside the walls of the city—where a small stream, which has been identified as the classic Almo, flowed near the road, and I saw some people washing a stucco figure of the Saviour in its waters, and it immediately flashed across my mind that this curious ceremony was no other than a survival of the annual washing in this very stream of the famous image of Cybele, by the priests of the goddess, more than two thousand years ago. This image of Cybele looked like a huge piece of deep brown lava, ending in a sharp point. It had several irregularities on its surface, which resembled the sun scattering its rays around it. It was set in a silver statue of the goddess, in place of the head, in the great temple built in her honour. Heliogabalus, the infamous Roman Emperor, it is said, stole this relic from its temple, and placed it in his own chapel, under the name of the Sun Heliogabalus. More than a hundred years ago it was accidentally turned up in excavating the ruins of the Palaces of the Cæsars ; but, ignorant of its true nature, the labourers tossed it aside among the rubbish as a common stone, and it disappeared.

At Delphi, in Greece, the shrine of the celebrated oracle—where the oldest worship of the land was performed—there was a stone which Saturn was said to have swallowed and rejected. It was anointed with oil, and carried with pride on solemn festival days. In the temple of Juggernaut, in India, there is a black stone of pyramidal shape, which has libations of perfumed oil poured upon it every day. Besides these famous stones, there is one that has acquired even greater fame, and is better known to us in these days. This is the Kaaba, which is built into the wall of the holy place of the temple at Mecca, and is said to have been brought from heaven by the angel Gabriel. Thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the Mahometan world flock every year to kiss this stone, as the Roman Catholics kiss the toe of the statue of St. Peter, in the great church of St. Peter's in Rome. The stone at Mecca has, in consequence, been worn into hollows by the lips of the "faithful." Closely

examined, this stone has been discovered to be nothing else than a meteoric stone, that fell from the sky thousands of years ago, and was worshipped by the prehistoric people who lived in this part of Arabia. When Mahomet came, he engrafted the worship of the holy stone into his own religion; and the people raised a great temple in its honour. There are thus no less than five different religions which have made an idol of a meteoric stone that had fallen from the sky: the Phœnician religion, that worshipped the image of Diana at Ephesus; the Greek religion, that worshipped the stone of Saturn at Delphi; the Roman religion, that worshipped the image of Cybele at Rome; the Indian religion, that worships the black stone in the temple of Juggernaut, in India; and the Mahometan religion, that worships the black stone of the Kaaba at Mecca. These examples show to us how widely spread were these ancient objects of worship.

IDOLATRY A SEEKING AFTER GOD.



OW we are apt to think that religions which made stones like these sacred, must have been exceptionally degraded religions; that persons who were addicted to this form of worship must have been especially wicked and foolish. And yet the Apostle Paul, who saw all the foul lust and cruelty of idolatry at Ephesus, understood at the same time the spiritual longing connected with it. He knew that in that corrupt worship it was not man departing wilfully from God, and desiring not the knowledge of His ways that was indicated, but man seeking blindly after God, groping after Him with outstretched hands in the darkness of Nature if haply he might find Him. He had a deep heartfelt compassion for the ignorance and blindness which could thus, in default of anything better, worship stones believed to have been the images of the gods sent down from heaven. He did not go about condemning the poor idolaters, any more than he would have condemned a blind man who stumbled because of some obstacle in his way. They could not help their blindness; they knew no better. All the time that he was at Ephesus—and he was there two whole years—he did not say anything against the prevailing worship of the place, although he could not but have seen day after day sights and scenes which must have greatly vexed his righteous soul. He contented himself with preaching the Gospel, assured that if he could get the people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they would at once abandon their own false religion. He could not expect them to give up what they already possessed until they had found something that was superior. And therefore his style of preaching was always constructive, not destructive—intended not to pull down the false, but to build up the true. He built upon the same ground which he had in common with the basest idolater—the instinct for God which exists in every human heart, and he said, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

It is natural for all human beings to worship something that belongs or is supposed to belong to a higher region than this earth of ours. The ancient Ephesians were accustomed to look up to the sky as the home of their gods. It was from thence that the rain, the dew, the sunshine, and all the beneficent influences that ripened their harvests and enriched their lives, came. It was from thence also that all the dreadful things that blighted their fields and destroyed their possessions—the storms and the pestilences—also came. So that while they were encouraged to pray for a continuance of the blessings, they were also tempted to offer sacrifices that the evils might be averted. With such ideas it was the most natural thing in the world for them to regard with peculiar sacredness a strange stone which they had seen with their own eyes falling down with a loud explosion from the sky; especially when that stone had some rude resemblance to a human figure. What else, in their utter ignorance of science, could they imagine it to be than a divine thing sent to them directly from the hand of the mighty Thunderer? They saw that the stone was perfectly different from all the other stones they had ever seen before. They saw that it was burning hot, glowing like a fallen star when it fell upon the earth; that it hissed as it crashed into the marshy waste; and when it cooled they saw that it was black and heavy as iron, while yet it was not iron. They regarded it as a part of the great unknown world beyond the stars, where they believed the King of heaven and all the gods lived. Hitherto they had seen nothing coming down from heaven but rain and snow and dew, the common things of Nature, which had no mystery about them, and were altogether uninteresting because they were so familiar. And they might have had the longing which we all have to know something of the mysterious region beyond the clouds; to be brought into some communication with these far-away outer portions of space. They might have had the same feelings of wonder regarding the celestial orbs which come out night after night in the serene sky of the East, and look larger, brighter, and nearer, than they do in our Northern skies, to which expression has been given in the child's poem—

> "Twinkle, twinkle, little star:
> How I wonder what you are."

They had heard of the visits of gods and goddesses to the earth in human form, and of the strange adventures which they met with, and of the mighty works which they did. But these were vague dim things that were said to have happened long ago; and they were not sure but they might after all be only the dreams that men had dreamed—poetical ideas instead of realities. They had heard of the wars of the giants against the gods; how giants had

piled mountain upon mountain in order to climb up to where the gods were, and so fight against them in their own place. And they were told how vain were these efforts; how the giants and their mountains were hurled down to the earth after every attempt, and the heavens remained as far off and as inaccessible as before. And they wondered if ever some means of communication with heaven might be possible for man. We can therefore easily imagine the wonder and joy which the sight of the stone that fell down from the sky must have caused to these poor heathens, who did not know any science and scarcely any religion. That stone was a real and true thing, about which there could be no mistake. They could see it with their own eyes and handle it with their own hands. And being ignorant of its true nature, it was inevitable that they should look upon it as a special gift from their gods, as a direct message from heaven to earth, and should worship it.

THE HUMAN LONGING FOR GOD.

HUMAN nature is always and everywhere the same. The longing that was in these poor idolaters, which the image that fell down from Jupiter appealed to and satisfied, is the very same longing that is in us. Our flesh and heart cry out for God as their flesh and heart cried out. There is a craving in us, a want which God Himself has made, and which therefore nothing but God Himself can fill. We look up into the starry sky and think of the vast distances which separate these suns and systems from each other and from the system in which our own earth is but a tiny speck, and we are oppressed by the greatness which our minds cannot grasp. We lose ourselves in the thought of the infinite, and we ask, like the Psalmist, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man that thou visitest him?" We have, as the poet says—

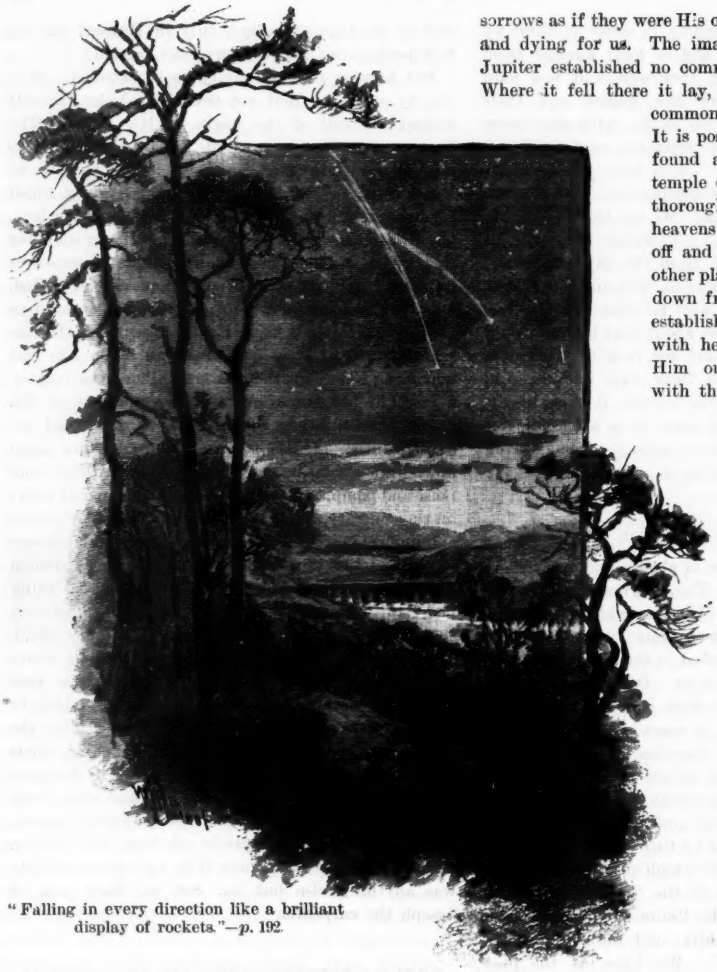
> "The desire of the moth for the star;
> Of the day for the morrow;
> The worship of something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow."

If we know not God, we must seek to satisfy this mysterious longing of our souls by the worship of idols like the Ephesians of old. The ambition that God has given to us that we might seek the highest things, we waste in the pursuit of the poor distinctions of the world. The covetousness that God has given to us that we might covet earnestly the best gifts, we degrade by laying up for ourselves treasures on earth which the rust and the moth corrupt and the thief can steal. But we soon find that all the material things of the world are beneath the dignity of our high-born nature, and can only yield a brief and fitful joy. The vague longing for God still remains unsatisfied. God has made us for Himself, and, as St. Augustine says, only in Himself can we find perfect rest and complete satisfaction.

But how is such a longing to be satisfied? Who can by searching find out God? He hides Himself behind the veil of the works of His hands. The heavens, beyond whose clouds is His throne, are so high above us that we cannot reach to where He is. But blessed be His name, He who has given bread for hunger, and water for thirst, and friends for love, has Himself provided for the longing of our souls for God. What we could not have found out for ourselves has been revealed to us. We could not ascend to God, but God has come down to us. He has given to us the most certain token of His interest in us. He has sent down to us from heaven not an image like that which the Ephesians thought had fallen from Jupiter, a mere lifeless stone, but His own Son out of His bosom, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. Jesus did not come down like a blazing meteor from the sky with loud noise and pomp, to attract the awe and wonder of men; on the contrary, like a beam of light He came gently and quietly, without observation. He stole into our world and into our human nature in such a common natural way that few knew what a wonderful thing had happened; that few could distinguish between the Babe of Bethlehem and any ordinary child. There was indeed a wonderful star shining above His cradle, but only the wise men from the East saw it; there was a lighting up of the midnight heavens and a sound of celestial voices heralding the event, but only humble shepherds watching their flocks heard and saw the portent. And as He came into our world, so He continued in it and went away from it—so quiet, so natural, so perfectly human, that it required much insight of faith and love on the part of those who knew Him to believe that He was anything else but the Son of Mary and of Joseph the carpenter.

CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE EPHESIAN IDOL.

CONTRASTING the image which fell down from Jupiter with the Image of the Invisible God in Christ Jesus, we can not only put old familiar truths into a fresh mould, and thus make them more impressive; but we can also bring out more vividly against the dark background of idolatry the preciousness and suitableness of the Christian salvation. The Ephesian meteorite had no message to bring from Jupiter. To a scientific man of the present day it could tell much regarding the nature of stellar substances, much about the chemical composition of those comet-fragments that are circling through space, but it could tell him nothing regarding Him who formed it, give no information concerning the spiritual inhabitants or the spiritual laws of the heavenly world. It would give him the same kind of



"Falling in every direction like a brilliant display of rockets."—*p.* 192.

physical information which he obtains regarding the common matter of the world around him. And if the rocks beneath his feet can tell him nothing about God, neither can the stone which has fallen from the sky. But Jesus has made known to us what kind of a God we have to deal with, and what kind of a heaven we have to look forward to. He has revealed to us the very heart of God, and assured us of God's willingness, nay, eagerness, to pardon and bless the greatest sinners of mankind. He did not come down from the bosom of the Father as the gods of old were fabled to have come down from Olympus to our earth in search of selfish pleasures, leaving the world to sin and suffer on as it might, without lifting a finger to help it. He came, on the contrary, to seek and to save that which was lost, touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, afflicted in all our afflictions, bearing our sins and sorrows as if they were His own, living and suffering and dying for us. The image that fell down from Jupiter established no communication with heaven. Where it fell there it lay, and it became part of the common materials of the earth. It is possible that it may yet be found among the ruins of the temple of Diana when they are thoroughly excavated. The heavens above it seemed as far off and as inaccessible as in any other place. But Jesus, who came down from heaven, by so doing established the closest relations with heaven. By taking upon Him our nature He linked it with the Divine nature; in becoming the Son of Man, He has enabled us to become the sons of God. What Jacob saw in a dream of the night is fulfilled in reality. We see the heavens opened over Jesus, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon Him; and by the new and living way which He opened up, we have access to God and to the glorious place where He dwells. And having finished His work on earth He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, and to prepare us for the place, and He has promised that He will come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also. The idol of the Ephesians had no more virtue than a common stone. However long the worshippers gazed upon it, no real moral change was produced upon them. Its worship, so far from purifying and ennobling them, only degraded them; for they humbled their own high nature to pay homage to what was infinitely beneath it. But the worshippers of Jesus become like Him. By appearing in our image He restores by His Spirit in us the image of God in which we were created, and which we lost by our sin. Beholding His glory as in a glass, we are changed into the same image; we become pure as He is pure, and perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

GOSPEL BLESSINGS COMPARED WITH THOSE OF IDOLATRY.

WE are told that where the image that fell down from Jupiter stood in the temple of Ephesus, there was the right of sanctuary. The shadow of the idol extended its shield over the fugitive from human justice. It also protected the city from all evil; and on one occasion, when besieged by Crœsus, the inhabitants connected with the temple by means of a rope the parts of the wall which the enemy was battering, in order the more effectually to concentrate on the spot of danger the influence of the deity. But this protection did not arise from any real intrinsic power which the image itself possessed. It was merely a vested right or privilege that was given to it by human authority and custom. And what man had given, man could take away. Whenever it was discovered that the idol was a mere senseless stone, its power and sacredness would be gone, and it could not protect itself, much less those who trusted in it. The city of Ephesus has for ages been a waste and dreary ruin, showing how futile was the protection of the goddess. But Jesus possesses in Himself the Divine power of protection; and all who put their trust in Him are safe against all the forces of the world. They can challenge the whole universe. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us."

The temple of Diana was the bank of Ephesus. The sacred image kept the treasury of the city safe from the thief and the spoiler. But this security was false; it was a mere delusion. Those who venerated the sacred image might themselves be too superstitious to touch money that was under the safeguard of the goddess; but if a strange warrior came and conquered the place, he would not scruple to take for his own use the money stored in the temple, in spite of Diana. He would not attach the least value to her guardianship. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, stripped the statue of Jupiter of its golden mantle, and substituted a woollen one, saying that the god would be warmer with that! We have treasures more precious far than silver and gold—the interests of our immortal souls; and if we place them under the protection of the Image of God that came down from heaven, they shall be inviolate in life and death. He will truly guard them, so that nothing shall be lost. No man is able to pluck us out of our Father's hand. We know Whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He will keep that which we have committed to Him against that day.

How highly did the poor idolaters of Ephesus esteem the image that fell down from Jupiter! It was a dark and ugly stone, but their imaginations glorified it, and invested it with the most sacred powers and associations. They raised in its honour the grandest and costliest building in all the world. They placed it in the very heart of their glorious temple, and they worshipped it with all that was best and most precious in their daily services and offerings. What are we doing to show our appreciation of Him who came down from God to save and bless us? He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. He loved us, and gave Himself for us. We can raise in His honour a temple far grander and more costly than the temple of Ephesus. Writing to the Corinthians, while his own eyes were resting upon the Wonder of the world, and writing to the Ephesians, to whose eyes its splendours were daily revealed, the apostle Paul borrowed from it an architectural allegory. He reminded his converts that they were built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, upon Jesus Christ the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; obviously alluding to the immense substructures on which the temple of Diana was raised, in consequence of the swampy nature of the ground. The human heart is God's proper dwelling-place; and we ought to show at what a rate we value God's unspeakable Gift, by making ourselves His temple, by placing Him in the inmost shrine of our heart, and devoting all our powers to His service. We should seek to make ourselves by God's grace a worthy casket for such an inestimable jewel, a worthy temple for such a Shechinah.

The strangers who came to worship at the temple of Diana carried away with them little models in silver of the shrine and image of the goddess, so that when far away they might recall the grand memories of the place, and carry on its worship wherever they were. And so Christ has gone away from the world, and we cannot see Him with our bodily eyes. But He has left us His Word, which contains such a beautiful and complete picture of Him, that we can vividly see Him before us, and hear His very voice whenever we read it. Let us seek to make a continual study of that Word, so that we may know more about Jesus, and become more like Him. The little models of Diana spread abroad her reputation, made people to know her glory in distant lands who never saw her statue at Ephesus. And so each of us may be a model, with the image and superscription of Jesus so beautifully engraved upon us, in our gentle and holy, in our loving and useful life, that all who behold us may admire Him, and be drawn to love and serve Him. We may be living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men; and thus we may be ourselves—each of us—the image of God that came down from heaven, and that by-and-bye will go back to heaven.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

JANUARY 19.—THE SONG OF ZACHARIAS.

To read—St. Luke i. 67—79. *Golden Text, verse* 76.



NTRODUCTION. Teacher must briefly question on the circumstances. Lesson two Sundays back told of angels announcing to Zacharias the birth, name, office, and character of his son. Also that he himself should be dumb till the child's birth, because of his unbelief. Nearly a year had passed; Elisabeth had received a visit from her cousin, the Virgin Mary, and heard of *her* expected child—the promised Saviour. Now at last Elisabeth's babe is born. Eight days pass. Time for the boy to be circumcised. Picture the scene:—

(*a*) Group standing round the child—dumb father, anxious mother, family friends.

(*b*) Friends want to call him Zacharias, after his father.

(*c*) Elisabeth insists on his being called John.

(*d*) Signs made to his father for his opinion.

(*e*) A writing tablet brought to him (no deaf-and-dumb alphabet in those days).

(*f*) He writes, "His name *is* John"—already given by the angel.

(*g*) At once his tongue is loosed—he speaks, and praises God.

(*h*) His song, composed under influence of Holy Spirit.

I. THANKSGIVING FOR EXPECTED COMING OF CHRIST. (68—75.)

Who is to be praised? The God of Israel, His chosen people. Why is He to be praised? Because—

(*a*) *He has visited* or "come to see" His people. How?

By an angel to Zacharias and the Virgin Mary;

By His prophet John—just born;

By His Son Jesus—soon expected.

(*b*) *He has redeemed* His people—*i.e.*, saved them from their enemies (verse 71). Seen with the prophet's eye as if already done.

(*c*) *He has raised up* a horn of salvation—*i.e.*, a Saviour ready to give blessings as it were from a horn full of wine and oil.

All this has been done as was promised to the fathers of old—nay, more, confirmed with an oath.

The result of it will be to serve God fully in two ways:—

(*a*) *Holiness*—*i.e.*, doing duty to God.

(*b*) *Righteousness*—doing duty to neighbour.

II. PROPHECY OF ST. JOHN'S MISSION. (76, 77.) Zacharias addresses his own son.

What is he to be? A prophet with a sacred mission.

He is to "go before" Christ, as heralds announce a king.

He is to prepare the way for Christ—by preaching repentance.

Sin confessed and forsaken prepares for Saviour's forgiveness.

Then Zacharias passes on to speak of Christ.

III. PROPHECY OF CHRIST'S MISSION. (78, 79.) Christ is like a day-star. How?

(*a*) He came to a world lying in darkness.

(*b*) He came with the full glory of His presence.

(*c*) He came to guide to peace and holiness.

LESSONS. *From Zacharias*—1. To use speech for the praise of God.

2. To obey God's will implicitly.

From his hymn of prophecy—1. The blessings of salvation.

2. The honour of telling the tidings of a Saviour.

Can we do nothing?

JANUARY 26.—JOY OVER THE CHILD JESUS.

To read—St. Luke ii. 8—20. *Golden Text—ver.* 14.

INTRODUCTION. Zacharias' prophecy has come true—Christ is born. Now the news must be told. Who shall hear it first?

I. THE SHEPHERDS HEAR. (8—14.) Shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem. *What are they doing?* Perhaps—

(*a*) Watching the stars, as David the shepherd did. (Ps. viii. 3, 4.)

(*b*) Singing one of David's pastoral songs. (Ps. xxiii. 1.)

(*c*) Guarding their flocks against wolves, etc.

What do they see?—(*a*) An angel's form.

(*b*) A bright and glorious light.

No wonder they felt afraid.

What do they hear? Notice the message—

(*a*) Good news to them and all mankind.

(*b*) A Saviour born in David's town.

(*c*) A sign by which to know the child.

(*d*) A burst of music in the air, viz., of many angels praising God.

(*e*) Glory to God, peace on earth.

II. THE SHEPHERDS SEE. (15, 16.) They talk it over. They will start for Bethlehem at once—they will see for themselves. What do they see when they arrive?

(*a*) A rude stable—cave cut out of a rock.

(*b*) Mary the virgin mother and Joseph the carpenter.

(*c*) The babe lying in a manger.

Yet they, taught by the angels, see more than that. They see in this helpless babe the Saviour of the world, God's Son come down to earth. They have been told it means pardon for man's sin—peace between God and man. Doubtless they fall down and worship.

III. THE SHEPHERDS TELL. (17—20.) They must not keep the good news to themselves—it was

for all mankind. So they hasten to make it known. Notice the different ways in which the news was received :—

(*a*) People generally wondered.

(*b*) Mary kept all these things in her heart.

(*c*) The shepherds praised God.

Lessons. What does the birth of Christ teach us ?—

1. *Joy* for the good news. Christ born a Prince and Saviour to *us*.

2. *Praise* to God who has thus "visited and redeemed His people."

3. *Missions*. The news must be told. Men, money, books, prayer all needed in missionary work. What are we doing ?

February 2.—Jesus brought into the Temple.

To read—St. Luke ii. 25—35. *Golden Text—ver.* 32.

Introduction. Christ is now forty days old. He has been circumcised when eight days old, and received the name Jesus, or Saviour (ver. 21). Now two things take place according to the Jewish law : viz.—

(*a*) Mary, his mother, returns thanks and offers a sacrifice.

(*b*) The child is presented to the Lord in the Temple. (See Lev. xii. 2—6.) It is in connection with this that to-day's story occurs.

I. Simeon's Desire. (25, 26.) Know very little indeed about Simeon. Still we can gather some interesting facts.

(*a*) He was an aged man, living at Jerusalem.

(*b*) He was devout—*i.e.*, attended to his religious duties. This would include daily attendance at the Temple.

(*c*) He was just—*i.e.*, doing his duty to men.

(*d*) He was well read in the Scriptures, for he knew all about the consolation promised to Israel. (Is. xl. 1.)

(*e*) He was under direct guiding of the Holy Spirit.

(*f*) He longed to see Jesus — the promised Saviour.

II. Simeon's Prayer. (27—32.) What had the Spirit told him ? And to-day the Spirit bids him go to the Temple, for his desire shall be granted. Can picture him advancing to meet the little group—the humble peasant mother with two turtle-doves ; also the babe and Joseph. He takes the child gently in his arms, and praises God that he has lived to see this day. What does the coming of Christ mean ?

(*a*) *To him*—to depart from this world in peace.

(*b*) *To all people*—salvation from their sins.

(*c*) *To the Gentiles* in darkness of heathenism—light.

(*d*) *To Israel* long looking for Messiah—glory.

III. Simeon's Prophecy after first giving his blessing.

(*a*) Christ shall be for the *fall* of many.

Fulfilled by destruction of Jerusalem thirty years after His crucifixion.

(*b*) Christ shall cause many to *rise* again.

Fulfilled when preaching of salvation caused three thousand to be converted in one day. (Acts ii. 41.)

(*c*) Christ shall be spoken against.

Fulfilled when Apostles forbidden to teach in His name. (Acts v. 28.)

(*d*) A sword shall pierce the heart of His mother.

Fulfilled when she witnessed the Crucifixion. (St. John xix. 25.)

Lessons. Notice about Simeon—

1. *His faith*—was rewarded by sight.

2. *His prayer*—was heard and answered.

3. *His prophecy*—was fulfilled.

So shall it be with all—in God's good time.

February 9.—The Childhood and Youth of Jesus.

To read—St. Luke ii. 40—52. *Golden Text—ver.* 32.

Introduction. Very few things told of infancy of Christ. What are they?—

His birth in cave at Bethlehem.

His circumcision at eight days old.

His presentation in the Temple.

His persecution by King Herod.

His receiving visit of the wise men.

Nothing more told till He was twelve years old.

Probably lived quietly at Nazareth with Joseph and Mary.

Probably, also, had companionship of John the Baptist, his cousin, after the death of his aged parents.

To-day's lesson tells of the only recorded event of His boyhood.

I. The Visit to Jerusalem. (40—45.) Notice these incidents—

(*a*) *The occasion*—to keep feast of Passover. (Exod. xii.)

(*b*) *The age*—Twelve unusually young, fourteen the regular age.

(*c*) *The cause*—Christ, though so young, being strong and tall in body; mind remarkably developed; soul full of God's grace.

(*d*) *The journey*—Went up in a large company (ver. 44) for protection.

(*e*) *The feast*—Duly kept for eight days at Jerusalem.

(*f*) *The return*—Christ tarried behind in the city.

(*g*) *The search*—His parents not missed Him at first; then looked amongst friends; then returned to Jerusalem.

II. The Finding in the Temple. (46—50.) Seem to have searched all other places first. How little, after twelve years, they knew Him! At last, found Him in the Temple, probably in one of the Scribes' rooms, sitting in the midst of the learned Rabbis. What was He doing?

(*a*) *Hearing them*—*i.e.*, listening to their explanations of God's Word.

(*b*) *Asking questions*—*i.e.*, seeking for further information.

No wonder all were astonished at His intelligence.

What did His mother say?—"Thy father and I have sought Thee."

But Joseph was only His adopted father. So Christ tells them that He must be occupied about His own Father's concerns. But they knew not what He meant.

III. THE HOME AT NAZARETH. (51, 52.) Christ now returned home to Nazareth; nothing more told of Him for eighteen years. But these verses give a little insight into that peaceful home—

Joseph the carpenter working at his trade.

Mary musing daily over the wonderful prophecies about her son.

Jesus growing daily stronger in body, wisdom, and grace.

LESSONS. 1. *Love for God's house*—Christ was glad to go. (Ps. cxxii. 1.)

2. *Love for God's Word*—Christ anxious to learn.

3. *Submission to parents*—Christ stayed at home, working for Joseph, obeying parents till thirty years old.

A DIVIDED DUTY.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER, BY THE AUTHOR OF "PAIN AND GAIN," "THE CHRIST-CHILD'S GIFT," ETC. ETC.

SHE was walking through the dull suburban streets which led to her home, with such an intensely bright and happy face that the few people she passed smiled involuntarily as they looked at her, and then went on their way feeling somewhat the richer for that momentary glimpse of such a piece of embodied sunshine.

There was no special beauty about her. She was just an ordinary fair-haired girl, with rounded rosy cheeks and grey eyes, which even the laughter lying in them at present could not wholly rob of their usual gentle steadfastness; but her great happiness was transforming her this summer evening, and more critical eyes than those of the neighbouring children, who knew so well the figure of the little grey-clad governess as she passed to and from her daily work, glanced after her with amused approval.

And had she not every right to feel happy? she was asking herself; for this day week would see her wedding-day with Horace Greeley; and was not Horace the dearest, and best, and—— The whole gamut of love phrases having danced through the girl's brain, Flavia began thinking more seriously of all that had led up to the present position, and recalled one by one the different events. First, there had been her father's death, two years before, which had flung upon her young eighteen-year-old shoulders the necessity of providing not merely for herself, but for her little brother, who was ten years her junior; for they were doubly orphaned now, their mother having died at Harold's birth. It had been a hard struggle at first, though everyone told her she had been exceptionally lucky in obtaining pupils as rapidly as she did; but time had eased her burden, and she was actually able to lay by a little money against the inevitable time when Harold must go to school.

Then she had met Horace, who was the brother of one of her employers. He was a *débonnaire* impulsive young soldier, and as ardent in his wooing as in everything else, so his engagement to Flavia Strong followed very soon upon their first meeting. Then a hitch threatened, for his sister declared they would both be reckless unless they waited for his captaincy; but as matters turned out—"Fortune has been in my favour ever since I was born," said Horace Greeley, with his gay irresistible laugh—he gained his step almost immediately, and preparations for the marriage were hurried on. These were still in progress when the 116th received marching orders for Malta, and Flavia's heart sank within her; but her impetuous young lover laughed at her doubts. Harold must go off to boarding-school directly, he decided. The boy would be more contented there with other lads of his age than he had ever been moping in London lodgings with his sister, and Flavia must marry him at once, and come out to Malta too. And so it had all been arranged, and to-day the little governess had given her last lesson, and now was going homeward with a thankful heart and a radiant face.

As she neared her own door, she was amazed to see her landlady standing on the steps in a great state of distress, and with the tears flowing copiously down her kindly face.

"Oh, my dear young lady!" she sobbed. "They told me to break it to you. Oh, poor Master Harold! He's hurt, miss—he's hurt."

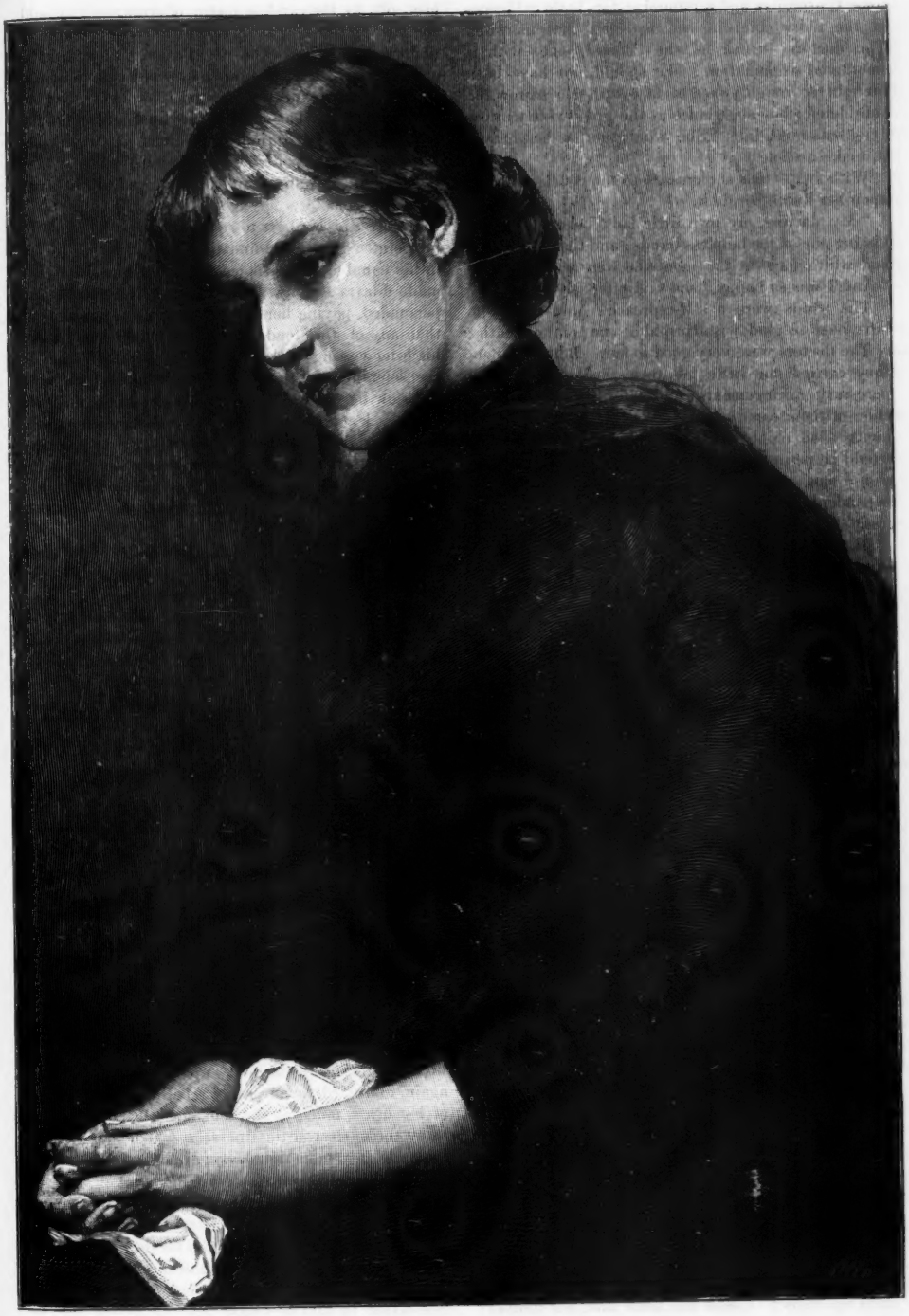
Flavia's own face blanched.

"He—he is dead?" she asked in a hoarse whisper; leaping to the worst conclusion, as women are apt to do.

"No, no," cried the landlady, "my dear, not that; but he was climbing in the garden, and fell and hurt his back. The doctors are with him now. He——"

But Flavia did not wait to hear more. She brushed hastily by her, and entered the little sitting-room.

Lying on the horsehair couch under the window, with his thin drawn face flung up towards the light, and with a couple of strangers bending over him, lay Harold, mercifully insensible. On the table were



"Leaning her head wearily back against the dull blank wall."—*p.* 204

some tin soldiers and a humming-top, little evidences of the noisy child-life she had left that morning. The doctors turned as she entered, one with a smothered exclamation: she should not have been brought so roughly face to face with her sorrow, he considered; but one glance at the girl's wide tearless eyes reassured him. She would not, as he phrased it, make a scene.

With swift steps she crossed to the couch, and fell upon her knees beside it.

"My darling, my own little lad!" she whispered, kissing one of the helpless hands; and then she raised her white face to the men who were watching her. "And I was so happy," she said piteously.

The words were a self-reproach: how could she have been so glad, with Harold at the point of death?

The doctors were very good to her. Between them they carried the little lad to his bed, and made all necessary arrangements, and later in the day the elder of them came back and sat with the girl for an hour. The child would not die, he said, but he would be permanently crippled. Of absolute pain he would not suffer much, probably; but he would be dependent all his life, for his lower limbs were helpless.

As to the probable length of his life, no one could say that: it depended, of course, upon his constitution.

It was a pitiful enough meeting between the lovers upon the morrow, but the sadness of it was infinitely deeper for Flavia four days later, for it was then that Horace spoke again of their marriage.

"It must be on Monday, as was decided. I will not have it delayed," he said firmly; and then more tenderly, "I must have the right to look after my poor little girl."

Flavia glanced up at him in bewilderment. Sleepless nights were telling upon her, and she did not grasp his meaning.

"How can we," she asked wonderingly, "with Harold like this?"

"Listen, dear," returned the young man gravely: "we have had special surgeons besides the doctors you first called in, and we know all about the dear little fellow, and how it will be with him, don't we? We must marry as we fixed, and then I will leave you here until you have nursed him as well again as he will ever be, and then you must place him in some home, or under my sister's care more probably, and come out to join me."

"Horace!" The girl was startled. "Desert him? I couldn't."

"It is not desertion." The young man took her in his arms, and kissed her quivering lips. "He will be happy enough. But I must have my wife, Flavia. You have told me an engagement is not a light thing in your eyes: that it is a solemn betrothal; and I claim your promise now. Do you not love me?"

Did she not love him? Her whole heart went out in that whispered *yes;* but what of the crippled child up-stairs? Could she leave him, her mother's last gift, to the careless mercy of strangers? Could she bear to think of the weak little cripple crying at night for the sister who never came, or picture the childish heart-break should he ever be made to understand his helplessness was found a burden? But, on the other hand, what of her future husband, and of the promises he had a right to claim? It was a sore sorrow at best, this divided duty, and the tears which until now had refused to come burst forth in great labouring sobs.

Horace did his best to soothe her, but he stuck to his point. It was the first time he had been crossed in his equable self-satisfied life, and opposition but made Flavia doubly dear to him. He coaxed and persuaded, paying her perhaps a higher compliment than any of the tender speeches which had graced his brief wooing by harping upon the one string of the solemnity of their betrothal, which he declared he knew her to be too good a woman to break. He came back again that evening to repeat and emphasise his words, but Flavia had passed the intervening hours by Harold's side, and the memory of the faint pressure of the boy's tiny fingers was more potent than the strong actual touch of her lover's pleading hand.

She won her own way at last. She would stay with her brother, and pray for better times, and Horace must sail with the regiment.

"I would exchange and stay at home, but I have run it too close. I can't beg off now," he said to her, when all this had been arranged, and the last good-byes were being spoken; and then he added, with a half-smile, "I am fonder of you than I ever was before."

"And I prouder of you," Flavia whispered back. "It is good of you to have forgiven me, and not be hurt or angry at my decision."

"Who could be?" was the loving answer. "You are a good woman, you brave little Flavia: far too good for me. But our feelings won't change, dear, and when I am home again we 'll marry then, and be as happy as the summer's long, and the boy shall live with us."

So they parted.

The weeks dragged wearily by, and everything fell back into much of its old grooves. The patient tap of the slow-moving crutches had taken the place of the noisy jumping of stairs which had hitherto heralded Harold's approach, but otherwise there was little change. Flavia took up her daily teaching again, and tried to put away rebellious longings out of her heart, much as she had smoothed and folded away the modest little trousseau which should have replaced her more sombre garments. She failed sometimes, for Horace's sister had taken up the notion that her brother had been badly used about the matter, and so ignored the little household altogether, which made it harder for the girl. But on the whole she kept brave, and comforted herself, as she had told Horace, by praying for better times. She wrote to him regularly, and he to her, but he

was always a bad correspondent, and at the end of six months Flavia had gathered little more of his doings than that he considered Malta a shocking hole; that there was generally a good deal of gaiety to be had; but that of course neither one fact nor the other could affect him, while his hours were spent in wanting Flavia.

At the end of that time the letters grew even shorter and more unsatisfactory, but Flavia did not notice the change, for her little brother had caught a chill, and the doctor had begun to look very grave. Since that accident, he explained, the child had not the strength with which in the old days he would have flung it off, and if Flavia were not careful he would fall into chronic invalidism now that the winter was fully upon them.

The doctor's words proved sadly prophetic, for very soon the crutches were laid on one side, and Harold was lifted from bed to couch, and back again to bed. It is no use dwelling upon that weary winter-time. Everyone has shared some such sorrow as was Flavia's now; everyone has watched the faint tinge of pink in white cheeks, and tried to cheat themselves into the belief it was a promise of returning health, when in their innermost heart they have known it was only the flush of fatigue or excitement.

It was merciful, doubtless, for her fast ebbing strength, and for the feeble money resources of the little household, that the patient vigil was not very protracted, but when his favourite flowers—the first spring daffodils—instead of gladdening the boy's eyes, served only as a wreath for the tiny coffin, his sister for the first time fully realised her own desolation. Life seemed over for her with Harold's death, and she was so benumbed that she let the mails go in and out unnoticed, and neither wrote to Horace nor noticed the lack of his letters to her. The kindly old doctor concerned himself in her affairs, and sent her away for change of air and scene, and so it was that when she again began taking an interest in the life and work around her, it was in a hospital near Colchester, where the black-robed nurses found her tasks for which she was equal, and talked cheerily of a brighter future in store for her when she should fully have regained her strength, and become one of themselves.

"You are so good to me," she said gratefully one day, "that I feel I am taking advantage of your kindness in staying here so long."

It was to the matron she spoke, and the good woman answered her briskly.

"Nonsense, child!" she said. "You are well worth your board, or we couldn't afford to keep you. You know we are hoping you will stay altogether, and make it your home. Unless, indeed," she added, with a quick glance at the girl's blushing face, "there is someone with a prior claim upon you."

"Yes, there is," said Flavia simply; and then, emboldened by the kind look in her new friend's eyes, she told her little love-story.

"The 116th, do you say?" the other repeated in amazement. "Why, the regiment is home again! It is stationed at Colchester."

"He is home again!" echoed Flavia blankly, and with the pretty blush dying out of her cheeks; and then she gave a little gasp as though she had lost her breath, and broke into a happy laugh. "Why, how you frightened me—just for the moment, you know! The doctor forbade me to write to Horace about my little brother, for he said the effort might throw me back again, and so perhaps he does not know where I am."

"H'm!" The matron sat silent, turning the matter over in her mind. "It was very foolish to come away without leaving him an address," she said at last.

"Oh, but I did," returned Flavia. "I sent it to his sister, but evidently she has not given it to him. She cannot, or he would have come here as soon as he landed. You don't know Horace."

Well, they talked it over, these two, and then Flavia was counselled not to go into Colchester, as she had at first intended, but to write to Captain Greeley.

"You had better explain everything, my dear, and ask him to come to you at the hospital," advised her friend; but when the letter was written, it contained but a very few lines:—

"I am here, dear Horace, with friends. Will you not come to me? I am longing for you.

"Flavia."

The next morning—she had had no time to hear from Horace, but she knew he would come that very next morning—she busied herself in making the bare little sitting-room, into which he would be shown, bright with spring flowers. Horace liked the room to look pretty; and besides, it had been spring-time when they were first engaged, and hid in every blossom, as the girl arranged them with loving eager hands, there seemed to be lurking some year-old memory. The violet clusters, the starry primroses, the wedding jonquils—their fragrance was very eloquent to her; and when she took a sprig of snowy narcissus and fastened it at the throat of her sombre gown, it was with a remembrance of what had been his earliest gift. She had gone herself to make these little purchases, and though she had taken off her hat and smoothed her fair hair, she was still in outdoor dress and lingering over her flowers, when a tap came at the room door. With a beating heart Flavia went to open it, the narcissus at her throat falling unheeded to the floor as she did so; but instead of it being Horace, as she had half expected, there stood a little maid with a letter, which had just been brought up, she said, by hand. With a muttered word of thanks, Flavia caught it from her, and carried it back into the room. It was from Horace.

It was a long letter, and, standing by the window, she snatched the meaning of the long, laboured sentences rather than read them.

He had been amazed to hear from her; he had never expected to hear from her again. When she had cared so little for him as to prefer Harold to him, after she had gone away without consulting him—surely that pointed to an utter lack of affection. And now, when he had conquered his own feelings so far as to be attached to someone else—his colonel's daughter, to wit—now she wrote to him! It would not be fair to his future wife to see her, Flavia, again, but so far from reproaching her, as another man might do, he begged her to believe he had every wish for her happiness. And so he remained, etc., etc.

This, shorn of its wordy clothing, was the gist of the letter, and Flavia moved away from the window mechanically, and as if the sunlight hurt her, and let herself drop into a chair, leaning her head wearily against the dull blank wall. So *this* was what had come to her instead of the gay brilliant presence on which she had counted so surely! She looked round at her flowers, and the thought crossed her mind that they looked faded somewhat since she had last touched them, and much as the golden daffodils had looked lying upon her brother's grave. Her eyes grew misty once or twice, but she wiped the tears quietly away, and still sat on, thinking—thinking. And it was thus the matron found her, and straightway took her in her motherly arms, as if she had been a little child.

"Cry, my dear, cry. It will do you good," she said, petting and fondling her, and giving her ready sympathy without any questioning of how the matter stood, as only a good woman can; and then, as the girl still kept her unnatural composure, she tried more cheery comfort. "You must stay here, and be my right hand. You can be with us now."

And then at last the girl found her voice.

"I used to think it hard because I saw a divided duty before me," she said pathetically; "but it seems almost harder now there is not."

So she stayed, and the time passed on, and though she fancied at first—being still so young—that life would never be the same, in due time the laughter came back to her lips and to her eyes. The blessedness of her bygone prayers came to her now, for she learned that if one prays very hard for a thing (as she had prayed about her future with Horace), even though one loses it, all the sting is taken away from the loss, and so, in some strange unexpected way the grace, if not the wish, of the prayer, is granted after all. She grew fond of her work, and found her life's happiness in it, until those so-called poets who are fond of moaning of eternal misery, and the like, would have picked a quarrel with her bright contented face. But the poor sufferers in the hospital beds were not likely to complain upon that score. Her cheeriness was better than any medicine, they said, and the even and unruffled happiness which must surely have been her portion—for what outside worry could have touched this soft-voiced nurse?—did not prevent her being very sympathetic to any of their whispered hopes and fears. For though she was always sunny, she was always gentle too.

M. E. W.

THE LADY-HELP: FROM A NEW POINT OF VIEW.

THE question as to the advisability of ladies going out into the world as lady-helps has been discussed over and over again. Many who are unfitted by lack of education to take a post of governess, and who have no marked capability for any special line of work, are thus able to try and earn money by honest labour. Whether, practically, the plan fails or succeeds lies with the individual or her employer, as the case may be, and it is not with this that the present paper has anything to do.

I wish here to offer a few suggestions as to the necessity that exists for ladies, in many cases, being lady-helps, and that *in their own homes*. The need of them is very obvious. In many families where the staff of servants is small, and the class of servants employed is by no means the highest, the whole household suffers by gradually acting on the principle of "letting things go."

To over-work servants is decidedly wrong. They have their rights as well as their employers, and their need of rest, recreation, fresh air, and sufficient time in which to take their meals, read, write, or do needlework for themselves, and obtain a proper quantum of sleep, should always be considered in a well-arranged household. But to do this necessitates one or other of the following results: either, as I have just said, things are allowed to be "let go," or else the ladies of the house must do some of the work themselves; it being a sheer impossibility that the servant or servants can accomplish all that is needful in the way of keeping the home in order.

In a house where the hugger-mugger arrangement reigns, the hall is usually untidy, and if there are children in the family their existence is betrayed in the way of toys, books, and various things belonging to them, lying about. In the drawing-room there is a general aspect of disorder, and you note that though the furniture itself is pretty, no care is taken of it, and the chair-backs, table-covers, curtains,

etc., need renewing, mending, or being sent to the laundry. The pictures and various knick-knacks on walls and tables are not very clean, and the old china would be all the better for careful washing. The handsome brass fender and fire-irons are very dull, and the tiled hearth is blurred and dim.

The books in the shelves are badly arranged, and what the French call *jardinage du salon* is evidently neglected, for though individually there are many pretty things, their effect is lost by bad arrangement, or no arrangement at all. The flowers, too, are not as fresh as they might be, and sometimes the bouquet, owing to having stood for some time in the same water, is anything but fragrant.

The dining-room has the same ill-kept *cachet* upon it, and the meals are in keeping. Nice things are liked and ordered, but there is not time to cook them properly even if the servant has the necessary knowledge. The plate is innocent of having made recent acquaintance with chamois leather and plate powder, and the glass and cutlery are not in the state of brilliancy desirable. Careless folding of the cloth shows needless creases, and the illumination of the whole is more than fashionably dim, because of the dusty glasses round the gas-burners, or untrimmed lamps with smeared chimneys and globes.

In the bed-rooms the same want of care is noticeable, for the quilts want mending and the pillow-slips are one or two buttons short, and you feel sure, could you turn down the beds, that unmended linen would repay your curiosity.



HELPING IN THE KITCHEN.

And so on through the house.

Now, if the ladies of the house were to do some of the work, all of this would be obviated. When I use the word "lady," I do not mean necessarily a grown-up person, as sometimes quite young children can be trained to employ spare hours in making themselves useful.

But whatever the age may be, there is the work if you choose to do it; only, as I write, the various excuses likely to be made come before me.

It seems strange that it should be so, but many are under the impression that idleness is ladylike, and the converse, work—or rather, manual labour—is unladylike. These people would far rather have their houses as I have briefly described than do any work in them themselves: to do crewel-work, paint, draw, play the piano, being very much more agreeable occupations than dusting, making beds, or mixing a pudding. Granted the agreeability, but query—which is more in accordance with the refinement and beauty that is associated with the surroundings of a lady: the hugger-mugger house, or the house that is pretty and cleanly in all its details, because all who can, lend a hand in thus keeping it?

Another curious excuse is often practically made by the fact that many a girl who will do nothing at home to help her mother or the servants, will be only too charmed to do the roughest work if she may wear a peculiar garb while employed about it. For a "Sister" or a "Deaconess" or an "Associate" to scrub floors, clean brasses, wash tiles, and do menial work generally has to many a charm of its own—provided it is not done at home. A girl who is sighing to be allowed to go as probationer to a hospital, where she knows hard and coarse work would be her daily task—particularly if she cannot afford to go as lady pupil—thinks it a hardship if expected to make her bed, or keep her own room in order as far even as only dusting goes.

But the beautiful charity which should never *end* in one's immediate surroundings should begin at home. *En passant*, too, I would remark that a girl who at home is accustomed to turn her hand to useful occupations, who knows how to do house-work, can cook fairly well, can darn—not botch—the house-linen, who loves order and does her share of seeing its reign asserted in the home, will make a far more useful nurse or worker in whatever special sphere future circumstances may find her, as well as a more capable head of a house, should that be her lot. Even should she marry a rich man, to know how things ought to be done by her many servants will strengthen her power over them.

Judging of the matter fairly, it is reasonable to admit with truth that "union is strength," and that many of the rough experiences of a nurse or worker

are considerably smoothed by the fact that she is one of many, and others round her are all doing the same thing.

Cannot this strength also be brought into home life? Would it not be possible to make unpleasant duties agreeable, to go cheerily to work at commonplace and menial tasks, if all in the house tried to take a share?

It may be easier too—granted that it is—to rise at the sound of a bell that is ringing up many a fellow-worker than for a girl to get up early so as to secure time to do some little things about the house. But if she brings her will to bear upon it she can do it perfectly.

With reference to what *can* be done in the house, I do not pretend to give an exhaustive list of items. No hard and fast line can be drawn.

But as mere outlines I would enumerate the following:—

Cooking. — A couple of hours spent in the kitchen every morning would be of immense help to a servant, provided that the help was a *bonâ fide* one. For a girl to expect the servant to be at her beck and call, to beat up the eggs for her, to dredge the board, and to wash up everything she has used, is often adding to trouble. Unless it is scullery work, try as far as possible to wash up all that you use in your cooking, and leave the servant free to go to other things. Cooking can be self-taught, and if you use your wits and the many excellent recipes to be easily obtained, you will be able to make many a little delicacy for your table. Some people cannot cook, or dust, or do anything without making themselves untidy, which is quite needless. A large apron with a bib tied round you, and cotton sleeves to draw over your own, if the latter will not roll up, will keep your dress from being soiled; and for dusting, you can tie a handkerchief over your head.

Great assistance can be given in a house if one member undertakes to wash up after one or two meals. This is not by any means such unpleasant work as it sounds.

Have plenty of water, and wash all clean things first, greasy last; the latter in hotter water than is necessary for the former. Have a second large bowl full of clean cold water to pass them into before wiping dry. For glasses, put a little blue in the water.

Cleaning the plate on one or two days in the week is another suggestion.



A MORNING TASK.

Making the beds is good exercise for young people, and if the beds are large two can make them better. If only one person does them, a long walking-stick to smooth the sheets makes the work easier. Even to make the beds with a servant helps her and saves time.

The dusting of any room is light occupation and easily done. Cleaning of lamps is not so agreeable, but most work that soils the hands very much can be done in gloves. Hands, however, can be washed, and the process does not detract from their beauty, unless any very constant and rough work has preceded it.

The flowers of a house should be cared for, not by servants, and the water renewed; and even if your servant does the general cleaning and dusting, the arrangement of the drawing-room can be done by the home lady-help generally more efficiently.

The very idea that a lady is less a gentlewoman because she works in her own home is so ludicrous, that it seems needless to combat it. No one with any sense nowadays thinks it beneath the dignity of a lady to become a nurse, or identify herself with the work of some community. Why then, as I have said before, should she shrink from doing at home duties often less hard than those which would be her delight were she to be working in the above-named ways? And, even if her ambition does not soar to any definite post in the world's work, can

she not look at home, and see if there is not duty waiting for her there?

One word I would in concluding say. That is, whatever you do elect to do in the house, do it *regularly* and *punctually*. Fervour has been described by a great saint as being "punctuality, regularity, and exactness."

The old poet tells us—

> "Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
> Makes that and the action fine."

And one who wrote many ages before he did, tells us that all can be done "to the glory of God." So that fervour can rightly be expressive of the spirit in which many a humble duty can be accomplished by the lady-help at home.

THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON.

BY THE REV. CANON MONEY, M.A.

(Genesis xxi. 10.)

BOTH the Word of God and the works of God are calculated to humble man. The contemplation of His creative skill and energy must, in a prepared and enlightened mind, lead to a deeper consciousness of man's ignorance and weakness. The higher the genius of the philosopher enables him to soar, the more profound will be his acknowledgment that he knows comparatively little; and the deeper the student dives into the mysteries of creation in its minutest forms, the more ready will he be to confess that he is but on the threshold of more wonderful mysteries still. In the relationship of the Creator's Word and work there will be difficulties arising necessarily out of the marvellous character of each. To trace this relation and unfold this connection must ever be one of the highest and dearest aims of the Christian philosopher. In our day attempts are constantly made to exhibit a divergence between the two. I have no belief in the success of these attempts. One element of successful study is entirely wanting, and that is the guidance which God Himself has declared to be necessary in order that we may comprehend His Word.

It must be obvious to the candid inquirer that there is much in the doctrines, histories, and characters placed before us in the Bible which is perplexing and humbling; much that is intended to humble; much that should lead the earnest student to say, "I need both a guide and a light." Not only are we taught the corruption of everyone of Adam's seed by distinct assertion, but we are shown it also in the acts of living men. We are shown it, moreover, not merely in the lives of wicked men who brought a flood of water upon the earth, and a stream of fire upon Sodom, but we are shown it in the lives of men of God, who are esteemed by Him as friends and reckoned as righteous. Now this is, I know, a great stumbling-block to many, to all who think that human nature can recover itself, that circumstances form the man and mould the character, that a man turning from evil is just a man coming to himself. To all such the characters of Abraham, Jacob, and David, and the language of St. Paul, are mysterious and perplexing. On the other hand, the more we receive instruction as a little child, the nearer we draw to God, the more shall we feel the plague of our own hearts, acknowledge the unworthiness of our best services, and thank God who hath not only revealed to us the sinfulness of every creature, but has also manifested His tender compassion and long-suffering in reclaiming the back-slider, and carrying on by instruction and discipline the healing process in man's soul.

We are told that Abraham sinned and was reproved. We believe, also, that he repented sincerely, deeply. We are assured that he received a pardon, which he could not have deserved, for a sin which he could not have extenuated. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of."

The time has now come for the fulfilling of God's promise—a promise of the deepest importance and significance to each one of us. Upon no event—not even the Fall and the Incarnation—did the salvation of man more remarkably turn than upon the birth of Isaac. To Abraham himself it was a most wonderful and joyous event. Upon the day that Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast. If Isaac was three years old, Ishmael must have been about seventeen. The birth of Isaac was a death-blow to Ishmael's fondest expectations, and the effect is described:—"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." At first sight the conduct of Sarah appears vindictive and hasty, but when we consider the whole transaction, and the light which Scripture throws upon it, we must believe that if the feelings of a mother had been aroused, there were also other and higher motives influencing her, as she realised the full meaning of God's promise, and that he "who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by promise."

From this we learn that Ishmael's mocking was a type of the opposition and hatred which shall always be manifested by the worldly towards the godly.

With regard to Sarah, we gather that she was really taking her stand with God in this controversy. She believed God—believed that Isaac was to inherit the promise; and if she saw any hesitation in Abraham, this would make her the more decided. We know what Abraham's desires had been, and if, as has been suggested, he wished to keep Ishmael in reserve, we can understand the unwonted strength of Sarah's remonstrance when she said, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son."

With regard to the act itself, we must remember that it was not unusual to make a separation between the heir and the other members of the family (chap. xxv. 5, 6). But Hagar and Ishmael should have waited on the borders of the place where Abraham was himself dwelling. The wilderness of Beersheba was close at hand. God Himself directs Abraham to send them forth in compliance with Sarah's wish, and at the same time renews His promise in regard to Ishmael—"And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation; he is thy seed."

We have now a most touching account of the wandering mother and her fainting son. The provision with which Abraham supplied them, the bread and water, is soon gone, and the prospect darkens. Painters have transferred to their canvas this scene, but nothing can exceed the pathos of the simple narrative in this book. How Hagar came to lose her way; whether she was so full of the past and the home she had just quitted that she forgot Abraham's directions to remain within reach, or whether, stung by disappointment, she recklessly wandered she knew not whither, we cannot tell. But we can imagine the mother's agony, and her unwillingness to see her boy die, and how, placing him under a shrub—probably for shade—she withdrew, so that she might neither hear his groans nor see his death. "She sat over against him," where she could command a view of the spot without witnessing more than she could bear. All is now still. The hour of death draws near. Memory recalls the past—the little infant on her lap, the little boy standing at her knee, the beloved son growing in stature and intelligence. "Oh, I cannot part," cries the mother's heart, "from my child! He is all I have in the world. I have no home, no friend; and he who should have been my protector has cast me out. What shall I do if my child, my Ishmael dies?"

Who can describe the grief of an agonised soul? Poets may sing, and painters represent, but what can come up to the reality? Now, as three thousand years ago, the heart alone knows its own bitterness.

It appears that Ishmael also cried, and God had compassion upon him. An angel appears to Hagar and comforts her. She now sees a well of water, which in her trouble she had not perceived, and lifting up her fainting son, according to the direction of the angel, she holds the bottle to his mouth, and he drinks and revives.

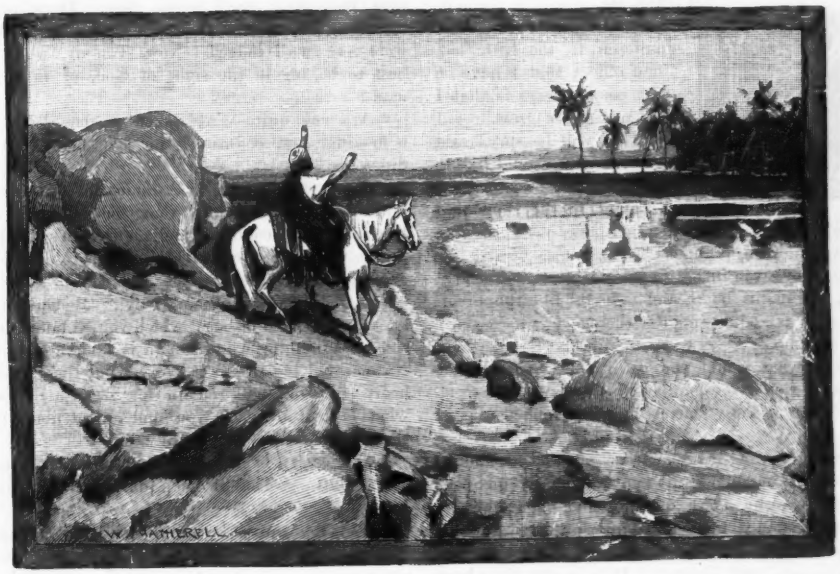
In referring to these transactions, the Apostle Paul (Gal. iv. 24) calls them an allegory. The allegory begins with the birth of Isaac, and continues till the expulsion of Ishmael. The history was written—nay, the facts themselves occurred—to set forth certain truths. We have here (Gal. iv. 24—31) the interpretation. Ishmael and Isaac, Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, Jerusalem which now is and Jerusalem as it is above, are all contrasted. Two covenants and the parties to them are here represented. These covenants are the Law and the Gospel—the covenant of nature and the covenant of grace. With these, men are connected by birth, in the one case natural, and in the other spiritual. In the one case man is bound to render perfect obedience as the condition of his abiding in the house. If he fails in anything he is liable to be cast out at any moment. He is a servant, and bound to his master by the strict letter of the law. In the other case man is in the house by promise as a son, as Isaac was. He does not obtain his position or maintain it through his own works, but through the obedience of another, even Christ. This obedience is perfect, and there is no uncertainty about it. The believer in Jesus is in the house, not as bound, but as free. His service is perfect freedom. He thinks and speaks and acts as a son from hope, and without doubt or fear. He may fail in some duty, he may grieve through some fault his heavenly Father, he may sin, but never shall he be cast out from the home of his heart and the presence of his God.

My readers, I ask you what position you occupy, and in what relation do you stand to God? If you are not one with Christ by faith; if you are not taking up your cross and following Him with all your heart, preferring Him to all; if you are not born of the Spirit, and walking under His guidance, then are you not His sons, but servants, children of the bondwoman; thus are you under the Law, and bound to fulfil it or die. This obligation fetters your mind and enslaves your soul. The impossibility of keeping the whole Law in all its spiritual meaning and strict requirements must discourage and disable. The more a man tries the more will he fail; the more will he learn that by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified. But if the Son has made you free, if the Spirit has introduced you into the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, then need you have no fear that you will ever be cast out or cast away. Oh, how precious is this Sonship, how glorious is this liberty! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." You may wander, but a Father's voice will call you back; you may fall, but a Father's arm will lift you up; you may forget that God is your Father, but He will not forget that you are His son. Oh, what a high and holy privilege is this! Brethren of Jesus, sons of God, heirs of glory, live in all the liberty and security of this relationship! Satan may desire to cast you out, but He who keepeth you and sanctifieth you is the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

A VISION OF PALMS.

BY META E. B. THORNE.

(*Vide* Prov. xiii. 12.)



"LOST! lost in the desert dreary!
Dying of thirst on its lonely sands!"
Crieth the traveller, wayworn, weary,
Lost on his way to fairer lands.
"Oh, for a glimpse of some brimming river!
Oh, for a draught from a cooling spring,
Only to quench this thirst and fever!
Then, methinks, I could rise and sing.

"Naught but rocks and sands all burning
Do I behold or east or west;
If north or south I gaze with yearning,
Still in vain is my eager quest.
Oft has a vision of snow-clad mountains,
Of silver rivers, and waving palms,
Of sunlit, shimmering, sparkling fountains
Lured me on with deceitful charms.

"Now, all spent, in the desert dying,
Thou and I, my faithful steed—
Hist! methought soft zephyrs, sighing
O'er purling streamlet and perfumed mead,
Brought to my ear the music pealing
From leaping waters and groves of palm—
Brought to me spicy odours, stealing
From flower-starred meadow and trees of balm.

"Hope lends me strength and clearer vision;
Now on the far horizon's rim,
Welcome as glimpse of realms Elysian,
Behold a palm-tree outlined dim.
Fainting steed, take heart, and bear me
Over a few more leagues of sand,
Where soft verdure again may cheer me,
And limpid waters, and breezes bland."

* * * * * *

"Stately palm, in your beauty standing,
Gazing afar o'er the desert drear,
Guiding the lost one, and commanding
Strength and hope for doubt and fear—
Guiding the pilgrim, fainting, dying,
Where sweet cool fountains refreshing spring—
In thy shadow the parching heat defying,
Thy praises with joy now my heart shall sing."

* * * * * *

Pilgrim across earth's desert dreary,
Panting, athirst 'mid its arid sand,
Fainting often, and sad and weary—
Lo, Hope cheers thee with beckoning hand!
Yonder she points to a shining river,
Laving Life's trees of fruitage fair.
Arise, faint heart! Thou mayst dwell for ever
In the Land immortal that 'waits thee there.

THE HEART OF THOMAS TITT; OR, THE BIG MAN AND THE BIGGER.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC.

CHAPTER III.

"NOW then, Tommy," said Mrs. Jamieson to the little lad, "one object that I have in your coming here is that I may make you grow."

"That will be spry," said Tom Titt; "I should like to be as big—well, as big as the giant in the show that comes round every year at fair time."

"And how big is that?"

"Six feet seven inches in his stockings, and nearly seven feet in his boots, and I should like this hump to drop off; I don't suppose there ever was a giant with a hump."

"And what would you do if you were a giant, Tommy—would you go about in a caravan?"

"I'd marry Polly Dacres," quickly replied Master Tom.

Mrs. Jamieson was somewhat startled at finding her *protégé* so prematurely matrimonially inclined, especially as she had a horror of long engagements; so she questioned the boy as to what he wanted to marry Polly for.

"You see," said Tommy, "Polly is the girl whose brother was buried six months ago, and I was so sorry to see her crying at the funeral, and the other people crying too, that I cried as well; and, ever since then, Polly and I have been friends; she's always comforted me in my troubles, and I try to comfort her in hers Polly's full of comforts, and of being able to be comforted; so if I were a giant I'd make Polly giantess in two minutes."

"So, Tommy, 't is quite plain you'd like to be a very big man."

"As big as a house," Tommy replied quickly; for you see, good reader, the unbalanced human mind is given to rushing to extremes; and as Tom Titt was now abnormally small, so, if he had his own way, would he have immediately made himself abnormally big. Yes! he would then and there have shot upwards, and, if it were possible, downwards, and out at either side; so as to make the fortune of any caravan to which he might be attached.

"Now, Tommy, I want to tell you something that will surprise you. The really biggest men in the world are not always very tall, nor are they always very stout. Indeed, some of the greatest men the world has ever seen have been very small, but what made them great was that they had great minds; and people judged them by their minds, and not by their bodies. But some of these men's doings, though we call them very great and very wonderful, were very bad; so, though they were counted great amongst men, they were small before God. These people, according to the way in which He counts goodness, were very small indeed. Now, Tommy, which is it best to be, big in the sight of God, or in that of man?"

"Are you quite sure," asked the boy, "that God is looking, and counting? for that makes all the difference."

"Quite sure," said Mrs. Jamieson, "and you'll remember, please, Tommy, that God will go by-and-bye on His own counting, and not on man's; and that people will be big or small hereafter, according to *His* counting. Well, now, which would you rather be, big in God's way or in man's way? Remember that all man's bigness of body which you so much desire, comes to nothing when a man is laid in the grave. No one will see even the bones; but the bigness of heart and soul will remain for ever; and that is what I want to make you understand about; and that is how I want you to grow big."

"And can't I ever do anything with this hump?" asked Titt. "That'll keep me back always, I know."

"No, Titt, it won't keep you back. Strange to say, it may help you forward; but now, you think of it; and when you come here to-morrow, you say whether you'd like to be a big man in God's way, or whether you'll keep going on as you are."

That night that familiar of our youth called "Billy Winky" was long in visiting the eyelids of Thomas Titt; for Tommy's mind was working, and he had no intention of being put to bed at all. All the humiliations of his daily life came before him. They fell thickly upon him. They multiplied themselves in number and in size, until they were ogres in dreadfulness, and legion in multitude. The boy had never felt so "dished," and "diddled," and "done for," before; he had never felt so keenly the prospect of being "diddled" and "dished" and "done for" up to the very end of his days. Never did the gulf seem so wide and impassable between Polly and himself as now; if he could get out of all this in any way, that was the thing to do; and though he couldn't understand it all, still Mrs. Jamieson had been very good to him, and could only wish him well, so he would put himself unreservedly into her hands, and see what would come of it in the end.

When that aforementioned friend Billy Winky (Ah! we know now that he is a friend, though we then so often tried to fight him off, and thought of him as an enemy) at last shut up Tom Titt's eyes, the boy dreamt that Mrs. Jamieson planted him in a little china flower-pot; and that she watered him every day; and that the sun shone upon him; and that at last he grew into a flower. He did not grow

tall, nor spread out very far, nor had he any light colours; moreover, he had a lot of green leaves that half hid some of the blossom; but this flower had a marvellous scent, and perfumed the whole garden in which it was. To look at the size of the little flower, and the distance at which its perfume could be perceived, one would have scarce believed that it could have penetrated so far. But what made this dream so noteworthy was, that people who came to see the flower and to smell it, all said that it was the Tomas Titticus Aromaticus—what the last word meant he didn't know, but the first two words sounded like his own name—not quite like, but like enough to make him think he and that flower must have some connection—more especially as he had seen Mrs. Jamieson plant him in that very pot. Now, as it turned out, this dream proved very helpful to Mrs. Jamieson in the task she had undertaken, and to Tom Titt himself in what he had been undertaken for. Fortunately he determined to tell it to his benefactress; and she, when she heard it, turned it, like a wise woman, to the best account.

"I dreamed," said Tommy, "that you planted me, and that I growed, and that I smelled beautiful, ever such a long way off, and that I had a big name; and that folk sniffed about and said, 'Oh how sweet!' and the bees sucked a lot of honey out of me; and the nosegay people put some of me in their bunches—and folk said I could be smelled lovely a mile off; and I dreamed, the best part of all, that Polly, she came, and picked a sprig off of me, and pins it in her dress, and then puts it in a book to keep, and she says, 'Oh, you be Mrs. Jamieson's flower; I'll ask her for you;' and you gives me to her, and she brings pot and all into her house; and everything in the place gets full of scent from me ever after for ever and ever——"

Mrs. Jamieson did not require any time for the interpretation of this remarkable vision. In it she saw her little *protégé* made the most of, far extending in moral influence, though not shooting up bodily towards the stars. She saw Tommy Titt a far-reaching influence for good—the hinder part of Tommy's dream she looked upon as just the bit when he was most coming to his waking senses, and therefore very likely to be coloured allegorically by his human wishes; so, while she laid the first part of his dream to heart, the second she quietly laid aside, as one in which she had not any particular concern.

"Yes, Tommy, I know the meaning of the dream, I'm sure I do—it means that if you mind all I tell you, and become what, with God's blessing, one like yourself can be made, you'll get as valuable to many as that flower, and your influence will reach as far. The real meaning of that flower is not the little pot, or its stem and leaves, but the distance off it could be smelt; and the real measure and size of you, Tom Titt, will not be your little body, and the little house in which you live—but the distance all round in which you can do good by example, or life, or deed—and who knows how far those may reach?"

Thus it came to pass that both teacher and pupil became inspired for their work; for Tommy took wonderfully to this idea as soon as his mind fairly grasped it; and when there is an inspiration in teacher and pupil, the lesson is sure to go on well.

By degrees, our friend Tommy learnt to correct his ideas of measurement, and to give up the thought of feet and inches; by degrees his attention began to fix itself upon *what* had to be measured—the *inner*, and not the outer man. There had been a time when Tommy thought that if only he had great big clothes, he would look as big as other people; and that opinion he stuck to for some time; though, trying to walk in his father's boots, he fell, and nearly broke his nose, and he half suffocated himself by getting into his father's coat; but now all this was gone; he had learnt the first great preliminary lesson—to start from where he was—to accept the position in which he was placed, and from it to try to rise to what is within its reach, to do the best with himself as he was and as he must be to the end.

The man who won't do and be as he ought as a labouring man, would not do or be what he ought one whit the more as a nobleman; he who won't as a curate would not as an archbishop. The Tom Titt who would not be what he might with a hump on his back, would not have done or been much if he had been as big as Goliath of Gath.

So, then, it was clearly understood between Mrs. Jamieson and her pupil, if we might call him such, that he was to learn how to be a "big man;" and that he should believe he could be a good man, even humpy as he was. And with that understanding Tommy's teacher made him see that he had a heart within him, and that that heart could grow big in love; and that he had a mind, and that that mind could plan and think big things, ever so far outside the little narrow circle of himself; and Tommy Titt passed away from measuring people by the yard, or foot, or inch, and from weighing them by the stone and pound, and thought of the power of influence, and how a man can be big, and very big, in that.

And as time wore on, he learnt to embody these ideas in himself. What good are ideas unless they are embodied? Bacon says that "the end of all knowledge is fruit," and that end Tommy Titt determined should be come to in himself.

Accordingly, Titt plucked up considerably. He no longer walked with his head slouched, making himself a greater object than he had been before; he no longer shuffled along, as though he had nowhere particular to go to, and were going there. When the mind gets into the body it is wonderful what it will do for it: and Titt's mind seemed to have got into his. There used to be a fishy hue about his eye, which now departed; and as time wore on, the people were astonished at the big notions with which he seemed possessed.

The great ideas implanted in the mind of Thomas

were that "God's measure and man's were altogether different," and that "God's was the one to be aspired to;" that it was quite possible for people, very poor and ungifted in man's eyes, to become big and great in the true sense of the words big and great; that the means of doing so lay round about everyone in his own daily life; and that it was his own fault if he did not make use of them, and his own loss too. Moreover, the matter of influence was one on which Mrs. Jamieson indoctrinated Thomas with her own ideas; for she taught him how a man's words, or deeds, or character, may reach far away beyond himself, and the walls of his own house, and the place where he happens to live; so that, even though he knows it not now, he may really be living in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, and a few odd islands, such as Australasia and New Guinea, thrown in here and there (not generally counted in when the globe is cut up into quarters, but which are there nevertheless); "for," said Mr. Jamieson, "a man coming into this world, is like a stone thrown into the water, which makes ring after ring round it, each ring larger than the other, so that no one can tell exactly where they end."

All this fired the imagination of Mr. Thomas Titt, who hoped he himself might do or be something yet in the world; and, as time went on, he looked less and less over his shoulder at his hump, less and less thought of himself as a boy with a hump, and less and less felt inclined to shrink into a corner, and hide himself from everyone's eyes except, indeed, those of the little girl at the funeral of whose little brother he had cried; for having done which he narrowly escaped being tied up in his own pocket-handkerchief by that bad boy and being thrown into the river—just as women from the Sultan's seraglio are said to have been sewn up in bags, and thrown into the Bosphorus and drowned.

As time went on, and Mrs. Jamieson recovered the use of her injured limb, she saw that Tom got proper instruction at school, keeping him also in hand herself. For it was this good woman's habit not to drop people when she had once taken them up. Accordingly, Tom had got a capital education, such a one as would fit him to earn his bread without much mere bodily exertion; and when he had attained to all such school learning as was needed, he was bound apprentice to a chronometer-maker.



"'Hullo, one foot nothing! is that you?'"—*p.* 215.



"She told him . . . how she was in the world alone."—*p.* 214.

True, there was not a prospect of a great fortune in this business; but there was that of a fair competence; and with industry and economy he might make a capital, and set up for himself.

To carry out this scheme, our friend Thomas had to go to London, and so part from his good friend. This parting was of less consequence than the youth thought at the time; had he remained where he was, he could not have been much longer with his good friend, for very soon after he left she died; and one of her last acts was writing Tom a letter telling him that, now she had the other world in prospect, and now that she could price all earthly things with the light of eternity upon them, she felt more and more that every word she had said to him was true, and she hoped those words would live in him, and work in him when she had gone; and that he was to aim at being "big" and "great" in the true sense of those words; and not content himself with being miserable and small. This letter Tom Titt carried about with him always, in a pocket-book specially dedicated to it; his Bible was the first thing in the way of reading, and Mrs. Jamieson's letter was the next.

Tommy Titt passed well through his apprenticeship to chronometer-making. Accurate and steady workmen are required for this work; men who are dependable, and accurate, and steady; and dependable was Tom. Tom felt the responsibility of the work; and it was a pleasure to him that in some degree he was able in that particular line of business to carry out the ideas of his dear departed friend.

"You see," said Tom Titt to himself, "you have the lives and fortunes of many in your hands. Unless your chronometers are dependable, there is no knowing what wreckage they will lead to. You are no doubt at work here to-day, but to-morrow or next day, you—that is, your accuracy, and your care, and your skill—will be sailing over the wild waste of waters; you will be in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; it may depend upon you, Thomas Titt, whether one of Her Majesty's ironclads goes to the bottom, or whether she still carries the flag that for a thousand years has braved the battle and the breeze. The ironclad's chronometer might be only Tom Titt in wheels, and spring, and case." And many a time the little man—for man he was now—used to stop and think, "I am not confined to this bench, I am all over the world;" and thus far professionally he used to feel himself somebody—that he had grown out, so to speak, all over the world; and, though no one thought of it, yet that really, even on board the Admiral's flag-ship, one of the most important people in command was Mr. Thomas Titt; for by his chronometer as well as by the sun itself they must go. And to carry the idea a little bit farther, might he not be said to be in some sense a partner even with that great luminary itself? for it was by what it and the chronometer said together, that compass and everything else went. Even the Admiral himself was under Tom Titt's command; and so, for the matter of that, were all the admirals and captains and men-of-war in Her Majesty's service.

Now and again our friend got a rub which, under other circumstances, might have made him sour. Some people, measuring him by inches, made but little of him; but Mr. Titt carried his own foot-rule about him in the person of Mrs. Jamieson's last letter, and so he would never take merely the world's opinion, and he would never allow himself to become soured. Mr. Titt wanted no one's clothes but his own; and those made to fit him exactly too; he did not want to shuffle about in anyone else's boots or shoes, or to sit down by the fireside in their slippers; the mind and the heart were the measure of the man, and he felt his enlarging, and his influence increasing, and his usefulness too; and all this was enough for him.

But talking of slippers before the fire would naturally lead our readers to think that all Mr. Titt's life was of the pleasantest character; and that, at

any rate, a very appreciable part of it was spent in enjoying himself; but that was not the case—during the whole of his apprenticeship our little friend fared hard, and worked hard too.

Work, of course, he must have done, or he would not have been kept as apprentice at all—but hard fare—at least, as hard fare as he had, need not have been his lot.

It was his by choice, and on it he lived, and grew, and became big, after the fashion, according to his dead friend's teaching, of true bigness. The soul has its food as well as the body; and the lad's soul was fed; and like Daniel, and Shadrach, and Meshach, and Abednego, on the pulse and water, it looked fairer and clearer, and was fatter than that of many who had eaten of the king's meat.

Death had been abroad in Tom Titt's village, and amongst those it took away were Polly Dacres' father and mother, and Polly was left alone in the world. At least, Polly thought she was; which for the time, at any rate, had the same dismal effect. She had no one belonging to her; she did not belong to anyone—at least, so she thought; and that, as I have said, is for the time being almost, so far as misery goes, the same thing.

And that was all the more pitiful because, unless she had some friend to help her, her little prospects in life, which had seemed tolerably fair, must be blighted. Polly was the village schoolmistress's favourite pupil; and she herself aimed at being a schoolmistress some day. But now, there was not anyone to pay for her schooling or to support her; and there remained nothing but that she must go out to be a farm-servant, as so many others round her had done.

The schoolmistress would have willingly taken Polly Dacres into her own house, but she had her own aged father and mother to do something for; and so, with great grief of heart, she had to make up her mind to let Polly go.—"But I can keep you for a month," said Miss Docens; "who knows what may turn up in that time? Anyhow, you can be no worse off than you were before."

The news of Mr. and Mrs. Dacres' death was not very long before it reached Tom Titt. It came to him from two sources—from his own home, and from Polly herself.

Poor Polly had heart-hunger and heart-thirst; and now, in this season of death, these longed for their meat and drink. Miss Docens was excellent in her way. Educationally she was tip-top; but the verb "to weep" is one that shrinks from being conjugated, and the noun "tear" is one that somehow does not seem as if it had much to do with the English grammar, and as if it did not like to be declined.

The truth is, Polly wanted someone whose tears would mingle with her tears—"tear-feelings" if not "tear-drops"—tear-feelings which the eye could look, if not tear-facts which the eye could drop.

There was one who had wept with Polly in times gone by, and his tears still glistened cool and bright on her spirit, just as they had done the first day they were shed; and they never seemed to shine brighter than they did now.

These were the tears which little Tom Titt had shed by her young brother's grave, and which had passed into the secret chambers of her young heart. There they had lived ever since. They had never dried: they had something in them which made them keep ever fresh, and ever grow green in the herbage round them; and now that a mourning-time had come again, the girl felt that the one who had shed them was the one who would be best able to comfort her.

So she wrote a letter, and told him in it how her father and mother had departed, and how she was in the world alone; and how sure she was that he would feel for her as he had felt for her when her brother had died in years gone by.

The answer to that letter was Mr. Thomas Titt himself. He had asked for no holidays since he had been at the chronometer-maker's; on the contrary, he had worked on holidays when there was a press of business, and others were amusing themselves away; and now the master was glad to let him have the day or two he asked for.

What took Mr. Titt to the old village? It was not human love, as we too often speak of love, for he had no thought that Polly Dacres could ever wed the like of him. He must go through the world alone—at least, so far as matrimony was concerned, though no one less alone, as far as human-kind, and human sympathy, and human love were concerned. There was a big thought in Tom Titt's mind—big, but symmetrical—shaped by a love that had, and could have, no hopes for "self." He felt that he could comfort Polly; he felt that perhaps he might help her too, if she were indeed dependent; he—dwarf though he was, might take upon himself the burden of her young life, at any rate until she could do all that she needed for herself.

Hard pressed was Thomas Titt as these thoughts rose in his mind. Now did he want to shoot up into the giant as of yore; now did he want to tear off that encumbering hump; now to be this, and that—none of which he could ever be.

Ah, Tommy! these were growing pains; now you were shooting up; now you were being rounded off in symmetry; now was one of the *epochs* in your life; now was the tide in your affairs, which, taken at the flood, would lead you on to more than even you dreamed of yourself. And you came well through the time—you did, my little man; may many another do the same.

Instead of howling over his being so heavily handicapped for doing good, my little friend Tom girt up his loins, and prepared to be equal to the occasion. First of all, he would go down and see how the land lay with Mary Dacres; he would comfort her; he would, if need be, and as far as ever he could, help her; so down to Donnithorp he went.

Various were the receptions he got in his native village. Some rather rudely remarked to his face that they thought he had grown, his own people taking up the old howl that he never could expect to do much, and the wretched boy who had threatened to tie him up in his own pocket-handkerchief and throw the bundle into the river, leering at him from the door of a public-house, and saying, "Hallo, one foot nothing! is that you?"

But the main point is, what reception did he get from Mary Dacres? She had now grown well on to being a young woman in outer appearance; but Mr. Titt soon found that she had just the same heart as she had that day at the funeral, as a little girl.

Years must change faces, but years need not change hearts; and that tender heart was tender still.

And Mary was right in thinking that Tom was unchanged; he was bigger—he was, small as he was, more of a man—but the eyes were the same, only more earnest, more full of love; and something had come of extra sweetness in the smile; and he seemed very real, and purpose-full, and withal seemed even more full of sympathy than he had been on that memorable day when the little boy was laid, earth to earth, and ashes to ashes, in that sure and certain hope.

Tom Titt's big heart took the orphan girl into it, with all her troubles and sorrow, and all the perplexity of her affairs; and he offered her all he then had to offer her—his sympathy; but this was all she wanted. She asked neither silver nor gold, nor help of any kind; the world she would have to face, and she would face it; but she wanted to be fortified for it; she wanted to go out into it, not in weakness but in strength.

Tommy, you were a funny source to seek strength from. If I had not known so much about you as I do, I should never have gone to you; but you see, that would have been because I didn't know how big you were—how much you had in you; and, by consequence, how much could come out of you.

Well! you strengthened Mary Dacres. The way to strengthen people is to tell them whence true strength comes; and then to put *yourself* into the case—and who knows what will flow from a higher level through you? A very poor earthly frame may be a conduit-pipe of heaven.

Mary Dacres had much of Mr. Titt's time during the short time he was at home, but not all; he was closeted secretly with Miss Docens for fully an hour, without Mary's even knowing anything about it.

"Supposing," said Mr. Titt to that erudite lady, "I could find the means of paying for Mary Dacres' board with you until it is finished, and she could be put in the way of earning her own bread, at any rate, as a junior mistress—would you keep her with you, and look after her as though she belonged to you?"

"It is just the question of a little money, and nothing else," said the schoolmistress; "I am fond of her, and she is useful to me, and she might perhaps get a situation in this very school. I would take her for the bare cost of her food; if at the end of the month that is provided for, then I will be only too happy to keep her."

This interview took place on the last day of Mr. Titt's visit; and in the evening he left for London and for work again; not, however, before he had strengthened up a poor failing heart. Yes! he, the poor little fellow who had nearly come to an end in his own pocket-handkerchief, had taken a poor fainting heart and lifted it up. Heavy hearts are heavy weights. They are ill lifting. It would be easier to raise many a mountain than many a human heart; but Tom Titt did it—he was big, a big man for work like this, and though a shovelful of earth would have been a hard burden to him, he took that up which, when heavy, is heavier than a mountain, and lifted it, as the giants were fabled to have lifted the mountains of old. Mark you, it was not a matter of silver and gold—it is said by one of old, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee." Little silver and gold had Tom Titt; but such as he had, that he gave.

And what had this mite of a man? He had the sustaining power of sympathy. He had that which lifts up poor fainting hearts, and binds up poor wounded ones, and makes whole poor crushed ones, and puts strength into poor feeble ones to fight the battle of life, to journey along its weary road, to bear its burdens, and fulfil its mission, however little may be its sunlight by the way.

Yes, Titt—little Titt—Tom Titt, already, my little mite, were you bigger than big Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford ever had been—ever will be; you were stronger—you were, as it were, lifting up and bearing in your arms a helpless fellow-creature over one of the hard passes of life; you were making possibilities for her; you were revolving in that little breast, hard by that hump, great thoughts; bigger, Augustus—ever so much bigger, Augustus—than the biggest that ever swelled in your puffed-out breast.

But why am I saying such big things about my little man Titt? Why, but because he had made an arrangement with Miss Docens, under the most solemn promises of secrecy on her part, that, should he be able to provide sufficiently for Mary Dacres' board and clothes, she would take her in until her school-days were ended, and she could get something better than mere farm work; or perhaps he could get it for her.

That settled, Mr. Titt returned to London with a mind somewhat lightened in one respect, but somewhat burdened in another. For the weight which Mr. Titt had taken off Mary Dacres' life he had added on to his own: if he were going to provide for her, the provision must come from somewhere. It had, so to speak, to come from his very flesh and blood.
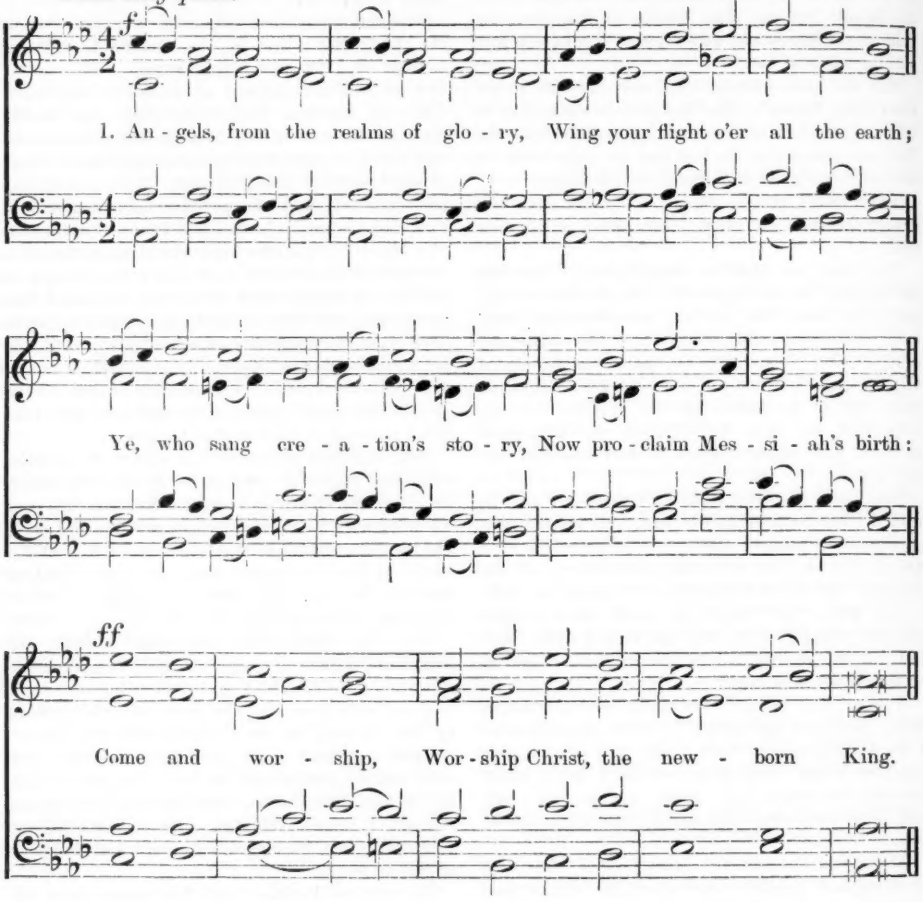
(To be concluded.)

Angels, from the realms of glory.

Words by James Montgomery, 1819.

Music by George Garrett, M.A., Mus.D., &c.
(*Organist to the University of Cambridge.*)

Moderately quick.



2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant light:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations—
Ye have seen His natal star:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

4. Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord descending
In His temple shall appear:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

5. Sinners, wrung with true repentance,
Doomed for guilt to endless pains,
Justice now revokes the sentence;
Mercy calls you—break your chains:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King!



A NEW YEAR'S PARABLE

FOR OLD AND YOUNG

EVERY year a busy stranger steps into the world. He is very young when the bells ring out their merry peal of welcome to greet his coming, but, like the rest of us, he grows older every day. Father Christmas is never half so busy as this new-comer. His shoulders bend beneath the weight of thousands of parcels which he brings for all his friends. As he pushes his way briskly through the eager crowd of boys and girls gathered to give him welcome, he leaves in the hands of each a book with nearly four hundred pages, and a pencil that makes very black marks.

One year I watched the scene with wondering interest, and lingered in the crowd of children whilst they opened the mysterious parcels which had been put into their hands. Each parcel contained the oddest book you ever saw: every page was a spotless white. The little owners did not learn this at once, for only one page would open at a time. But as they never found a single mark when they opened the book in the morning, they soon gathered that every leaf was like the first.

Almost the moment the books were opened, thousands of little fingers seemed as by some strange instinct to pull out the pencils and begin to write. Then indeed the scribes opened their eyes, and wondered if it was a dream. Beside

the words, wonderful pictures appeared. No one knew where they came from. Some invisible artist was busily at work. His pictures were only miniatures, but so clear, so true to life that every child knew the faces there at a glance. They seemed like photographs, but they were splendidly coloured. Every boy's jacket, every girl's dress, was painted with wonderful skill. You might see tears running down some faces; others were lighted up with smiles. No touch that could add reality and vividness to their pictures seemed to have been forgotten. Everybody was compelled to say, "I never saw such a true portrait of myself before."

I looked over the shoulder of one little fellow. There stood the ugly words: "I got very angry this morning." The pencil almost wrote the words against the boy's will. They were very firm, very black, very forbidding. Then came the first picture. A child was spinning a top: a happier face no one need wish to see. "Hum, hum, hum!" went the top. The little spinner clapped his hands with glee. Suddenly the door opened. An elder brother ran into the room. "That 's mine!" he shouted, and cuffed the child smartly on the ear. Everything changed in a moment. The happy face was clouded with tears. The elder brother had such an ugly frown that he tried hard to rub out the unflattering portrait from his book. He washed it, but the colours would not run; he tried his father's india-rubber, but still the frowning face looked reproachfully upon him. At last he began to cry with vexation and regret. Then a voice whispered in his ear, "See what it is to be angry."

To deepen the impression on his mind, the invisible friend promised to show him other pictures like his own. A few moments later a pile of books exactly the same size and shape as his lay at his side. The words, "I got angry this morning," were written there also. But the pictures were so lifelike that he almost forgot the words. In one appeared a boy just in the act of throwing a big stone; his face wore a scowl which frightened you. The stone hit an old playfellow such a blow that he dropped with a cry of pain on the ground.

"You can turn over these pages," said the voice. As the boy did so, he recognised the lad who had been struck by the stone; he sat in a chair, propped up with pillows. His face was pale and a big bandage was round his head. "How it smarts," he kept saying, with a weary moan. For at least a dozen pages in succession there was the same picture. Below was a little drawing of a house door, where the playfellow who threw the stone stood asking how his friend was to-day. "I 'll never do such a wicked thing again," he said; "I have suffered more than Tom. Do you think he will ever forgive me?"

"Look at another book," said the voice. He lifted the first of the pile that stood at his side. This showed how a little girl had pushed her brother against the bars of the grate. A deep red scar was left, which it would take many a week to efface. In another book he watched two boys fighting. They were friends who had often played together. They belonged to the same Sunday-school, and were in the same little cricket club. Faces began to quiver and bleed; but neither of them would give way, because evil passions had crept into their hearts and would not be driven out.

"You may shut up the books," said the invisible Mentor. "Little people who yield to anger become passionate men and women; they lose character, friends—sometimes even life itself—because they did not learn to put bit and bridle on evil tempers when they were young."

Some of the books told of idle days, when opportunities were wasted. Retribution came by-and-bye. The girl who had never loved her music sat moping in company, while her friends were at the piano. She robbed many an evening of its charm through her carelessness in other days. One boy had never learned to write neatly or spell even simple words. Right dearly did he pay for his carelessness. Many a post was closed against him. No master durst trust his books in the hands of the idle boy.

The little journals, you remember, only opened a page at a time. Each night when the clocks were striking twelve, and the little scribes were fast asleep, the page covered with marks turned quickly over. A new leaf was ready when the children woke. It was interesting to watch the eagerness of some to look for a moment at yesterday's page. Boys who were ashamed of themselves got out their knives and worked hard to raise the leaf; but it was of no avail: it would not stir. "Don't try any more," said the voice which often spoke to the little writers; "no one can open the book." Then it asked what they would like to blot out. Many a tale of regret was poured into the ear of the unseen friend. Disobedience had left its sting of remorse, bad companions had prompted to foolish deeds. Prayer had been forgotten, duties left undone. To all who poured out their sorrows, words of courage and hope were spoken. God could pardon; God could strengthen. That very morning those young pilgrims were made ready for their day's march. They put themselves under the wings of the Almighty Friend.

That night, when the little folks were fast asleep, I saw the story of the day written in their books. Such pleasant pictures one never hoped to see. A praying lad knelt by his tiny bed. I knew him at once. He was one who had not prayed at all the day before. It was easy to tell that he would never forget again. A ladder stood at his side: it went far beyond my sight up into the blue sky. A shining angel came swiftly down it to walk that day beside the boy that prayed. When his playmates sorely tried the boy's temper, the angel spoke some word of love which stayed the angry blow. He never lost his temper, never spoke an unkind word. His lessons were learned well, his errands

were done quickly. He was the happiest boy I saw that day, for "God was with him." Even whilst he slept, though still unseen, the Guardian Angel hovered near; for it is written, "He that keepeth thee shall not slumber." Life for him was fenced about by day and by night.

The book was filled with such pictures from beginning to end. The angel never left him. The boy became the joy of his home, the pride of all his friends. I watched him long, but at last lost sight of my little friend. Years passed. One day all the books he had written since the angel joined him were placed by my side. They formed the most wonderful biography I ever saw. Every step of the boy's life was painted on those pages. The good boy had become the earnest Christian man. On Sundays his happy home seemed to grow happier than on any day of the week. His children sat by his side in church, and went with him to their dearly loved Sabbath-school. They learned to tread in their father's steps. His grace was theirs; for they, too, loved to pray. All the week that good man went about like a benediction. Many who were growing weary in life's fight took heart again. The poor found in him a loving friend, the lost were sought and rescued. He had the joy of leading many to his Saviour.

On not a few of the pages which I turned that morning I saw him with a circle of eager listeners around, to whom he told how he first began to pray with all his heart. He was allowed to open the page in the well-worn old book that had the story of his boyhood. There everyone could see how the angel began to walk by his side. The happiness of his life dated from that hour when he found himself at the gate of heaven, and asked, as Jacob asked at Bethel, that God might be with him in the way he was to go.

Many a boy and girl who looked over my friend's shoulder began to live a new life from that very day. There is the same help, they said, for me. Years passed quickly away. One day I found a pile of books beside me, all of which opened at the hour when the good man had told his story. The angel's face was shining out of every page. Some of the little folk had become honoured servants of Christ. Others filled a smaller place in human eyes; but whether high or lowly, all were good. There were mothers there who taught their children the secret of their peace; fathers who toiled and prayed for the little ones. I caught a glimpse of one who had become a missionary in a village school of India; of another who spent her life carrying the story of Jesus to the women in the Zenanas, who, but for her labours, would never have heard of their blessed Saviour. Some were toiling hard from morning till night, but the smile on their faces showed that

> "Some softening beams of love and prayer
> Had dawned on every cross and care."

You have long since found out the meaning of this child's parable. The stranger who stepped into the world was the New Year. The books he brought had a page for every day. You have one, and all you do is written there. Our little pencils make marks which no one can erase. Keep your book free from everything at which you would be ashamed to look by-and-bye. That is a hard task. It will keep you busy as long as you live; but if God help you, it can be done. The Arabs say that every morning when a man rises, the Spirit of God sits upon his right shoulder, the Spirit of Evil on his left. So soon as his eyes open he repeats a little sentence: "I seek refuge in God from Satan, accursed with stones." If it be possible, he sprinkles himself at the same time with water. If he failed to repeat his little formula he believes that the good Spirit would fly away and leave the evil one to put his stamp on that day of life. This is a superstitious fancy, but it may remind you of the Psalm: "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." That is the secret of victory: God's grace for every day's battle.

If there are already pages you cannot think of without pain, never rest till God blots their story out of His book in heaven, then those pages of your book will be sealed up, to trouble or condemn you no more for ever.

J. TELFORD, B.A.

THE CHILDREN'S NEW-YEAR HYMN.

WITH joyful hearts, this New Year's Day,
We come, with one accord,
And, bending at Thy footstool, pray
For Thy protection, Lord.

Thy gracious Presence, ever near,
Upon our path has shone,
And step by step, from year to year,
Has gently led us on.

Lord, that our lives may shine for Thee,
Enlightened from above,
In patience and humility,
In words and deeds of love!

Thus blessing others, we would try
This year to live anew
For Thee, and on Thy help rely
In all we speak or do.

J. R. EASTWOOD.

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

BY C. DESPARD, AUTHOR OF "INTO A LARGER ROOM," "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.—A RUINED LIFE.



OUTSIDE the concert-room, in the dimly lighted space in front of the companion, Thekla and Lady Lucy were met by Grierson.

"What is it?" said Thekla, in an awed voice.

He took her hand, and drew it within his arm. "Don't be frightened," he said very gently; "poor Murchison is ill, and he has asked to see you for a moment. The doctor thinks that if his wish is gratified he may sleep, and sleep is just the one thing that may save him. Will you come?"

"Oh yes, yes! if you will go with me," said Thekla; but she trembled. Would he say any of the strange things he had said that morning; and if so, what would the others think?

There was no time to hesitate, however. Michael drew her on, and in another few moments she was standing by the long chair on the hurricane-deck, where Murchison had been laid. He was lying very still; his eyes closed, his lips slightly parted, his face wearing the spent expression of one who has suffered cruelly and long. He had been very ill that day. The fatigue and excitement of the athletic contest, far too great for him in his enfeebled state of health, and his passionate wrath when he saw or suspected that the man through whose perfidy he had been ruined, and one dear to him betrayed, was being forced upon his little friend Thekla, were together too much for him. The heart trouble which had ended his father's life seized upon him, and all day long he had been passing from one paroxysm of pain to another.

Thekla thought he was asleep; but when the rustle of her dress fell upon his ears, he opened his eyes, and, with a wan smile, held out his hand to her. "Thank you so much for coming up here to speak to me," he said. "It was selfish to ask you, I am afraid. You will miss some of the gaiety down below."

"I was very glad to come," said Thekla simply. "Does the music disturb you?"

"Oh no: now that the pain has gone nothing disturbs me. You can't think what bliss it is to be free from pain when it has been tearing at one for hours upon hours."

"The pain has gone. You will be better to-morrow," said Thekla.

"I may be; but I think not. That is why I sent for you. I wanted to see you once more, to thank you for all your goodness to me."

"Oh! but you mustn't," cried Thekla piteously. "I always liked to talk to you; and you will talk to us again—little Queen Mab and me—to-morrow, when you are better."

A smile flitted across the pallid lips, and the sad, sad eyes—oh! so haggard and worn, with a look in them that made Thekla tremble—rested lovingly upon her fair young face. "Ah!" he said, "there is nothing in the world that could give me greater pleasure now. You 'll look after poor old Prince, won't you? He will miss me. And—I was going to say something else—what was it?"

"You have said enough," Thekla murmured through her sobs. "To-morrow I will see you again."

He seemed scarcely to hear her words. He had turned from her, and was looking at Michael. "Yes," he said; "I remember. If you want a friend—I don't know that you will, but strange things happen—if you do, ask *him* to help you. Say you will"—for the rush of tears and a curious overmastering excitement prevented her from speaking.

"He *is* my friend," she managed to say at last, and looked up at Michael timidly. Her hand was still upon his arm; but it was so natural to her to depend upon him, that she had not, until this moment, been fully conscious of his support; and now, when his grave kind eyes met hers, her heart went out to him, with a confidence such as she had never felt before, even in her own father.

"Say no more," said Michael gently. "She understands you."

"Thank you," he whispered. "That does me good. I think I shall sleep now."

The sad eyes fell; but he lifted them once more to say, "You are sure it is true? I may look for Him in the great darkness?"

"I am sure," said Michael. "No one ever sought the Father of Spirits in vain—for His sake, the Son of the Father, the Brother of our humanity——"

"Yes: you told me. I think I have known it a long time; but we forget. Ah! how strange everything is; the world—His world—separating us from Him!"

"Try not to think any more to-night," said Michael. "Sleep is what you want. I will take Miss Ellerslie down to Lady Lucy, and then the doctor and I will help you to your cabin."

"Thank you," said Murchison. He held out his thin hand to Thekla. "Good-night, and good-bye."

"Good-night; but not good-bye," she managed to say, through thronging tears. "We shall meet again to-morrow."

For poor Murchison, alas! there was no to-morrow on this side of the grave. Early—very early—at the mysterious hour between night and morning, when life is said to run low in the veins of earth's children, the tragedy of his sad life ended.

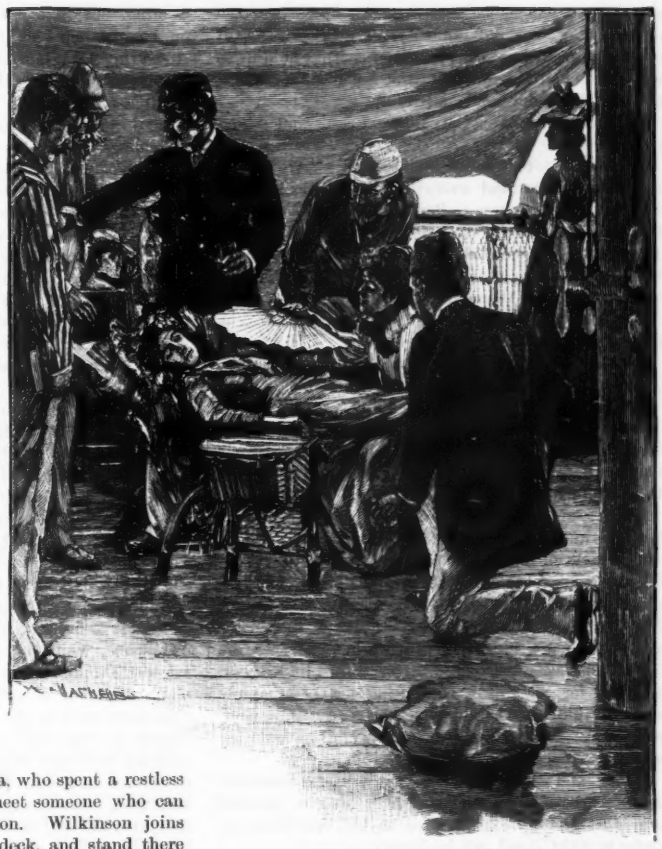
The doctor and Michael Grierson were with him. He had passed through another of those terrible paroxysms of pain. The exhaustion was great, and they thought he was asleep, and were talking

together in low whispers, when, all at once, they saw a change pass over his face. His eyes opened widely, and there was in them a piteous, imploring expression, like that of a child who craves for a boon.

Grierson stooped over him to ask if he wanted anything. No answer came; but in less than a moment the plaintive look had gone.

"It's all right," he whispered, with a smile; "I've said I'm sorry, and——"

They could catch no more. Over the sad eyes the eyelids dropped: the smile faded from the voiceless lips. With the peace of the forgiven at his heart, he had fallen asleep.



"'She is coming to.'"—*p.* 224.

Morning has come, and once more the good ship is astir with her living freight, few of whom know as yet that in the night-season one of their number has gone out into the everlasting silence. Thekla, who spent a restless night, is up early, hoping to meet someone who can give her news about Murchison. Wilkinson joins her, and they go to the poop-deck, and stand there looking out.

A great change since yesterday! Then there were low banks, and level sands, and wide horizons. Now there are hills behind the desert—hills that are wrapped to-day in lovely rose-lilac mists; and between the hills and the desert there is a long dark green oasis, which, Thekla hears, is the town of Suez. This on one side of the ship, while on the other, freshened with white foam-bells, and gay with boats carried briskly along by their large lateen sails, stretch the blue waters of the gulf—an ever-widening highway, to be merged presently in the Red Sea, and to wash the coasts of fertile Egypt and the green and rocky wildernesses of the Sinaitic peninsula.

It is an exciting as well as a lovely scene; and if Thekla could only for a moment forget Murchison's pinched face and wild eyes, she would enjoy it keenly.

Wilkinson notices her depression, and tries to reason her out of it. He is talking and she is listening, or trying to listen, when they hear the following words: "Yes, very sad, and rather uncomfortable for us. The doctor says it was heart disease."

It was the captain's voice—high, clear, and rather pompous—and he was speaking to Sir Richard Ellerslie. They resumed their walk without seeing the young people, who looked one at the other silently. "What does it mean?" gasped Thekla, at last. Her large grey eyes were distended with horror, and her cheeks were as white as marble.

"Don't look so," pleaded Wilkinson.

"But can't you tell me? Can't anyone?"

"I'm afraid it was a death. That poor fellow Murchison was very ill last night. Dear Miss Ellerslie, don't take it so. Why, you'd never do for a soldier. If we thought so much of death, we should be in a constant state of panic."

"It's not that I'm afraid," said Thekla slowly. "It's—but I don't think I can explain. He had been so miserable; I wanted him to have just a little happiness before he went away. I should like him to have seen this beautiful morning—to have been standing here with us. Poor fellow! Poor fellow!" Her voice broke and her eyes filled with tears. She had been thinking of him half the night; forming little girlish plans to nurse him and make him cheerful—she and Mr. Grierson together; and now—she

gave a little sob, as she gazed out dreamily over the dancing sea. The inevitableness of death—its awful severance of all the dear, homely ties that hold us to our earth, had for the first time touched her heart, and she felt cold—cold and numb.

"It is very strange," she said. "I can't understand it."

"Don't try to!" said Wilkinson. "We aren't meant to understand everything. And look here: we may be mistaken. Perhaps it's someone else. Let's go back to the main-deck and ask about it." They had not gone far before they met the doctor, who was swinging along in his usual rapid way, and looking grimmer than ever. When he caught sight of Thekla's pallid face and large troubled eyes, he pulled up.

"I am afraid you have heard," he said. "Mr. Grierson wished to be the first to tell you."

"It is true, then?" said Thekla.

"Yes; the poor lad has gone. He went away very quietly. I thought he might have lasted a little longer; but he was bound to go—and to go suddenly. It is best as it is."

Thekla staggered on. A mist was gathering before her eyes, and her tongue seemed chained to the roof of her mouth. It was so pitiful. The young life—the life that might have been and done so much—snatched away from the warm earth for ever. A few words of regret—cold like those of the doctor and captain; a sea-burial; and then silence—the eternal silence of the dead. Her tears blinded her, and but for Wilkinson, who, being nearly as simple and childlike as Thekla herself, was the best companion she could have had, she would have fallen more than once over the ropes or chains.

Gently and silently he guided her to the companion-way. There she took her hand from his arm, thanked him sweetly for being so kind to her, and then ran away to fight it all out by herself.

For the rest of the day Thekla was not much seen. Now and then Wilkinson would catch a glimpse of her little sad face; but he had no opportunity of speaking to her.

Late that afternoon the *Amazon* took the Brindisi passengers on board, and steamed out immediately into the bay. Then, in the gathering dusk, a little party of passengers and officers assembled on the poop-deck, and the captain read the beautiful solemn words of the Burial Service; and the body of the poor fellow whose earthly life had been a failure was dropped down into the silent sea.

CHAPTER IX.—TROUBLES INCREASE.

NIGHT has come. The *Amazon*, with sails set, is moving quietly through the sea that washes the coasts of Arabia and Egypt. Land, looking ghost-like in this dim light of moon and stars—mountains, and low shores of white coral and sand—can be seen on both sides of the ship. The sea is perfectly still, the sky cloudless, and all the wind that there is being with the vessel, there seems to be scarcely a breath of air stirring.

An entertainment had been planned for this evening, but it is put off on account of the death on board; and the ship's company, meanwhile, are recovering their normal spirits.

On the main-deck there is plenty of laughter and talking. The London passengers are trying to make friends with the Brindisi passengers, who show an amiable readiness to be cultivated. Lady Lucy Leveridge is particularly popular. Marion, too, has a little court about her, and a very lively one it is. She indeed does little more besides smile and look pretty; but the new-comers find it pleasant to be near her; and the lady sitting beside Marion, and frequently her companion now—a certain Mrs. Cockburn, young and of lively temperament—laughs and talks enough for them both. Thekla, meanwhile, is walking up and down the hurricane-deck with her friend Michael Grierson. Isaacson is, at this very moment, complaining to Sir Richard that Grierson is gaining an influence over her. That is true; but it is neither his fault nor hers. He had what she wanted—knowledge, faith, and a tenderness which sometimes, to this little girl, seems infinite, like that of Heaven; and instinctively as willows seek water, and flowers of the sun the light, she turned to him. Never, in all her life, has she been so perfectly happy as in this beautiful and divine friendship that surely, she thinks, is God's gift to her.

And Michael, although he has not yet ventured to confess it to himself, feels a delight in this little girl's confidence, which is new to him, and bewilderingly sweet. Circumstances have made of him a lonely man. He is of no race or nation, and prejudice has come between him and his acquaintances. Friendship, indeed, he has won, and even admiration. A man with his force and beauty of character is bound to be recognised by some. But in every case there had been something to overcome before he could stand face to face with the soul of his friend. Here there was no struggle. With swift comprehension and radiant sympathy, this fair child had turned to him; and sometimes now it seems to him as if, through all these long years, he had been waiting for her sympathy to complete his life.

To-night she is telling him of her puzzles—the dark, dark mysteries of life and death and suffering. She has never spoken of them before, and even the talking seems to lighten her heart, while every word from Michael helps her. Then from time to time they will stop and look away over the land of rock and wilderness where the Israelites of old, in their living humanity, acted out the great parable which, with its priceless freight of wisdom, has come down to us through the ages: and after that they will talk again, and Thekla says to herself that she has not been so happy since the last of her dear dream-days in the garden at home.

Presently she sees two figures approaching them, her father and Mr. Isaacson.

Her hand is on Michael's arm. Unconsciously she clutches at it, and for an instant he feels the swift vibration of her heart against his side. In the next instant she is walking on alone to meet her father.

"Where have you been all this time, Thekla?" There is a sharp irritated ring in the voice.

"I have been walking with Mr. Grierson," she says. "Do you want me, father?"

"Yes: I have been looking for you. Your sister wishes to speak to you."

"Where is she?"

"On the main-deck"—a pause, and then—"What are you waiting for?"

"You are coming, father?"

"No; I wish to have a little talk with Mr. Grierson. Isaacson will take you to your sister."

"Father——?"

"Do as I tell you, at once, Thekla!" The terrible words are spoken very low. Sir Richard is much too fine a gentleman to make an exhibition of himself or any member of his family before strangers, but he will have this silly child know that he is her master.

Without another word Thekla turns away; and Sir Richard resumes the suave manner which is one of his distinguishing characteristics. He speaks to Grierson with perfect courtesy, but unmistakable decision. "I am told," he said, "that there has been some absurd gossip about my little daughter. These stupid people, who have nothing else to do but to gossip, have been coupling her name with yours. Pray don't protest, my dear sir! I don't blame you, nor do I blame her. She is young for her age. Her sister and I have been accustomed to look upon her as a mere child, and so, I suppose, we have allowed her more liberty than is quite consistent with her age and position. I am speaking with great frankness to you, Mr. Grierson."

Michael bowed. He could not speak.

"And having gone so far," said Sir Richard blandly, "I may as well go a little further, and let you into a family secret. My younger daughter inherits largely from her mother's family. For obvious reasons I have kept this quiet, and I only tell you because it will help you to understand my peculiar anxiety. These sorts of things leak out, do what we will. I am sure" (with exaggerated courtesy) "you are not one of those who could take an unfair advantage; but everybody is not so far-seeing as you and I are, and things have been said on board about you which I had rather not repeat."

"I scarcely understand," said Michael, controlling himself with an effort.

"My dear sir, I really couldn't explain any further. It goes against the grain with me to say unpleasant things, even" (smiling) "when they are coined by someone else. The long and the short of it is, that we must be more careful. That 's enough on a rather painful subject. And now—if you are not too angry with me—I want you to give me a little information about the East."

What could Michael do but be complaisant?

Sir Richard asked questions, and he answered them; but he felt all the time as if a sword were piercing his heart.

Quietly the ship went forward on her way. Every day, the mighty sails—Thekla's "wings of the morning"—were spread, and the throbbing of the great engines, that are like the heart of some living thing, never ceased.

The heat in the Red Sea was intense, and the spirits of the ship's company flagged.

Marion kept up wonderfully well. "A new batch of admirers," Mrs. Cockburn said sardonically; and, in fact, the Brindisi passengers, several of whom were persons of distinction, had flocked to the standard of the beauty of the *Amazon*, who was bound, of course, to be cheerful.

Thekla's gaiety was gone. She would sit for hours gazing out at the sea; her face pale, and her large grey eyes full of gloom. They thought it was the heat; and her friends petted and encouraged her. They would sit and chat to her, and they would bring her tempting things to eat, and they would move her chair from place to place, as the sun and wind shifted. The General did her the greatest service of them all, for he would sit by her side for long spells, and since Isaacson, for all his self-possession, could not stand the glitter of the General's steel-blue eyes, while they were on watch Thekla had nothing to fear from his unwelcome attentions.

Michael alone, of all her friends, never came near her. Why was it?—she would ask herself, with a pain that she could neither understand nor control. Had her father said anything unkind? But he could not! There was surely no harm in one so good, and true, and noble, speaking, for a few moments, to a little girl like her. If there was, then she knew nothing. The world had turned upside down, and she with it.

Her principal friend now was Ronald Hinton, whose kind and simple manners, instinct with the chivalry of a nature which was no less tender than strong, had a soothing effect upon her mind. "I wish you were my brother really," she would say to him sometimes; and Ronald would answer cheerfully, "I may be your brother some day, little Thekla—who knows?"

A fresh bond of sympathy had arisen between them lately, for Ronald had become intimate with Grierson, whose goodness—a quality which is more attractive than some of us imagine—had won his sympathy and affection.

"You have found out what a wonderful man Mr. Grierson is," said Thekla one morning, with a smile of triumph, when, after a walk with Michael, Ronald joined her on the main-deck.

"Yes," he said, "I have. He is an extraordinary man, especially when you consider his antecedents. But remember, he is an exception."

"What do you mean?"

"It is rather difficult to explain; but I will try."

Just at this moment, they were interrupted by Wilkinson, who came up all in a flutter of excitement. "There 's a fellow on board with a photograph-machine, he said, "and he 's going to take us—all the people of the entertainments, don't you know? Will you come?"

"Certainly," said Thekla. "And Mr. Hinton must come too."

"Of course he must. He was manager."

They went over to the other side, and found a

group being formed, and the photographer making wild efforts to reduce them to order and silence.

It was done at last; and the second group, which was to include Thekla and Marion, Hinton, Wilkinson, and Mrs. Cockburn, were requested to fall into place, when Thekla observed that Mr. Grierson was not present, and asked if he might not be called. There were one or two dissentient voices; but the greater number were of opinion that the group would not be complete without the reciter, so Lady Lucy undertook to find him. She was some time away, and meantime one or two of the ladies, and notably Mrs. Cockburn, grew tired and cross with waiting.

Michael was found at last, however, and the group was speedily arranged. Marion and Thekla were seated. Hinton stood close behind them, and Michael was made to sit down on the deck, near Mrs. Cockburn, who had taken up her position gracefully at Marion Ellerslie's feet.

The moment the impression had been taken, Mrs. Cockburn, who was red with suppressed anger, sprang to her feet, and said, in an audible whisper, to a lady standing by: "The idea of putting *me* beside that black fellow! It was really too bad."

The cruel words fell on Thekla's ear. Michael was close beside her, so he must have heard them too. She dared not look at him. If a lash had been drawn across her face in the presence of all these people she could not have been more hurt and wounded. To insult him so—gentle and true and chivalrous as he was! How could she? How could anyone?

Pity is strong; but when pity is touched and ennobled with reverence, when, with awed hearts, we confess that to pity is to dare, and that yet the strong passion of our souls must find a vent, then, in the whole compass of human feeling, there is nothing to compare with it in force.

This was poor Thekla's case, and for a few moments, her whole being seemed to be swamped and lost in an overflowing agony, that brought the stinging tears to her eyes, and made her heart like to swoon with its heavy throbs of pain.

"My dear little Thekla" (that was Lady Lucy's voice), "you must have grown deaf all of a sudden. This is the third time of asking. Are you coming to the other side, or do you wish for a sunstroke? Here the heat is simply killing."

"Is it?" said Thekla, springing to her feet, and looking round wildly. "Where are they all?"

"The group, do you mean? They have dispersed. You are ill, child!"

Michael Grierson was standing close by. Lady Lucy made a sign to him. "Take this child to my easy-chair on the other side," she said. "I'm afraid it's a touch of the sun. I will be with you directly."

"Oh! thank you," murmured Thekla. And then, all at once, it seemed to her that she was standing under a cataract, and that the sound of its many waters was roaring about her ears. For a few moments she struggled, but it was too much. Her hold upon life was lost. That the arms of her friend were about her, that those eyes which were to her the most beautiful upon earth were looking down upon her, that, followed by a little crowd of the compassionate and curious, she was being carried through the hot air, she never knew.

The painful sense of struggle passed, and she fell into a dream—a dream of kind faces and gentle looks and whispering voices. Some familiar words were on her lips. Like the refrain of an old song, they followed one another through her mind. She was saying them to herself softly: "Peace—peace—peace that the world cannot give"—when, suddenly, for no reason as it seemed to herself—for she would have liked to dream on—she opened her eyes, and lo! she was lying in a nest of cushions on deck, and Michael, with such a strange, strange look on his face, was on his knees beside her, and behind him she could see dimly a host of faces and figures. While she was trying to understand what it all meant, she heard an authoritative voice: "It's only a faint," it said, "and she is coming to. Stand back and give the poor child room to breathe."

Feeling troubled and perplexed, she once more closed her eyes, and then all in a moment her full consciousness returned. "Why, it must have been I that fainted," she said to herself. "What a lot of trouble I am giving to everybody!" She tried to spring up; but she felt strangely weak, and was obliged to content herself with looking up and smiling. The smile ended in a sigh; for her friend Michael, whom she wanted to thank, was gone, and Ronald Hinton was in his place.

CHAPTER X.—MICHAEL GRIERSON'S PLAN.

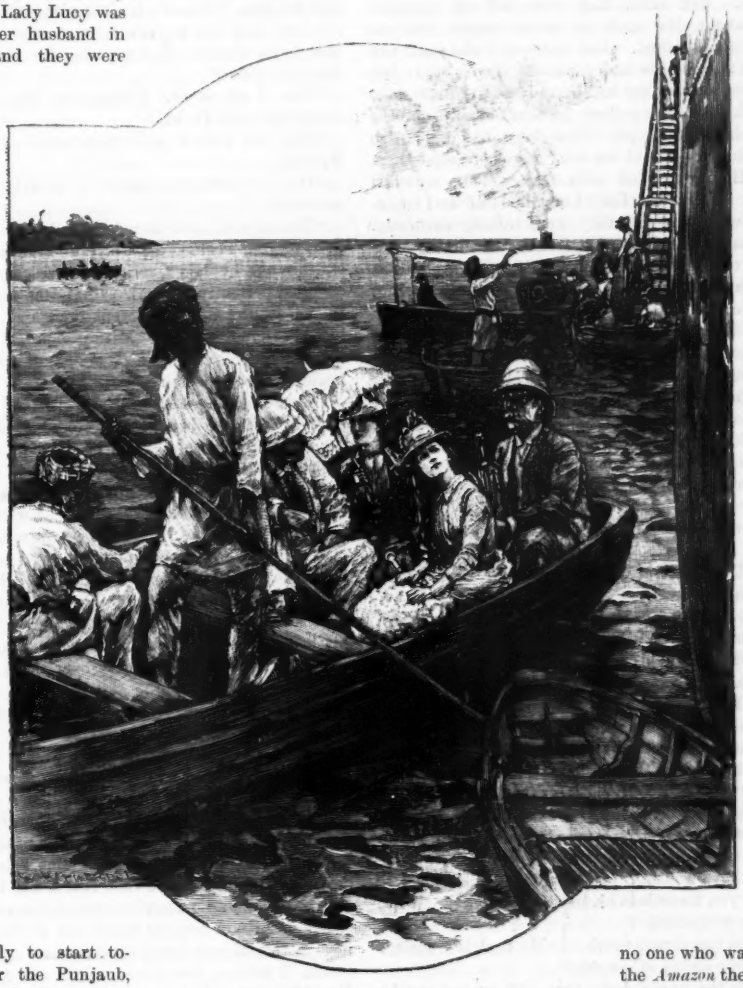
AFTER that there was little or no change. Day after day there were the same deep-blue seas, the same tranquil skies, the same blaze of sunlight; and night after night the starlit heavens overspread the waters, and the moon came rising up out of the sea. Amongst the passengers, too, and their relations one towards the other, there was nothing new. Marion amused herself, and her father looked on with a benignant smile, being sure that his favourite child would be prudent and consider the future. Thekla, since her curious fainting fit—a touch of the sun, the doctor called it—had not been very well, and, while Marion spoke plaintively about the difficulty of keeping that wild child quiet, Lady Lucy took her in hand, and forbade, for a few days, any sort of excitement, which was well for the young girl, upon whose sensitive nature the incidents of the voyage had made a powerful impression. Now, as they neared their goal, she was beginning to look upon it all as a dream which had come into her life strangely, and which would vanish as strangely, leaving nothing but a memory behind.

In a few days the languor which followed her nervous attack passed away, and she refused to be treated as an invalid. "I am quite well," she said to Lady Lucy, and once more she laughed and talked and played with the children, and haunted the hurricane-deck and gazed at the sea. But it was with a difference; she was not so light-hearted as she had been.

So the time wore on. They touched at Aden, but they did not land, as they put in late at night and

started with daylight on the following morning. It came at last to the day before their expected arrival in Bombay. It was a long day; everyone was excited, and little was talked of but arrangements for arrival. Our little society that had been so much together were to be widely dispersed. Lady Lucy was to meet her husband in Bombay, and they were immediately to start together for the Punjaub, where he held a high official post. The Ellerslies were to remain in Bombay, where a pretty furnished bungalow, the property of a gentleman ordered home suddenly on account of his health, had been taken for them. Ronald Hinton, who was an assistant-magistrate, had to hurry up to his station in the North-West Provinces. Wilkinson's regiment was at Lucknow, and he was ordered to join them there at once. Isaacson and his friend talked of a shooting expedition, when they should have spent a few days in Bombay. About Michael Grierson's movements no one seemed to know anything definite. Since Murchison's death he had been more silent than before. His messmates said he had a taste for mystery.

The long hot day declined into an evening which no one who was on board the *Amazon* then will ever forget. The sun went down slowly, leaving a glowing western sky; there were tracts of pale yellow, toning down into orange and crimson, and between the belts of colour stretching long cool fingers into the crimson and golden haze were zones of the ethereal and lovely green of the sky. This to the west, while overhead the zenith was transfused with a soft lilac veil, through which the stars shone tremulously. It was so beautiful, and the little world of the *Amazon* were so strongly excited, that many of them found it impossible to keep still. Backwards



"She sees the dark hull of the *Amazon* towering above her."—*p.* 229.

and forwards they paced; as they walked one way, they were dark—it was scarcely possible to recognise them; but, facing west, each face took a rosy glow and shone in the glory of colour.

Thekla sat aside in a nook near the companion watching them. A little time ago she had longed to arrive. Her mind had been full of romantic visions about the land, on whose shores she was about to set her foot. And now—ah! she could not tell what it was—she had romantic visions still; but she did not long, as she had once done, to run to meet them. She had come to love the dear old ship, and the people—the kind people whose faces had become so familiar to her—would she ever anywhere meet them again? Her eyes filled with tears as she watched them all. There was Lady Lucy, and Michael Grierson was with her, and they were talking earnestly. How beautiful their faces looked in the lovely illumination of the western skies! Little Thekla longed to be with them, and to hear what they were saying. And there was Wilkinson. He was another of her friends. She liked him very much indeed now, and it gave her a little pang to think that they might perhaps never meet again. One of the officers had Wilkinson in tow. Thekla wondered what wonderful stories that comical-faced man was pouring out, and how much of them Wilkinson would believe. Marion was among the promenaders; she was walking with a handsome middle-aged man, who had been paying her many attentions of late. Thekla did not even know his name, and she declined to take an interest in him. She was Ronald Hinton's champion, and she would not tolerate the people who were trying to supplant him.

I think she must have been a little amused with herself for her own vehemence. She was thinking, perhaps, of what Lady Lucy had said to her a few hours ago. "You are cut out for a champion, Thekla. You can't see more than one side of a question at a time." For, at this point, she smiled, and the radiance of the smile was still lingering about her eyes and lips, when the big young fellow, with the honest brown eyes, about whom she had been thinking so pitifully, came up to her.

"I congratulate you on your pleasant thoughts," he said. "I wonder what they were?"

"Were they pleasant?" said Thekla.

"Well! you know best about that, of course. What do you say to a stroll?"

"I should like it very much, but the deck is crowded. It's the same on the other side."

"Come to the upper deck, then. There is scarcely anyone there."

It was, as he had said, quiet enough on the hurricane-deck; so they went up, and took two or three turns in silence. Presently they saw a wonderful sight, for the splendour of the western heavens had quickened till the colours were so vivid and glowing, that one might have imagined a universe in flames behind the rim of the silent sea; while in the east, a golden ball, soft and wonderful, sailed slowly up the skies. "The moon!" said Thekla, catching back her breath with rapture. "I have never seen it look so beautiful before!"

"Yes; this is almost the best evening we have had," said Ronald.

There was another silence, and then he said, "I wonder if you remember our walk here the first evening of the voyage?"

"Very, very well! I was just thinking of it then," said Thekla. "Doesn't it seem a long time ago?"

"Yes, and yet it isn't long, really—only a little over three weeks. And now the last day has come. Are you glad?"

"No: I am sorry. I hate last days and saying good-bye," said Thekla.

"But you and I will meet again, I hope," said Ronald.

"Oh! we must: we must! I should be so sorry if we didn't!"

"Thank you," said Ronald simply. "That is very good of you, Thekla." He had fallen into the habit of calling her by her Christian name, and to her it sounded perfectly natural. "But you have been good to me all the time," he went on, "and I'm afraid," looking down upon her with a smile, "I have been rather troublesome—talked a lot of nonsense, and made you feel miserable."

"Please, please don't talk like that!" said Thekla brokenly. "It is you who have been good to me."

"We needn't dispute about precedence," said Ronald. "Shall we say that we have been good friends, and that we mean to be good friends still, although we can't be brother and sister? There!" with another of those smiles—smiles from the lips only, not from the eyes, which were all the time very grave and sad—"it is out now! I was bound to tell you; but I didn't know how. Thekla, dear child!"—he checked himself, for her trouble moved him, and it had been in his heart to say something much more tender—"you mustn't take it so. We live over these things, you know."

"Oh! but it makes you so unhappy; and are you quite certain?" said Thekla.

"Quite, quite certain. I have asked, and I have been refused. We don't like that sort of thing just at first. It hurts our pride. Besides, I suppose one begins to build castles in the air, and when they come down all at once it's a pretty big downfall. You see, I am a little sorry for myself. But I know I don't deserve sympathy. I've been like a big baby crying for the moon, and naturally enough the moon doesn't see the beauty of coming down out of its sphere for me. A mortal was loved by the moon once, and the result, I believe, was disastrous to the mortal," said Ronald, talking lightly to console Thekla, who was miserable over the destruction of her first little romance, and could not keep the tears out of her eyes. "Why, if you feel it so, I shall be sorry I told you."

"Oh, no! It was much better," said Thekla; and she fought down her sobs, and tried to smile, and made a few halting remarks about the beauty of the night, and then slipped away, leaving Ronald with a strangely shaken heart, and an image that would haunt him for many a long day.

For a short space he stood musing; a new idea, and a very strange one, was forcing its way into his mind. He tried to repel it. He told himself he was vain,

stupid, morbid, ridiculous. But the idea was too strong for his strong epithets. Again and again it returned, and would not be chased away. The dinner-bell rang, and he went down to the saloon. He sat at the opposite side of the table from the Ellerslies, and some distance away from them, but he could see their faces well. He looked across, and saw that Thekla had not come in. Dinner was half over before she appeared. Her face was much paler than usual, and the droop of her heavily fringed eyelids over her eyes gave her a curiously pathetic expression.

Ronald could not sit the dinner out. That tyrannous idea was possessing him, and he felt that he must be alone with it. He went to the hurricane-deck again, threw himself into a long chair, and lay gazing up at the soft moonlit sky. What a fool he was! and yet, it might be; such things had been. She was not really the child they all imagined her. Her image rose before him—the sweet pure face, the lovely eyes; ah! they were the eyes of a woman: no mere child could look as he had seen her look—the sensitive tremulous mouth, the wide brow that was troubled now sometimes, as if perplexing thoughts were warring behind it. Could it be that she also was learning the great secret that transfigures human life?

He was pondering over this, his heart not quite so sad as it had been, when he saw not far from him the figure of the man whom he had learnt to look upon as a friend. He also was alone, and he also was interrogating sky and sea. Hinton got up and joined him. Michael had been busy with troublesome problems of his own, but he was at once at his friend's service, and, for a few moments, they talked together in a desultory way.

The talk fell on mental problems. Michael was a deep student of the as yet imperfect science that goes by the name of psychology. Hinton scarcely knew there was such a science, but his own mind was so much of a puzzle to him that he felt glad to discuss mental phenomena with so keen an observer as Michael. "Look here!" he said presently; "mind is such a complex arrangement, according to you. Do you think any man clearly understands the workings of his own mind?"

"I think men make enormous mistakes about themselves, as well as about other people," said Michael, smiling.

"That is not exactly an answer to my question, is it?"

"Your question, my dear fellow, was uncommonly wide."

"Well, I'll narrow it. Take an individual case—mine. You know me pretty well by this time. Do you think I know anything about myself?"

"I think, as a general rule, you would judge your own powers pretty accurately. Whether you are as wise about your sentiments is another question."

Ronald laughed. "I believe you are a wizard," he said. "But never mind; I think I understand what you mean."

"I am right?" said Michael, looking at him keenly.

"My dear fellow, how can I tell? If we don't know ourselves—by-the-bye, doesn't that make things a little puzzling?"

"I think, on the whole, things were meant to be puzzling. But there is a clue to the labyrinth."

"Have you found it?"

"I believe I have, and it is simple enough, after all. Putting self out of the question—that is the true secret of life, and it is wonderful how it simplifies everything."

"But," said Ronald, "we *must* think of ourselves."

"We think we must, but we are strangely mistaken. The real truth is that we are living unnaturally—fighting against our true instincts—and that is the cause of all the misery. Let us once recognise the Divine, the Giver, the Father of Lights—and our difficulties will vanish. We shall know the truth, and the truth will make us free."

"That is a fine thought," said Ronald, impressed, as he had been before, by Michael's earnestness and passionate conviction. "But," with one of his old smiles, "I am afraid we shall have to wait until the millennium for its fulfilment."

"Perhaps; but, meanwhile, we at least can begin to live truly."

So the talk drifted on. Presently they found themselves talking about the voyage which was so near its end, and Ronald, who was transparent as a child in Michael's hands, told of his love, his disappointment, his strong interest in Thekla, and the curiously divided feeling that perplexed him that night. Then, for the first time, Michael spoke plainly. Entreating the pardon of his friend if he had misjudged him, he openly declared his conviction that the love which he believed essential to his life was a sentiment which would quickly vanish. "You have been loving an ideal being," he said. "You saw a lovely woman, and you clothed her with the grace of mind and heart of which, in spite of a thousand proofs to the contrary, we believe beauty to be the outward and visible sign. You have found out your mistake, and you will soon be cured. Are you angry with me?"

"Yesterday I should have been—desperately. This evening—I can't make it out—I must be dreadfully fickle—yet I don't think I am."

"No; you are not fickle. You are candid. You can be honest with yourself."

Hinton was silent for a few moments. He had not said all he meant to say, and Michael knew it. At last he said faltering, "And how about my interest in—in—the other?"

"That will last. It has less of self in it. Cherish it! It may be the joy of your life and the safeguard of hers."

"Thank you," said Hinton, in a voice hoarse with emotion. "I shall remember what you have said."

After that they bade one another good-night and good-bye; Hinton stayed out on deck for hour after hour watching the stars and dreaming, and Michael went down to his cabin to fight down the pain which this interview had cost him.

CHAPTER XI.—GOOD-BYE TO THE *AMAZON*.

They were in. The white wings were furled; the engines had ceased from their constant revolutions, and the wide seas which they had been traversing had narrowed to a beautiful bay, surrounded with low

hills and sapphire islands, and bearing on its bosom the towered buildings and rich tropical foliage of one of the loveliest of Eastern cities. Seen in the light of a beautiful Indian winter morning, nothing could have been more delightful or enchanting. But there was a sting in the heart of the enjoyment, for the dear *Amazon*, the tranquil home for so many days of this little company of travellers, had changed her character.

When Thekla, who had dressed with swift, trembling fingers—she could scarcely do anything for that little pang at her heart, that "never, never, never," that was haunting her—ran up, leaving the cabin in the hands of Marion and Janet, she found the deck heaped high with luggage, and Indian servants, impassible as to face and figure and looking extraordinarily picturesque in their white clothes, crimson sashes, and voluminous turbans, were standing about; dark-limbed coolies were, or appeared to be, fighting over the luggage, and Englishmen, with sunburnt faces, in white clothes and sun-helmets, were threading their way through the confused labyrinth. Here and there she saw a familiar face; but in every case it looked harassed and anxious; and, thinking with a sigh what a changed world it was, she stood aside in a quiet nook to watch for her friends.

Ah! there was Lady Lucy, beautifully dressed, looking handsome and radiant, and leaning on the arm of a tall and soldierly man—her husband, of course. Thekla watched her timidly, but did not venture to speak.

She herself was being watched. It was by a tall Indian, with a grave and patient face, who had just addressed a question to one of the quartermasters. When Thekla looked at him inquiringly, he approached her, made a profound salaam, and drew a letter out of his girdle.

"Is it for me?" said Thekla. He bowed still lower, and placed it in her hands, and Thekla saw that it was addressed to her father. "Thank you," she said with a friendly smile. "This is for my father. I will take it to him."

She went back to the companion, and found Sir Richard, accompanied by Isaacson, and followed by his English servant, coming up the ladder. Thekla gave him the letter, and pointed out the man who had brought it on board.

"The *Khansama* of our new establishment," said Sir Richard, glancing over the note. "Speaks English, my agent says." He beckoned to the man, who bowed, advanced a few steps, bowed again, and stood at attention, his glittering eyes fixed on Sir Richard's.

"Then you are my servant?" said Sir Richard.

In a moment the man's flexible body fell into an attitude of profound humility. How it was done, no one born in the West could explain, but every limb, every feature, every line in the sinuous figure seemed to express satisfaction in the honour that had been conferred upon him by entering this distinguished service, with an intimate conviction of his own unworthiness adequately to sustain it.

"What a queer fish he is! Are they all like him, I wonder?" said Isaacson to Thekla. "That's the sort of fellow, don't you know, one would like to tickle up with a whip, not to hurt him, but just to see him jump."

"Hush! hush! I beg of you," said Thekla, her face turning crimson. "He understands English."

But if the servant understood, he made no sign. Dignified but submissive, he stood before his master.

"You will see after my things with my English servant," said Sir Richard, "and have them taken on shore at once. We will follow when we have breakfasted. Have everything ready." Then he turned to Isaacson, and asked what he was going to do, and if his servants could be of any assistance to him.

"Oh, thanks! I leave all arrangements to my travelling companion," said the rich young man. "He sent on early, I believe, for rooms. I'll have breakfast, and then go on shore with you."

Thekla, in the meantime, had been taken possession of by Lady Lucy. "I have been looking for you ever so long, little one," she cried. "We are going on shore at once, and then right on—no one knows where, and I wanted to say good-bye. Here is my husband, the General. He would like to shake hands with you.—General, this is my little friend Thekla Ellerslie, one of the dearest girls in the world.—Good-bye, sweet little friend! How much I should like to take you away with me! You will think of me sometimes, won't you?"

"Oh! shall I never see you again?" cried Thekla piteously.

"See me again! Of course you will. Now where are the rest?"

"I'm here," said a comically mournful voice behind them.

"Ah! Mr. Wilkinson.—Another of my friends, General, and one of the best boys going.—Good-bye, good-bye. Meet again! Why, of course we shall. The General and I never lose sight of promising young soldiers."

"Won't you say good-bye to *me*, Lady Lucy?"

"My friend Ronald! Of course I will, though I'd much rather not," said Lady Lucy, with a twinkle in the corners of her bright brown eyes. "If I were not so ridiculously happy to-day, it would make me wretched. Has anyone seen my friend Michael?"

"He has gone on shore," said Ronald.

"Gone!"

"Yes. I don't think he much liked saying good-bye, and he had some unexpected news this morning."

"Not bad news, I hope."

"No. I fancy most people would call it good. He said something about an increase of responsibilities. I was to say good-bye to you from him. You would forgive him, he hoped, for not seeing you. He says you know his ways."

"Yes, I do; but I think it is specially disagreeable of him to-day. The General wished particularly to see him, and now, for anything anyone knows to the contrary, we may never see him again. That man has a trick of vanishing. Well! I must go. Farewell once more, my sweet little Thekla. Why, child," as she kissed her, "how white you look! Ah! when you are as well accustomed as I to saying good-bye, you will take it more easily. But," in a whisper, "you

are a darling, all the same, to feel it. I shall hear from you——"

"Oh! yes, yes!" said Thekla fervently. Her cheeks were pale, and her lips were quivering; but it was not only with the pain of saying good-bye. Some of Lady Lucy's lightly spoken words were ringing in her ears, and filling her soul with such sorrow as it had never known before. "He has a trick of vanishing. We may never see him again." Vanishing, going away into the great invisible—could it be of her friend this had been said? Gone! and he had not so much as said good-bye to her. This beautiful friendship, which she had fancied once would be the treasure of all her life, was to pass away like a dream. How foolish she had been—how very, very foolish, to imagine, for one moment, that it could last! He belonged to the great ones, and his place was in the great world, and it was only in the little life—the little, lovely life of the sea—that he could have had time to listen to the talk of a young girl like her.

While these sad thoughts were passing through her mind, she heard herself called. "Thekla! Don't be so dreamy, child! Come down and have some breakfast before we go on shore."

It was Marion's voice. Charmingly dressed in pale grey and rose-colour, the flush on her delicate cheek, and the light of excitement in her eyes, making her look even prettier than usual, she stood in the door of the companion, looking up and down the decks.

"What confusion!" she exclaimed. "Now confess, Mr. Larkin"—to the first officer, who had come up to bid her good-morning—"you will be enchanted to get rid of us all."

"I can't confess to what is not true, Miss Ellerslie," said the chief gallantly. "You, at least, will leave a blank on this ship which can never be filled up. Henceforward, I shall live on the sweets of memory."

"Oh! I hope not. After a little of that unsubstantial diet, we should not recognise you," said Marion, laughing. "And you know," softly, "we mean to go back to England in the dear old *Amazon*. It has been the most delightful voyage. I shall never forget it—and all of you have been so nice to us."

"We couldn't very well have helped that," said the chief. "When fair ladies such as Miss Ellerslie, if I may be permitted to say so——"

"You are not permitted to pay any more compliments. I suppose," said Marion, turning to another officer who had joined them, "this is Mr. Larkin's usual form when a voyage is over?" Then, as more came up, "I really won't say good-bye to anyone until after breakfast," she protested. "It's too exhausting. Come along, Thekla!"

Mechanically Thekla followed her sister, and mechanically she swallowed her breakfast, hoping against hope that he had not really gone—that presently she would see his kind grave face once more, and meet the morning smile, to which she had come to look forward as the best and dearest part of her life.

That morning she hoped in vain. And then—too soon for her—breakfast was over, and she was hurried up the companion-ladder, and everything was confusion—shaking of hands, and compliments and good-byes, and cries of "The boat is ready. We are wasting the day."

But still there were a few last words to be said, and still she lingered. Perhaps he had gone on shore to make arrangements, and would come back for his luggage. He could not possibly have taken everything away with him so early. Every moment's delay was of some value to her. If they would only talk a little longer! But Isaacson was hurrying them off, and Sir Richard was becoming impatient, and Marion was saying plaintively that she was really very sorry; if it rested with her she would never leave the dear old *Amazon* at all; but they saw how it was with her. Escorted by a little crowd she began to move towards the gangway. Thekla followed with a sinking heart. It was all over, then. He had gone. She would never, never see him again. Ah! what was that? Hurried steps behind her! With a child's expectant rapture in her face she turned round, and in the next instant she was trying hard to repress the bitter tears of disappointment.

"So you were really going away without saying good-bye to me?" It was Ronald Hinton who looked down upon her.

"Ah!" faltered poor Thekla. "I didn't mean to. Everything is so confused and strange to-day."

"Well! never mind!" he said, her agitation, which she did not attempt to conceal, moving him strangely.

"Father is calling me. I must go. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Thekla—dear little Thekla. Promise not to forget me!" whispered the big young fellow, with such a strange look in his brown eyes.

She knew it was all for Marion, but it touched her to the heart, and, do what she would, she could not keep the tears from her eyes.

"Of course I could not forget you," she said, sobbingly. "Or—or—the dear old *Amazon*. Good-bye."

"Thekla—*are* you coming?" from Sir Richard.

"Thank you, darling," fervently from Ronald.

And now—she is in the boat, and the boat is moving, and, through a mist of tears, she sees the dark hull of the *Amazon* towering above her, and she realises for the first time that the voyage is over. To a new life in a new world her "Wings of the Morning" have brought her! Resolutely she turns her face to the shore, and gallantly she fights down the sobs that are choking her. She has no right to be miserable: she ought rather to be thankful. She will try to live as he lives—grandly and nobly, and then, perhaps, some day——

But see! the boat is touching the wharf, the fair Eastern city is before her, and Marion's voice is arousing her from her dreams.

"Now then, Thekla—*do* you mean to sit in the boat all day?"

The voice has a sharp ring in it. Thekla, as, helped by Isaacson, she steps on shore, wonders what she can have done to vex Marion.

(To be continued.)

THE HYMNS OF HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

I. THE SONG OF CREATION AND THE CHURCH.

(Rev. iv. 8, 11.)



OURS is a theme worthy of those pens which gave to the Church the immortal poems of the "Te Deum" and the "Gloria in Excelsis"; or of those which in later and not less earnest times have awakened for us the stirring echoes of the hymns of the Apocalypse. For Eastern Church and Western both delight to dwell upon the halls of Zion, the golden streets, the absence of pain and death, and the amaranthine crown. But it is remarkable that most of the hymns which we have taken directly from St. John are adapted from the one song of the numberless host of the redeemed who had been rescued out of the great tribulation. The reason seems to be that it possesses an intensely human interest. The Church, like ourselves, is fain to dwell upon its days of suffering. The "Acts of the Martyrs" will always retain its popularity. Queen Mary, I suppose, did more for Protestantism than any ruler of England, because the fires which she lit in Smithfield have thrown their glare down all the ages since, and England is still keenly mindful of their cause and their consequence. Thus English congregations have linked the cause of English martyrs with the deathless cause of the primitive victims. Of both it may well be sung—

> "Lo, these are they from sufferings great
> That came to realms of light,
> And in the blood of Christ have washed
> Those robes which shine so bright."

Nor this alone; but in all times of persecution Christians have clad themselves in the mantle of song, and St. Paul and St. Silas made the prison at Philippi ring with their praise—strains, no doubt, from the psaltery of Israel; and Scotchmen, whether they be Covenanters yet, or members of the more ancient Church, feel a thrill of honest pride when they tell how in the days of Claverhouse their fathers stood within gorge and cave of the mountains, and sang—

> "God is our refuge and our strength,
> In straits a present aid;
> Therefore, although the earth remove,
> We will not be afraid."

But there is no fierceness, no alarm, no intensity of mortal fear or present anguish in the songs which they sing in heaven. The singers look not upon visions of musket, rack, or stake, but upon Him that sitteth on the throne, upon the Lamb whose agony was past, and upon the hosts of angels that, calm and resolute, guard the citadel of life. They remember, indeed, the sorrow—

> "The path they came by, thorn and flower,
> *Was* shadowed by the growing hour,
> Lest life should fail in looking back.
> So be it; there no shade can last
> In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
> But clear from marge to marge *doth* bloom
> The eternal landscape of the past."

It was peculiarly fit that the vision of these heavenly singers should have been granted to St. John. Visions come to everyone who is fit to receive them. The seer does not create his vision: he has only eyes to see, and he sees it. So Moses saw the burning bush; for the bush of life was always burning, and was not consumed, though he had not perceived that truth before. St. Paul saw the triumphs of Christ in the third heaven, for they are always there; and St. John looked into the heaven when the door was opened, and saw and heard changeless and eternal things. But while the panorama spread before him, and while the Church and the angels were singing, the forces of darkness were being marshalled on earth to obliterate the very name of Christ. The whole creation was groaning. The Church was partly exiled, and all alarmed. The nations of the world and the world's work and strength were passing into new conditions whose issues were beyond foresight or conjecture. And above them all, calm as the evening star, God dwelt, and surveyed and ruled the destinies of men.

Let us look at the vision.

He beheld God first: God in His unrivalled majesty and grandeur, outstripping the power of description so far that he could tell us what He was like only by resemblances. His glory, undefined and indefinable, passes before us; but we are hid within the narrow compass of a rock's cleft, and can see only the shadow of His hinder parts, the mantling as it were of His stupendous life. As with the fiery chariot of Ezekiel, so with this; the mind is bewildered and dazed if it attempts to grasp and shape it into a concrete form.

And round about the throne was the Church, represented by the four-and-twenty elders. Each had his own place and seat, prepared in fulfilment of the promise of our Lord.* They are not suffering now, but crowned. The elect are complete. None are wanting, none unworthy. The crucibles of temptation, and trial, and sorrow have long tested each of them. The kingdom they told of, whose interests were committed to their charge, and whose magnificence they saw through the glory of the Ascension, has not only come, but is triumphant. No wonder is it, then, that their songs were songs of glory.

And the glory is heightened by the unity of the elders. The thrice-uttered prayer of their Master is

* St. John xiv. 2.

at length fulfilled, and they are one. As they came near to Him, they came close to one another. They found they were agreeing all the time more than they had suspected. They had fought sorely enough over words and many a worthless thing, as if the stability of the Throne itself depended upon the issue. They had thought it better to separate from one another, and sometimes to hate one another, rather than surrender their own feverish opinion or village prejudice. It had come to pass, even, that they did not wish to be one, and thought it was better the prayer of Gethsemane should not be answered. Now, thank God, all that was past. It was better, they found, to ascertain how much they loved God, and how fully they could serve Him. It was better to look upon the Throne than upon erring men, better to see the pledge of the Covenant than the broken vows of the saints. They are brethren in heaven.

And this peculiar sympathy with one another is broadened into sympathy with all life. Individual Christians have in many centuries shown themselves careless of the material welfare of men, and of the progress of secular learning and of civilisation. Their plea was that celestial affairs absorbed their time and their energy; and this was, by a hasty generalisation, passed on as the deliberate judgment and custom of the Christian Church. It was an unhappy conception of theirs. In heaven the song of the Church is always in harmony with that of the living creation. The material good of men is a portion of God's design—we might almost say, of God's covenant. Advancement in true knowledge must advance religion. The true happiness of the community may be described as the happiness of Christ; and so in St. John's vision all are blended together in one beautiful unity—angels, and elders, and living things paying homage and adoration before the Throne.

For the third portion of the vision is equally impressive. Here is a fourfold representation of Life, under the figure or semblance of a lion, an ox (or calf), an eagle, and a man. The idea seems to be the combination of all that makes up universal life: for our English translation of "beasts" ought to be simply "living creatures," and the picture is one of life under the aspect of humanity, industry, ambition, and physical strength. Here, again, union is emphasised: all join with similar voice and full heart in the song. They teach us the lesson that all belong to God, and should be devoted to Him. In different persons one or other of these qualities may predominate. Such a condition is perilous, but not fatal. It reaches the fatal stage when anyone of them absorbs the rest. The physical strength may become brutal; ambition may destroy honour and truth; industry may despise all but material good; humanity may degenerate into sentimental philanthropy. But in God's great plan each is consistent, each has its appointed place, each is a star in the firmament of life.

Such are the singers: let us listen to their hymn. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." So says Creation, standing apart as it were, and not venturing to address God directly, but speaking as yet in the third person. It is a song of contemplation, then; and the ideas of God which arrest the attention of His creatures are His holiness, His eternity, and His omnipotence. These are the world-wide thoughts of the highest minds in all ages and lands about God. They formed the theme of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision. Out of them came the appeal for human co-operation with God.* They constitute to-day the ideal, the hope, and the confidence of the saints. They are, indeed, the facts that are fitted for all time: and would that, in years when men and women are busiest, and work is hardest, and anxiety keenest, we too could draw aside for a space, and lift our eyes to these grand characteristics of Him whom we better know as our Father in heaven.

The Church addresses God directly. It comes boldly to the Throne: and the "is" of creation is turned into the "art" of the elders. Yet the very fact of creation is assigned as the reason for their ascription of worthiness. Why is this? Because by His creation God has manifested and revealed Himself. It is thus He is known and apprehended: and without this no thought could contemplate Him, nor worship approach Him. And closer still does the Church draw to Him. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," said Augustine of Hippo. "Thou hast made all things for Thine own pleasure," said the Elders before him. There is something exquisitely beautiful in this idea of God's works; His pleasure in energy and action: in conceiving worlds that dazzle alike the eye and the imagination; mountains that claim high thought and purity; flowers that whisper innocence; rolling oceans that demand courage and enterprise; men, with all their tremendous destinies, their expanding hopes, and their prodigious powers. And now that all is done, the verdict of the Revelation is the same as that of Genesis—"God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." The process still goes on. Creation is never finished; God is ever at work. Night after night dissolving stars shed their dust upon our earth. Century by century it grows bulkier, and its pace grows slower. Changes are continually at work. The life begot in millions of tiny animals becomes the chalk beds of future Englands in their death. The mountains are giving their wealth of rock and soil to the valleys that rear their fields of wheat and orchards of apple-trees. Not a shower falls that does not, to some degree, alter the condition of things, and in all this change and growth God takes pleasure. Is it not the symbol and pledge of the absolute and eternal worth to man of all that happens in his lot? Does it not, when taken in connection with the fact of His mercy and love, cast a gentle spring light upon such terrible facts as suffering and death? Was not Cowper universally correct when he said that—

> "Behind a frowning providence
> He hides a smiling face?"

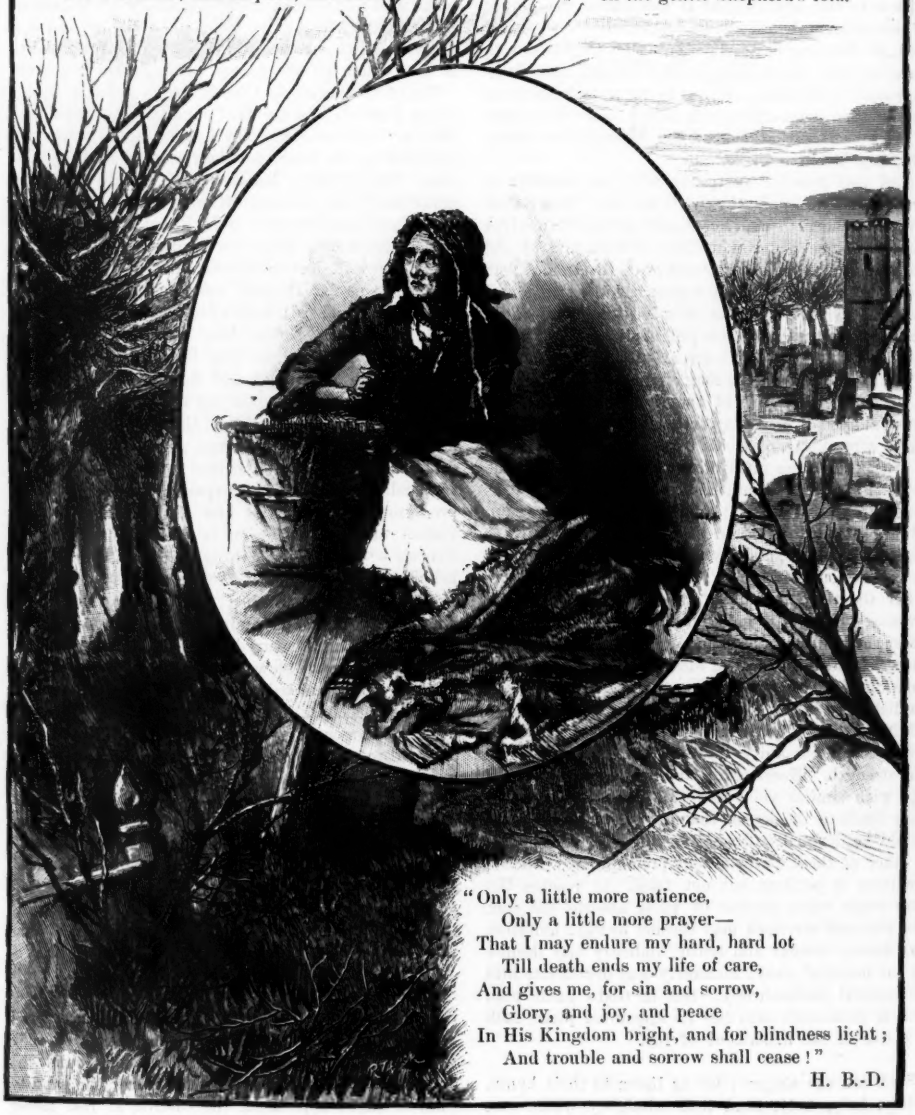
It is the first of Heaven's hymns; and we shall see afterwards with what strong bright faith they were sung, while the clouds thickened around the Jerusalem on earth; and how, whatever the earthly Church might apprehend, the Church at rest never for a moment lost its confidence in the final triumph of Christ.

* Isaiah vi. 8.

WAITING.

"ONLY a little longer
To wait, and hope, and fear;
Only a little longer,
And the darkness will be clear.
Only a little longer
To suffer hunger and cold,
Hard words and blows from friends and foes,
For I'm blind, and helpless, and old!

"But night will be day *some* morning,
And darkness be light for me;
I have heard a whispered warning
That soon I shall be free!
Only a little longer,
And hardness, hunger, and cold
Will all be past, and I'll rest at last
In the gentle Shepherd's fold.



"Only a little more patience,
Only a little more prayer—
That I may endure my hard, hard lot
Till death ends my life of care,
And gives me, for sin and sorrow,
Glory, and joy, and peace
In His Kingdom bright, and for blindness light;
And trouble and sorrow shall cease!"

H. B.-D.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

25. Zacharias, in speaking of his son, John the Baptist, says, "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest." Quote our Lord's words showing His estimation of St. John as a prophet.

26. What words addressed by the angel to the shepherds specially set forth Jesus as the Messiah?

27. What parable of our Blessed Lord shows the danger attending shepherds while watching over their flocks by night?

28. What writer of the Old Testament set forth the goodness and Providential care of God under the similitude of a shepherd?

29. How was it the aged Simeon could know the infant Jesus when brought into the Temple?

30. What prophecy did Simeon give as to the effect of Christ's teaching?

31. Why did Jesus go with His parents to Jerusalem at the age of twelve?

32. What was the first occasion on which our Blessed Lord spoke of His Divine origin?

33. How was it that Jesus was found among the doctors in the Temple?

34. What may we learn from the fact that the Blessed Virgin at her purification brought only "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons?"

35. What sign was given by the angel to the shepherds which enabled them to find the infant Jesus?

36. What words of Zacharias foretell the great work of redemption wrought by Christ?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 152.

13. St. John vi. 62.

14. Hosea xi. 1; St. Matt. ii. 15.

15. Their refusal to take possession of the land of Canaan when God had brought them thither, and wishing to go back to Egypt. (Numbers xiv. 2, 3, and 22, 23.)

16. Because Solomon built an "high place" on it for the idolatrous worship of Chemosh and Molech. (1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.)

17. St. Peter and St. Paul, who speak of God as "no respecter of persons." (Acts x. 34; 1 Peter i. 17; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6; and Col. iii. 25.)

18. Deut. x. 17.

19. "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruits of his doings. Woe to the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." (Isa. iii. 10, 11. See also Eccles. viii. 12—14.)

20 The authority with which He set forth His doctrines. (St. Matt. vii. 29.)

21. He took the fort of the Jebusites, and himself became king in Jerusalem. (2 Sam. v. 6, 7.)

22. Ahithophel the Gilonite; it is supposed because of the murder of Uriah by David, he being the grandson of Ahithophel. (2 Sam. xv. 12.)

23. Ahijah the Shilonite, who wrote a history called the "prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite." (1 Kings xi. 26—31; 2 Chron. ix. 29.)

24. In Eccles. xii. 1—6.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

A SUNSHINY FUTURE.

IT is told of an old man living in a cottage on a lonely moor, that when asked if he knew no fear, he answered, "Never, for Faith closes my door at night, and Mercy opens it in the morning." May Faith close for us the Old Year as surely as Mercy will open the New! Darkness and mystery may sometimes seem to approach us as the midnight bells tell of the changing years; we feel blind and ignorant and helpless as the unknown year becomes a reality, with its unvisioned thorns or flowers. But when we remember our Father in heaven—

"The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath."

"He that feeds His ravens will never starve His saints," He whose power controls the tempest and paints the insect's wing is able to steer us safely and wisely through all the changes of the hidden way. Somewhere "under God's heaven or in it" His children will be through the varying course of the dawning year; we shall not drift beyond the Master's care, we cannot be out of reach of the love of our Lord. His loving-kindness even in chilling days will wrap us in summer warmth and glow, His promises will be to us as the gladdening sunlight overhead. It may be that 1890 contains the answer to long-lifted prayers, the blessing that has seemed to us to tarry; let prayer and work be deepened, for who can tell what God has in store for us, and what showers of grace may be gathering for the patient, thanksgiving heart? It would ill become the children of the King to approach the threshold of the New Year with trembling doubt; every event has been chosen and appointed by Him who is the Good, and who cannot make mistakes. A legend of the Talmud relates that a Rabbi was travelling on with three possessions—an ass, a rooster, and a



'Even in the chilling days.'

lamp. He could get no shelter at night, but he said trustfully, "All that God does is well," and journeyed towards the forest, where the wind put out his lamp. "All that God does is well," he said, and repeated the words even when his ass and his rooster were lost. Next day he found that a troop of an enemy's soldiers had passed through the woods in the night, and he reflected that if they had seen the lamp, or the ass or rooster had proclaimed his vicinity, he would have lost his life. "All that God does is done well," he cried adoringly; and we, in whose lives the lesson of the homely legend has been repeated again and again, confide ourselves anew with unclouded faith to His keeping whose love is brighter than the morn, unchangeable and true.

RECORDS OF PROGRESS.

The common-metre hymn once given out by a negro is an inspiring New-Year composition:—

"Go on, go on, go on, go on,
Go on, go on, go on,
Go on, go on, go on, go on,
Go on, go on, go on."

We are glad to find, from interesting accounts received of their progress, how many good works to which we have drawn attention in THE QUIVER are acting in the spirit of the poet of progress, and going forward actively, earnestly, successfully. Some time since we noticed the Sailors' Rest, Amlwch, Anglesea. Mr. R. Morgan, a zealous worker therein, reports that Christian efforts continue to be put forth in the ragged-school and sailors' reading-room, and a number of letters have been received from abroad, testifying to benefit resulting from the practical sympathy extended to the men. Mr. R. Morgan visits the vessels with helpful and interesting literature, in addition to gifts of tracts. Sergeant Pullinger continues to labour on behalf of soldiers at the Home, 58, Hugh Street, Pimlico. "He was a boy in my Sunday-school class thirty years ago," writes a lady correspondent, who has seen the fruitage of her early work indeed, for many have been converted through the instrumentality of her former scholar. Like all Christian workers, Sergeant Pullinger is a little perplexed now and then about ways and means; but his is a most helpful and hopeful endeavour, and doubtless his hands will be yet further strengthened for the uplifting of our gallant soldiers. No standstill report is that of the Plumstead Mission for Artisans. Miss Russell, 1, Thames View Terrace, Plumstead, has had it laid upon her heart to interest herself and others in evangelical efforts amid a poor, struggling neighbourhood—efforts carried on by means of tent, mission-hall, and faithful Gospel appeals. Fruit "after many days" has often appeared from this work, which has so extended that it is necessary to provide greatly increased accommodation. "*Excelsior*" is the watchword also of the Working Girls' Club, St. George's, Norwich (the Rev. R. Hobson, Secretary). We have more than once alluded to this earnest effort to brighten the leisure of factory-girls by useful, enjoyable classes, and the institution goes encouragingly forward. The Precentor of Norwich Cathedral testifies: "It is a noble work you are doing at St. George's Home, and the happy faces of hard-working girls must be an ample reward." "Forward, forward, let us range!" cries the Laureate: may the good works of 1889 be but the foretaste of widening influences that shall garland 1890 and all succeeding years!

FOR ALL READERS.

While the question of prizes and presents is still to the fore, our readers will be glad to hear of five new stories just issued by Messrs. Nisbet and Co., which are all very suitable for such uses. First comes "One Little Vein of Dross," a clever story by Mrs. Ruth Lamb, turning upon the not very original pivot of lost jewels, but worked out in so interesting a manner as to make it a very attractive volume for girls. "Mr. Orde's Grandchildren" by C. S. Lowndes, is intended for much younger girls, and would make a good prize for a scholar in one of the lower classes of the school; while "Miss Brown's Basket," a slighter story by Mrs. Henry Charles, carries with it

a lesson that would be better appreciated by one nearer the top of the school. "Where the Dew Falls in London," which is by our old friend Miss Sarah Doudney, is also another story particularly suited for elder girls, who can enter into the strong drawing of Miss Doudney's characters. "Golden Silence," the last of the five, is from the prolific pen of Emma Marshall, and though it cannot fail to interest all readers, would yet, we fancy, appeal, like the two stories we have just mentioned, most directly to elder girls. Sunday-school librarians should look out for these stories.—From the same publishers we have received an admirable little volume of "Bible History for Children," by Lady Kennett-Barrington, which should serve as a trustworthy introduction for little readers to the study of the Word of God. —"Stories Jolly, Stories New, Stories Strange, and Stories True" is the taking title of a volume issued by Messrs. Skeffington, containing a series of stories intended for the reading of boys and girls from six to fourteen years old. When we say that Mrs. Molesworth, Mrs. Macquoid, Mr. R. M. Ballantyne, and Mr. George Manville Fenn are among the contributors, we have said enough to show that this is a work of peculiar promise, and we may add that the promise is amply borne out by the perusal.—From the same publishers we have received a complete story for young children by Mrs. Macquoid, and illustrated by her husband. It is entitled "Pepin, the Dancing Bear," and would make a very pretty present for a child. The Christmas volume of *Little Folks* (Cassell and Co.) would be certain of a warm welcome if only for its illustrations; but the stories and verses are so good, and the coloured frontispieces so attractive, that the magazine is sure to retain its hold on the affection of its readers.—Children who take an interest in Band of Hope work ought to read the "Temperance Mirror" (National Temperance Publication Depôt), where they will find some very suitable pieces for recitation.

THE PRAYER IN THE GRANARY.

We heard recently of an incident which reminded us how little our human vision perceives *below the surface*, and what blossoms of faith and love may exist where to us stolidity alone is apparent. A country farmer, rising at four o'clock one bright morning, set off for a stroll around his place, and was startled to find the door leading to the granary unfastened, and yet his trusted mastiff stretched beside it in evident ease of mind. "Somebody is robbing me," decided the master, "and it must be one of my own men, for the dog would never have let a stranger go by." He silenced the welcoming dog by a gesture, and crept quietly nearer the granary to detect the thief. But soon his heart was stirred to its depths, for he heard his groom pleading with God in prayer, and he realised that the man was accustomed to choose that early hour and that quiet, lonely place to pour out his prayer before God. The farmer was himself an earnest Christian, but he had no notion that his example and the spirit of his household had been blest to lead this man to discipleship; and great was his joy in the salvation of one who had seemed to him most unlikely.

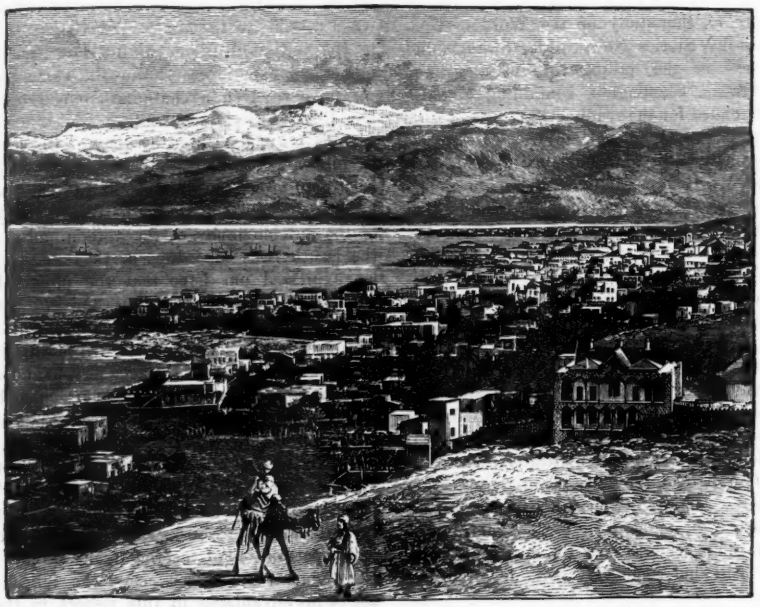
OLD FRIENDS AND NEW.

Mr. Spurgeon's first book! What changes have not come over the world since this was originally published! And yet "The Saint and his Saviour," which has been re-issued in a new and very handsome form by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, is as applicable to the spiritual needs of to-day as it was when first it saw the light. We wish it God-speed, in the increased power of its honoured author's name and experience.—From the same publishers we have received a charming Memoir of the late Dr. Charles Stanford, another well-known South London preacher, edited by his wife. Accompanied by Manesse's equisitely etched portrait, the volume is sure to prove doubly attractive to the many who knew and loved Dr. Stanford.—When the first part of the autobiography of the veteran missionary to the South Seas—the Rev. J. G. Paton—appeared, we expressed our hope that the promised second part might speedily be forthcoming. And now Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton have more than satisfied our expectation in the interesting volume before us. There is in it the keen fervour and steadfast consecration of the true missionary-spirit breathed on every page of a record that would put to shame many a romance of adventure.—From the strange life of a foreign missionary to the "Personal and Family Glimpses of Remarkable People" (same publishers) of Archdeacon Whately is a long step. As the son of the well-known archbishop, the writer had opportunities of meeting many people, more or less eminent, and he has made the fullest possible use of his advantages in this respect in the chatty volume that is before us.—"*Imago Christi*" (Hodder and Stoughton) is the title the Rev. James Stalker, of Glasgow, gives to a valuable series of chapters on the example of our Divine Lord in the various aspects of our earthly life—the home, the State, the Church, and so on. Professedly the teaching of this work is drawn from the Gospel narratives, and there is not a little in it to cheer, to instruct, and to encourage.—As a seasonable gift, many will be glad to welcome a new edition—the first that has been complete in a single volume—of "The Poetical Works of Frances Ridley Havergal" (Nisbet). The volume is at once tasteful and handy, while the printing is all that could be desired.—It is impossible to read the interesting story told in "Cardinal Lavigerie and Slavery in Africa" (Longmans) without a feeling of deep regret that the man who is capable of such noble and self-sacrificing efforts on behalf of the poor slaves of the Dark Continent should himself be enslaved in

the spiritual bondage of the Roman system. As a record of the actual state of the slaves at the present time, and the forces at work for their liberation, the volume is of great value to all English labourers in the same field. It is too early yet to estimate the effect of the recent edict of the Sultan of Zanzibar, doing away with the servitude of the children of the slaves in his dominions; but it may safely be taken as indicative of the progress of the grand, truly Christ-like movement which has for its end the utter abolition of this accursed system of slavery.—Mr. Elliot Stock has just published, in book form, under the title "Idylls of the Field," a series of nature-articles, most of which have appeared in the columns of one of our morning contemporaries. The author is Mr. F. A. Knight, and the freshness and breeziness of his style render it peculiarly suitable for dealing with such topics as he takes up. Whether "Meadows of Asphodel" or "A Robber Stronghold" be the most interesting of all the papers in the volume, we should find it difficult to say, but both are delightful, and only a little more so than the rest of the chapters in this charming little book, which is most tastefully illustrated also.—To their useful series on "Men of the Bible," Messrs. Nisbet have now added "Joshua: His Life and Times," by the Rev. W. J. Deane, who has contributed one or two previous volumes to the rapidly growing series. His is a thoughtful work, likely to prove of great assistance to teachers.—"One and All" is the motto which Mr. Richard Tangye, of Birmingham, has made the title of his autobiography, issued by Messrs. S. W. Partridge and Co. There is much to interest all readers in this story of the growth of a large industry, and the methods by which its success was achieved.

CHRISTIAN WORK IN SYRIA.

A work much owned by God is that carried on in connection with the British Syrian Mission, founded in 1860 by Mrs. Bowen Thompson. The



BEYROUT.

secretary of this effort is Miss Poulton, 18, Homefield Road, Wimbledon. The Harem visitors and Bible-women are encouraged to find their labours increased, and a good work is going on among the soldiers of the Lebanon army. The medical mission battles hard against ignorance and disease. The Syrian women know little of nursing, but the rising generation in the Christian schools will have better advantages; and meanwhile the workers patiently do their best, comforting the sick body and speaking words of healing to the soul. Girls of all denominations are educated at the institution in Beyrout. Several have arranged to teach when their own education is finished. They learn useful domestic work, and in every school the Bible is the foundation of instruction. Help and training are also extended to the blind, who learn from raised letters and maps,

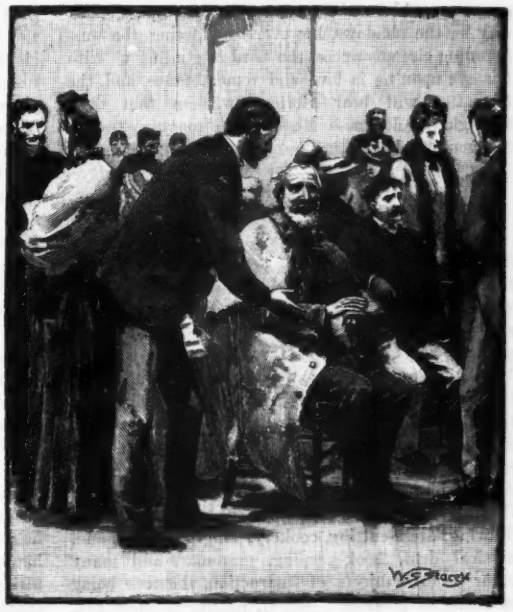
and are much cheered by the bright singing and sympathetic care around them. The teachings of Christianity are bearing practical fruit amid the daughters of Syria. A little ministering child, hearing that a blind woman was neglected by her children, comforted the mother, read to her and prayed with her, and told her family the teachings of Scripture concerning duty towards parents, till a great change was wrought in that house. A mere child told a woman who had been in trouble how the Lord had tried the faith of Abraham, and went on to speak of the Saviour of whom Isaac was a type. This is a mission that works on behalf of many races and religions, and endeavours to lead Moslems, Druses, Jews, and others, simply to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ Speaking of a garden near Beyrout, to which the scholars are invited, a worker says, "It is full of fir, magnolia, acacia, and eucalyptus trees, with roses, heliotrope, and flowering shrubs. All around one has glimpses of Lebanon, and, with the river murmuring near, one feels in an earthly Paradise." Amid such scenes may heaven be begun below in many and many a heart, by being led to rest on the finished work of Christ alone!

THE MISSION TO ITALIAN SOLDIERS.

With increasing blessing the unvarnished Gospel is again set forth in these latter days to those who dwell in Rome, and a most interesting movement is connected with the preaching of Luigi Capellini, once a student in a priest-ruled college, afterwards the commander of a military detachment, and now the leader of earnest Evangelical work, which is wholly undenominational, and which has spread the Scriptures not only among the troops, but among numbers of scattered peasantry. Some New Testament pages lying in the street led to Capellini's conversion, and he at once used his influence among the soldiers to proclaim the Gospel and to evangelise his comrades. To the little church thus formed Admiral Fishbourne presented a communion-service, of which the flagon bears the inscription, "From soldiers of England to the Evangelical soldiers of Italy." Many a convert has been tried by ridicule and persecution, influential endeavours having been put forth to repress the work. But persecution has failed. Not a few who attended the services to spy and report have become valiant witnesses for the faith they once opposed. Among those named as Capellini's helpers and co-workers are a former infidel, a sergeant who was once a leader of dissipation, another whose own village condemns him as a heretic, and a converted monk of great culture and ability. A "Martin Luther Association" exists to combine spiritual work with educative and recreative pursuits. We may add that help from English friends towards this mission may be sent to Miss Stoddart, 36, Donnington Park, West Hampstead.

HELPING HANDS.

"I can never see you," said a well-known Christian worker to an aged believer, "without longing for a word from you, and wanting to shake hands with you. You know what a debt I owe you, do you not?" He had made his way through a crowd to the side of the old gentleman, who shook his head, having come in contact with so many during the course of his long life that circumstances could not always stand out clearly in his memory. He knew the speaker now as an energetic Gospel standard-bearer, but more than this he could not recall. "Years ago," said the other, "I came up to London to seek a place in a business house, bearing a letter of introduction to you. I was friendless, timid, strange; you were very busy when I entered the warehouse, but you read the letter, and spoke to me a few words as to the worth of a good character. You said you would do your best for me, and promised to see me again. Then you asked me whom I knew in London, and I told you 'only yourself!' 'In that case' you said, 'you must spend to-morrow with me; your first Sunday in London must not be a lonely one.' You welcomed me home on the morrow; you took me to worship, and to the Sunday-school with you; that Sunday decided me for the service of



"'You know what a debt I owe you, do you not?'"

the Master." Who knows what eternal issues may hang on a kind word, a helping hand held out to a young life at a crisis like this?

DARKNESS AT NOON.

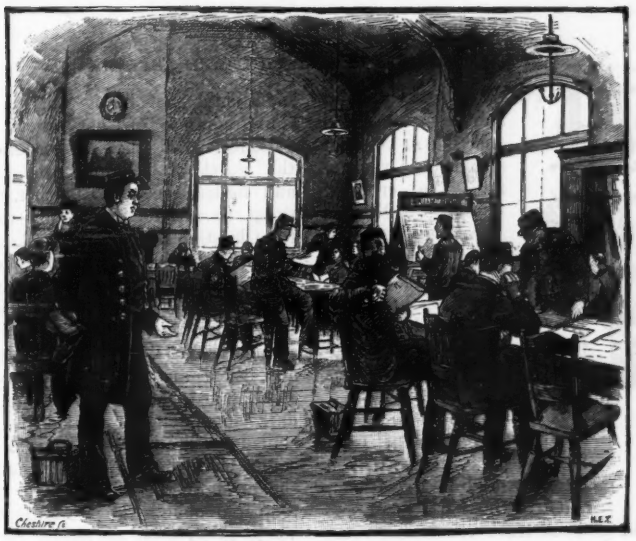
The sayings of little children may often point a lesson to children of a larger growth, for in face of many a problem of time and eternity, the most learned are but as little ones, dimly understanding, and often mistaken in judgment. One stormy day the atmosphere grew dark and gloomy while some little occupants of the nursery were taking their early dinner, and, after regarding the state of affairs in bewilderment and some impatience, a small boy settled the case by exclaiming, "Mother, we'd better all go to bed. God has made a mistake." A smile went round the table at the child's notion that the Almighty had sent the night before its time; but, after all, have none of us now and then come to as foolish a conclusion respecting the dealings of our Lord? Things have gone all wrong in our opinion, and the arrangements we mentally decided to be best, have been suddenly and sadly frustrated. In the midst of noonday sunshine, storm and darkness have veiled our sky, and our hearts are inclined to murmur, "God has made a mistake." To the child's remark the elders would say decisively, "God never can make mistakes," but let us believe this as well as say it. Let us remember the years gone by, when through the changing days, the hand of our God has led us on by the right way, when His appointments have proved better than our fears, our hopes, our prayers; and let us be very certain that however dark may be the shadows, however bewildering the surrounding circumstances, the Lord is guiding us with His eye upon us in love and remembrance, and the Hereafter will bear glorious witness that even through the darkness He abides "too wise to err, too good to be unkind."

EVENING CLASSES FOR YOUNG WOMEN.

Our friends of the Young Women's Christian Association are anxious at this season to make known that they have made special arrangements to bring within the reach of working girls good educational classes, and it is their hope that facilities for this purpose may be devised throughout the country. We have known young women anxious to improve themselves, yet too shy to plead for increased education; doubtless such classes at various centres will do much to benefit the members, and to swell the ranks of those brought within the influence of the Association. In London the advantages offered are Civil Service classes, ambulance lectures, French, drawing, dress-cutting, cookery, singing, shorthand, musical drill, book-keeping, grammar, and many other useful subjects of instruction, the fees being as small as possible. Mr. H. Kidner or Miss Ely, 17, Old Cavendish Street, W., receives the names of those in business houses who would like to join. Our lady readers may also be interested in an institution to which we have been asked to call attention, the "Mary Allworth Home," Mayfield, Sussex. This Home is open for change and rest to hard-worked ladies in various walks of life. It is managed by a matron, and the visitors pay from ten to twenty shillings weekly according to means; they are free from any harassing restrictions, and a private letter from a visitor tells us "one is quite free, and lives as in a family." The idea of this Home is that it shall not be considered a *charity*, but an effort to benefit and help those who are helping themselves.

A BUDGET OF STORIES.

While "Dorothy's Vocation" is still fresh in their memories, readers of THE QUIVER need no introduction to Miss Everett Green, the author of "Miriam's Ambition," the first of a budget of new stories for young people which has just reached us from Messrs. Blackie and Son, and which we have taken up with special interest in view of the seasonable cry for new books for boys and girls. The children Miss Everett Green draws are such genuine little ones that her story is sure to please her young readers; while her elder characters, and especially Sister Frank, are very strong.—"Cousin Geoffrey and I," by Caroline Austin, will be more likely to win the favour of girls than boys, we fancy. There is plenty of incident in the story, though, and the evil results of past wrong are clearly marked.—A clever dream-story by Alice Corkran, entitled "Down the Snow Stairs," is the next volume on our list. It is just the work to take the fancy of an impressionable child, and by its clever imagery not only to amuse, but also to really instruct the little reader; especially as the letter-press is accompanied by Mr. Gordon Browne's whimsical illustrations.—The American Civil War of last generation is becoming as great a favourite for the setting of a story as our own struggle of the seventeenth century was a little time ago. "With Lee in Virginia," by the ever-popular Mr. G. A. Henty, is the latest example of this tendency. We are glad to see that though the hero was fighting on the side opposed to the righteous claims of the slaves, he showed a right feeling towards them himself. However, we could have wished him altogether on the nobler side. The story is full of stirring incident, sure to please boy readers on both sides of the Atlantic.—"The Hermit Hunter of the Wilds," the next story in Messrs. Blackie's series, is from the pen of Dr. Gordon Stables, whose wide experience is sure to issue in a story at once exciting and novel.—"Sam Silvan's Sacrifice," by Jesse Coleman, is well described in its sub-title as "the story of two fatherless boys." The final scene, in which Sam dies to save his brother, is very touchingly told, and brings to a fitting close a most interesting story, in which the characters are well brought out.—In "Grettir the Outlaw," the Rev. S. Baring Gould has retold for



THE READING-ROOM, N.E.R. INSTITUTE, YORK.

boys the story of one of the old Icelandic Sagas, full of the stirring life of the Viking days. In his preface the author shows his readers how he told the story in instalments to his pupils thirty years ago. It was then very popular with them, and we are sure it will meet an equally warm reception from its wider circle of acquaintances now. This closes the list of Messrs. Blackie's new story-books, which all teachers and school librarians should see, as well as all who are on the look-out for acceptable gift-books for their young friends.

RAILWAY WORKMEN'S COMFORT.

Close to the railway station at York, there has been erected by the North-Eastern Railway Company, for the comfort of its officials, an institute, new and useful. It aims at bodily comfort, instruction, and recreation for persons employed by that great railway company in one of the chief of its centres; and as it has 1,250 members, it must be considered as in some degree fulfilling its aim. To the railway worker, rest, recreation, and comfort are essential, and the many employed in and travelling to York find the Institute of value. Large and comfortable dining-rooms are there, where food may be warmed and cooked; and there is abundant room for comfortably partaking of food, whether bought or brought. A recreation-room, a billiard-room, two reading-rooms, in every way fitted well, and even luxuriously furnished—class-rooms, and a large library well stocked with current literature. Classes, eleven in number, meet in the winter evenings, for the teaching of book-keeping, drawing, applied mechanics, and allied subjects; and by lectures and entertainments the work of the institute is added to. It is chiefly distinguishable from the ordinary mechanics' institute in the fact that it is provided for and managed by railway men, and that the subscription is lower—from threepence to fivepence per month for the ordinary member. It is one which will be the precursor of others on the great railway system named; and it might be a useful adjunct in other centres of the railway system.

THE "QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from October 21st up to and including November 18th, 1889. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month.

A Wellwisher, Newmarket, 3s.; Thankful, Warwick, 7s. 6d.; S. H., Hampton, 2s. 6d.

Dr. Barnardo has asked the Editor to acknowledge the receipt of 10s. from Myrtle, for the Homes.

THE "QUIVER" FREE GRANTS FUND.

In response to the appeal on page 80 of our November number for a fund wherefrom to supply free copies of THE QUIVER to the sick poor and aged, who by poverty are precluded from subscribing to it, we have received the following donations up to and including November 18th, 1889:—

Anon, Surbiton, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Bristowe, Derby, £1.

The Editor will be pleased to send collecting cards to all who wish, by helping in this way, to further the movement. All such applications and all contributions should be addressed—"The Editor of THE QUIVER, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C."

"GOD SEES TO ME."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



A POOR infirm man, blind and deaf, was asked once, "Are you not afraid to venture into the crowded streets?"—"No," he answered; "I am taken care of; somebody helps me along. *God sees to me.*" Every kindly hand held out to him, every touch of friendliness and sympathy, this poor man—rich in faith—took thankfully as the token of God's ever-present care. "God sees to me." If you are poor and needy, friend, and trusting in the Lord, these words hold glorious truth concerning yourself. Whatever your trials and sorrows, the record of your daily life is not written in gloomy characters, but in bright and shining letters, if only you are able to acknowledge by faith "God sees to me."

Bring to remembrance His care for you in the past, when He caused you to come out from the ways of carelessness and heedlessness, and love His Name and treasure His Word. Every promise in that Word is your own by right. How many have been fulfilled over and over again, when things seemed darkest, and you scarcely knew where to turn! Bring to remembrance the answered prayers of the past, the times when God helped you and comforted you, and made the rough places plain and straight before you. "God always *did* see to me," is your thankful cry, as memory goes back to the days of old, and you trace the way the Lord has led you, and "forget not all His benefits." "But what about the *present?*" perhaps you are inclined to sigh. "I want to do so much, and I can do so little; day after day is wasted, and I just lie here weakened and infirm." Make no mistakes, sorrowful heart—judge not rashly even your own feeble self. Day after day is *not* wasted, for you are learning the patience of Christ. Is it lost time to be fashioned into His all-glorious image? And how do you know that you are doing little or nothing? If you are praying even for one immortal soul, you are doing holy and deathless work; and little do you guess what may be the influence for all eternity of these days of quiet the Lord has ordained.

"She is a living sermon," was said of one of God's saints, aged, paralysed, helpless as a little child, yet filling all the household with the fragrance of her sweet cheeriness and patience. Let the Master show through you the *worth* of religion, even though the vine and fig-tree seem to wither. It is a great thing to set forth the joy and sweetness of the Christian life when the skies are blue overhead; it is a greater to shine for Jesus through the darkness, and triumph in Him over pain and bodily ills. I read once a suggestive fable of a boat borne gaily on the sparkling waves of the summer sea. "What if a storm came?" mentally asked an onlooker. By-and-bye the sunshine faded, the wind rose mournfully, and the dark angry tempest roused the waves that had smiled so brightly. But, safe in storm as in calm, the little boat rode triumphantly still on the crest of the waves—"for its cable was of tempered metal, and it was *anchored to a rock.*" There is no need, no reason, for life's storms to overwhelm you; reckon up your troubles as you may, you will find your mercies exceed them, and the troubles seem to grow dim before the sunlight of the assurance: "Even now God sees to me."

Will He look after you? Will He care for you in the time to come? Like many of us, you are, maybe, more frightened of to-morrow than of to-day; but the Master's love is not for the present hour alone. It is a provision for to-morrow: a certainty through that unknown future wherein He will walk with you and hold your hand. "I have loved thee," He says, "with an everlasting love." And His tenderness provides a promise for to-morrow, and every day to come: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be." What to-morrow holds, need not trouble your heart, for God has promised never to leave you nor forsake you, and He will choose for you nothing but the tenderest, highest, best. Live a day at a time; there shall nothing be laid upon you beyond what your faith can gloriously bear. "You have more than you can carry," said a boy to his little brother, whose open arms were receiving parcels from the father. "*Father* knows how much I can carry," was the trustful reply. Let us, in the spirit of this little child, take rest in the certainty that all our Father appoints we shall be able to carry to His glory with trust and thanksgiving. "God sees to me"—God, who is all love, all power, all sympathy; therefore return unto thy rest, my soul! For even in the shadow-valley of weakness and depression my God is with me, and I will fear no evil.

M. S. H.





YOUTH.

(See p. 254.)

THROUGH EVIL REPORT.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE neighbourhood of Clare Market is not quite the place where one would expect to find a born musician and a genius. Yet some twenty years ago, in the most squalid part of that malodorous locality, lived a little lad of ten who was both. He was a veritable street arab, with puckered, grimy face, tattered clothing, and ten small cold toes peeping out from his dilapidated boots.

How he loved music! His opportunities of hearing it were few. Even organ-grinders and German bands avoided Clare Market; though, indeed, their performances hardly merit the name of music. But at the corner of the fearful court in which was his home, stood a public-house, outside which a man and woman nightly took up their station.

The man played a harp, and the woman sang to his accompaniment. Her voice was full and rich, though sorely cracked and harsh in the upper notes, but this was because she sang in all weathers, and very loudly too. She sang all kinds of songs in her loud, strong voice, but one little listener liked the ballads best. He did not care much for the music-hall ditties, or the vocal waltzes, but he listened entranced to "Alice, where art thou?" and "The Banks of Allan Water." He led a wretched life, for his mother was always tipsy, and she beat him dreadfully. His father he had never known. But the other urchins pointed at him with disdainful finger and called out in their shrill treble: "Whose father was hung? Whose father was hung?"

So he only had the music and one other thing to comfort him; and that other was a puny little sister. Such a sickly, sallow baby, on whose pinched tiny face death was written, oh! so plainly, only the little lad could not see it. And day by day he sat on the door-step with her in his arms, or in summer-time he struggled along with his burden to Lincoln's Inn Fields or the river-side, with a vague childish



"It was a pretty picture."—*p.* 245.

feeling that the soft air and the lovely sunshine coming through the thick green of the trees might do her good, and bring a little colour into her pallid baby cheeks.

Yet, despite his loving, anxious care, she grew paler and thinner; till at last one hot night, when not a breath of air stirred in the court, when the woman sang outside the public-house, in which his mother stood drinking—on that hot, airless night the baby died. One sickly smile playing over the little wasted face, one short convulsive gasp, and he was left alone. And outside, the full strong voice sang, "On the banks of Allan Water, there a corse lay she."

He looked round the dreadful, filthy room; he listened to the oaths of the men and the shrill laughter of the women in the court below. Then, with a passion of sobs, he kissed the dead baby face, and never looking back, passed out of the room, down the rotten stairs, and so into the court. As he went along he passed his mother, who was reeling home singing a drunken snatch of song. She turned aside and tried to strike him, but he slunk away from her and went on down the narrow court. And as he went the boys cried after him: "Whose father was hung? Whose father was hung?"

And so he started to seek his fortune!

* * * * * *

It was fifteen years after, and an August day. In the sleepy old cathedral town of Longchester, everything was very still on that hot summer afternoon. The High Street was almost deserted. The doors of the quaint low shops stood wide open, but the shopkeepers were not visible—they were taking a siesta in the parlours behind. From the cathedral came the grand roll of the organ; though service was long since over, and the worshippers dispersed. And in the organ-loft the organist played on, lost to all else but his glorious art; playing now a stately fugue, now a dreamy nocturne, and sometimes he burst out into joyous little peals of melody, and sometimes into loud-swelling choruses. Below sat one listener—a bright-faced, brown-haired girl, and the sun, streaming through the stained-glass window, fell in great violet and amber splashes on her white muslin dress and sun-bonnet. The organ-blower was the only discontented one of the trio. The musician was happy, and so was the girl—in listening to him. But the blower was of coarser mould. His was hot work, and he thought longingly of the cooling tea awaiting him at home. At last, however, he was free; for the organist stopped, regretfully. The last note reverberated through the church, and he, divested of his surplice and hood, came hat in hand down the aisle. Then he caught sight of the girl, and a slight flush came over his pale earnest face, while she advanced shyly with kind little hand outstretched.

"I waited for you, Mr. Herapath," she said, "to tell you that I shall be leaving Longchester sooner than I expected, so I want to take three lessons a week if you will let me, instead of two. I want to be a clever organist, you know," she said playfully.

He looked down at the dainty figure in muslin draperies, at the flushed girlish face, with its grey-blue eyes, and soft peachy skin. There was a look almost of love in his face as he gazed on her. She could not see this, because the sun-bonnet was so very shady, and his tone was quite an ordinary one as he answered calmly—

"I should be delighted, Miss Wilton. What day will suit you best?"

"Friday, I think, if you can manage that day."

Then they walked out of the dim solemn old building into a bright blaze of sunshine. They went along the picturesque High Street, which stood on a hill, and had on each side old gabled houses, with latticed windows, and, in most cases, elaborate signs hanging out into the road. Presently they turned into a field, through which ran a clear babbling little brook, spanned by a rough wooden bridge. Just over the bridge and through one more field, and they must part, for Sylvia Wilton would be at home.

She was staying with her aunt in the prettiest of rose-covered cottages, while Thorold Herapath, the organist, had rooms at the other end of the town.

"Good-bye," he said, holding the little soft kid-clothed hand a second longer than was necessary. "Good-bye! You will be at the cathedral on Friday?"

"Good-bye," she said. "I will be there." And then looking up, she met the burning gaze of those big black eyes, and blushing hotly, the silly fluttering thing ran quickly into the cottage, up the oak staircase to a fragrant white bedroom, where, with brown head framed by rich yellow roses, she leant from the window, and with palpitating heart, and eyes even brighter than usual, watched the organist go down the road.

Readers of discernment will have divined long since that Thorold Herapath the talented young organist of Longchester Cathedral, and a tattered street arab whose unpoetical name was Edward or "Teddy" Robinson, are one.

Now, from London gutter-child to cathedral organist is a great jump, even allowing for the many and wonderful things which may happen in fifteen years. So, while the musician is walking dreamily along the quiet dusty road, with his heart throbbing quickly and his head full of the sweetest, prettiest girl in Christendom, we will enlighten our discerning reader still more, and explain how the poor neglected denizen of Clare Market is to-day a rapidly rising musical artist. It can be told in a very few words, because, somehow or other, genius will out, and as he was born to be an artist and nothing else, it followed in the natural sequence of events that he became one. For, after many vicissitudes, he got a situation at a piano shop, and, by a marvellous turn of Providence, an organist who bought music at his master's became interested in the little errand-boy with the bright open face and big black eyes, and learning of his passion for music, adopted him, being a widowed and childless man, and gave him the best musical training possible; so that at twenty-one his *protégé* was

assistant organist of a big London church, and at twenty-five organist of Longchester Cathedral. His benefactor was dead now, so he was alone in the world, except, as sometimes he remembered with a shudder, that he might still have a mother—though by this time surely she was dead, too—a drunken, brutal creature, such as he remembered her when he was a wretched little waif of ten. He shuddered when he thought of her, because it was the one morbid dread of his life that she would find him and proclaim to his friends that he was bred in a gutter and was the son of a murderer—for had not the urchins cruelly taunted him and shouted that his father was hanged? He winced when he thought of it, and those jeering cries seemed to ring afresh in his ears.

But his thoughts were pleasant ones as he walked along the dusty high-road on this summer day. For he was thinking of the girl he loved, and who, he felt sure, loved him. It was only two months since Sylvia and her aunt had come to Rose Cottage, and yet he wondered how life could have seemed so full before he met her. Even music, he thought, could not now console him should he lose his mistress. So he went on till he came to the suburbs. For Longchester, dear quaint old town, was disfigured by two miles of ugly yellow-brick suburbs. He turned in presently at one of the smaller houses. It was where he lodged; and as he went up the garden path a blind moved ever so slightly at one of the upper windows next door, and a pair of watchful greenish eyes gleamed out.

They belonged to a dashing young widow, Mrs. Magnus Wood, and, though green in tint, they were really very magnificent eyes—large and brilliant, with long curling fringes of silky black. For the rest, the widow was not good-looking. Her nose was a snub, her mouth too wide, and her complexion, even through her powder, deplorably bad. But her figure was graceful, and she had a certain smart air and a cunning way of arranging her plenteous black tresses, which rendered her not unattractive to a casual observer.

And, though her victim never dreamed of such a thing, she meant to marry Thorold Herapath. She did not love him. She was a cold woman of the world, and a bit of an adventuress. Love had ever played a minor part in her life. Still, she was keen enough to see that the organist was a rising man, and, as his wife, the people of Longchester, hitherto so coy, would smile on her. For, despite her splendid eyes, her wonderful dresses, and her pretty bijou house, Longchester folk looked askance at this recent arrival, and the card-tray in her dainty drawing-room was almost empty. So for the last six weeks she had brought to bear the whole battery of her charms on unconscious Thorold Herapath—in vain. And, though she did not know it, she had not even a ghost of a chance now, for he had fallen a victim to sweet English girlhood and eighteen summers; and certainly ultra-fashionable gowns, and a smiling well-powdered face, had no power to make him swerve from his allegiance.

"He looks unusually bright," she said to herself. "I wonder what has happened?"

On a certain afternoon, some three weeks after, the widow discovered why he looked so happy, for, while taking a long solitary ramble, fate directed her steps to Rose Cottage. She had never been along the road before; she belonged to suburban Longchester, and therefore to a totally distinct "set" from Longchester proper.

So she looked admiringly at the white rose-covered cottage, with its long, untidy garden, surrounded by an old red-brick, lichen-covered wall. A peacock was strutting pompously on the lawn; tall golden sunflowers and pure stately lilies reared their heads above the low wall. The casement windows were wide open, for it was a hot, sleepy afternoon, and their ample draperies of cool blue, or creamy white, were flapping lazily in the gentlest of breezes. A velvety bumble-bee droned unceasingly as he went from flower to flower, and the beautiful peacock called out harshly from time to time, but everything else was very still.

She was a practical, inartistic woman, yet the simple, peaceful beauty of the homestead impressed her, and, shielding her face from the hot sun with her parasol, she walked along the dusty road outside the low brick wall. It was in parts just high enough to prevent anything being seen from the garden but the top of her red silk sunshade, but in some places low enough for her to catch occasional glimpses of the scented flowery old place. And, gently sauntering along, she presently saw something which made her splendid eyes flash dangerously, and a couple of bright red patches burn through her powder. It was a pretty picture—a fair rosy-cheeked girl, in a blue-grey cambric gown which matched her eyes: and by her side stood a tall passionate-looking man, whose face was lit up with love as he gazed admiringly at the pretty figure beside him. The girl was picking currants: her fingers were rosy with their juice, and, as she quickly stripped each ripe bunch, the sunbeams shone and scintillated on a diamond ring which encircled the third finger of her left hand.

The face of the woman outside the wall grew very dark, and she crouched low down and waited. She was quite close to the lovers, and when they spoke, every word would burn itself into her jealous listening ears.

Yet she did not love him, but she had planned to marry him. The name and protection of a good man meant so much to her: all her life she had striven after conventional respectability—had striven, oh! so hard, to get into society of some good kind, and all her life Mrs. Grundy had frowned her down: for was she not an adventuress? So, to be foiled by a baby-faced chit of a girl was maddening, and perhaps the very simplicity and youth of her rival made her hate her the more; for she was a simple-hearted girl herself once—long, long years ago.

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So she crouched by the old wall and waited—till at last a clear voice broke the silence.

"Now you have given me this beautiful ring, Thorold darling, I suppose I must tell Auntie. But I didn't want to, dear, because it is so lovely to have a secret—such a secret! To know that you love me and I love you, more than anything or anyone else in the whole wide world! And for nobody to have a bit of a suspicion about it!"

Presently the girl spoke again.

"'Thorold Herapath!' It is a pretty name, but not like a real one, is it? More like the hero of a novel. . . .

"Why, Thorold, how pale you look! It *is* your name, surely, dear?"

There was a little pause. Even on the other side of the wall the woman could hear his heavy breathing.

"My darling," he said at last, "it is *not* my name. Some day, when you are my wife, my sweet, I will tell you the real one, and perhaps why I gave it up. And then, I will beg my Sylvia to forgive my reticence. Can you trust me, dear?"

The girl's voice came sweet and clear. "I will trust you always, darling. I will never believe any evil against you—never—unless you tell me to believe it, and that could never be."

Then, rising painfully from her crouching attitude, the woman peered cautiously over the wall; and there in the sunlight stood the girl, her long summer draperies falling on the bright green grass, her sweet trustful face upturned, and her lover's strong tender arms around her.

So the widow left them, but as she went lonely homeward, she revolved in her scheming brain a diabolical plan with which she meant to ruin, if she could, the happiness of two young lives. That evening she drew from a small tin box a folded paper, and, reading it through carefully, she put it in her pocket-book.

"It is a perfectly safe plan," she said, "for the girl has never seen me. She is almost a stranger here, and lives three miles away. At the worst, should I fail, I can but leave Longchester. All places are alike to me."

CHAPTER II.

Two days later the lovers stood at the garden gate.

"I shall only see you once more before I go," said Sylvia. "I will come for my lesson to-morrow afternoon. We leave for town in the evening."

"Puss!" said her lover fondly. "'T is but waste of a musician's time to give you organ lessons."

"Our lessons *have* been farcical lately," laughed the girl; "but how can one think of time and expression, and chords and discords, when one is in love—and with one's teacher?"

"And Tuesday—oh! Thorold—will be our last day together."

"Never mind, pet," he said cheerily. "I shall be in London in a month—and then—then we might be married."

"It is too soon, far too soon," she said decidedly, and shook her pretty head. But she smiled all the same.

"Now you must go, dear, or you will be late for the service at the cathedral. See, here is a rose—such a beauty! and a bit of maidenhair for your coat. Now, go."

She watched him out of sight, and shivered a little as she turned away. A cold dark cloud obscured the sun. The leaves on the trees and rose-bushes rustled faintly. A storm was near.

She went down the garden to the orchard, where she had left a book. As she went along by the wall a veiled head looked over, and a black-gloved hand beckoned her near. She went, wonderingly, and found herself close to a tall, graceful-looking woman—young, apparently, though her veil was so thick that nothing could be seen of her face save the restless sparkle of a pair of greenish eyes.

"I wanted to speak to you," she said, in a clear hard voice, "about the organist of Longchester cathedral."

"Do you mean Mr. Herapath?" asked Sylvia quietly, though her heart beat fast. She seemed to have a foreboding of coming evil.

The strange woman gave a cruel little laugh. "*You* may call him Mr. Herapath," she said; "*I* call him Edward Robinson. Because, you see"—she looked full in the fair flushing young face—"*he is my husband!*"

"It is not true!" said Sylvia indignantly. "I will never believe it. What proof have you?"

The tall woman pulled out a pocket-book, from which she brought two pieces of paper.

Sylvia took them eagerly and read them over: a marriage certificate and a newspaper cutting announcing the wedding.

It was between an Edward Robinson and a Letitia Savile, and the date was the 10th of February, 1879.

"Still, I do not know that these have any reference to Mr. Herapath," she said, giving the papers back.

"Nonsense!" replied the woman roughly. "What object do you think I should have in coming to you if I lied? I tell you, he is my husband. You thought he would marry *you*. He cannot, and would not now if he could. He thought I was dead; but he will soon know better."

She put her hand over the wall and seized the girl's delicate shoulder. "Listen to me!" she said imperiously; for Sylvia was staring at her with wide dry eyes, and her face was very pale.

"Listen to me!" repeated the woman, giving her a little shake. "Go away from this place and forget all about him. Events have treated you very badly," she went on, with a mocking smile. "Indeed, I feel sorry for you. Go away, silly little fluttering moth, and be thankful you have only singed your wings. We—my husband and I—had a little tiff, such as married people will have, you know. Then we parted, and I went abroad, and fell dangerously ill, and was

reported as dead. But it was all a mistake, you see. I feel sorry for you ; I do indeed."

The storm was near ; the clouds were sullen and black, while a few heavy raindrops fell on Sylvia's uncovered brown head. The soft splash of the water seemed to bring her to her senses. All the time that the woman had mocked her with cruel, bitter words, Sylvia had stood with white face, and blank vacant eyes ; but now her pale lips moved.

"I will not believe this story till I hear it from Mr. Herapath," she said. Then, with a touch of girlish dignity, she bent her little curly head and went towards the house.

The widow watched her out of sight ; then gave a soft chuckle.

"That marriage certificate of mine did capital duty," she said triumphantly. "In fact, the whole plan works well. As to speaking to Thorold, she won't do anything of the kind. She is a proud, sensitive girl, and I hit her very hard. She leaves Longchester to-morrow, so the coast will be clear. And, with her out of the way, I shall manage him easily. I have done things much more difficult."

But she did not know the power and trustfulness of pure womanly love. For next day Sylvia, heavy-eyed and anxious, climbed up to the organ-loft. And when she saw Thorold at the organ, she gave a wan little smile.

"Now," thought the poor child, "everything will be made right. My darling will tell me the truth, and I shall laugh at my foolish fears." Still, her heart sank as she marked his dejected attitude. In truth, he had almost as much cause for anxiety as she. Since yesterday he, too, had met an unwelcome stranger. And, while his little love hesitates on the narrow stairs, we will go back to yesterday and see what happened then.

When Thorold Herapath left Sylvia at the garden gate, he went happy and light-hearted down the road, looking back from the bend of the path to catch a last glimpse of the little figure he loved so well. The smile which came to his lips at sight of her had scarce faded away, when at the roadside he saw a wretched tramp—a woman, coarse and bloated in feature, filthy and ragged in dress. Such a sorry specimen of womanhood—so low had she fallen! Her dusty, wiry-looking hair came in stiff wisps from under the tawdry battered bonnet. Her gown, of light material and last year's fashion, was covered with patches of grease, and its numerous frillings, furbelows, and draperies hung torn and ragged on the dusty ground. A sorry, sorry specimen of womanhood ; yet some indefinable feeling of pity, of sympathy, made him eye her, not with looks of aversion, but compassion.

As she came up whining for charity, he put his hand in his pocket, and drew forth a silver coin. The tramp took it greedily. Then, with a curious look into his handsome open face, she shuffled along by his side, muttering inarticulate words and calling down the blessings of Heaven on his head.

He was annoyed, at last, by her importunity, and facing her with a stern look, bade her get about her business. And as he did so a strange feeling of horror came over him, for the sodden drunken face seemed familiar. A light of recognition crept, too, into the woman's bleared sunken eyes, and so, each half-conscious of the other's identity, mother and son stood face to face.

"I'm hot and thirsty, kind gentleman," she said, "a poor lone widow, with no one to look after me. I had a son once, but he ran away and left his mother. Fifteen years ago that was, when I lived in Clare Market, and he was a little 'un of ten."

She leered cunningly up into her hearer's face, which was ghastly white and very stiff.

"See here," she said at once: "you're my son Teddy, and you seem by the look of you to have done well ; so now, my lad, look after your poor old mother. I saw you courting that fine lady. Little she'd think of you if she knew all. But I'll tell her, unless you pay me to keep my mouth shut. I'll tell all your fine friends that I'm your mother, and as to your father——"

A look of absolute horror came into the man's set face. He thought of Sylvia, sweet and pure both body and soul, and then looked into the face held close to his—his mother's. The odour of her hot brandy-tainted breath was borne to him—and he moved away.

Blame him not! He had not one fond memory of the woman who called him son, whom he had not seen or heard of for years, and whom he had practically regarded as dead. Nothing but kicks and blows, and coarse terrible words, hurled at him daily for ten years of his life. What wonder that not one natural feeling of love came to his heart—only horror and loathing, and an overpowering desire to be free of her? So, with long rapid strides, he went away down the road. She shuffled after him in her miserable dilapidated shoes, shrieking threats and curses as she went. But she soon lost sight of him, and, nearing a public-house, she clutched the half-crown he had given her in her dirty palm, and entered—there to soak herself with drink till darkness fell and they turned her out into the black still road. And stumbling along in a drunken, helpless way, she came near a pond—a slimy green-covered pool. And, being utterly incapable of securing her safety, she leaned too heavily, in her stupid sleepy way, against the frail railing which surrounded it. A minute after, the green waters closed over a ragged, helpless figure—but still a woman's. Once, too, she must have been a bright, innocent girl ; or, if even then her life was marred, at least a smiling, unconscious infant, straight from God's hand. So her life ended.

She could never harm her son now. But, as he leaned despondingly against the organ, he did not know this. He would never know how that poor wretched life ended. So, as Sylvia came softly up to him, the face he turned towards her was anxious and

questioning. He thought he read his doom in her swollen eyes and pale cheeks.

And Sylvia, poor girl, had rehearsed in her mind a dozen times what she would say to him, how she would say it. She would be dignified, cold, trustful, pleading—anything, everything but what she was. For she just put up her hands to her face, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

Her lover gently drew down her hands and looked sorrowfully into her face.

"Has she told you, then?" he faltered, wondering how and when his mother could have met her.

"Oh, Thorold, Thorold," cried the girl, "say it is not true! My darling, I told her, that terrible woman, that I did not believe it; that I never would till you told me so yourself. It cannot be true. Say it is not!" she cried passionately. But he said never a word.

"She told me that your name was Robinson," the girl went on rapidly, "that she was your—— Oh, Thorold," she cried piteously, "it is true!"

For a glance at his agonised face told her he was guilty.

"Forgive me, Sylvia. It is true," he said hoarsely. "Forgive me, darling. I loved you so. I would have told you some day. I thought she was no longer living."

He came forward and tried to take her little hands; but she recoiled from him, crying, "Do not touch me. Your affection is now an insult to me."

"An insult!" he echoed. "Oh, Sylvia!"

"An insult, an insult!" she repeated vehemently. "I will go away," she said, putting out her hand and groping for the stair-rail: she was blind with tears and pain. "I will go away and never see your face again. It was not your fault, perhaps, but you have broken my heart. Good-bye!"

"Stay a moment, one moment!" he cried. "Look in my eyes, Sylvia, and tell me if you really mean that we must part."

She raised her tear-stained face and looked full into his. As she did so, the widow's cruel mocking voice rang in her ears—"I feel sorry for you; I do indeed."

And her voice and face were alike hard and cold as she said, "We must part."

"Let me plead with you once more," he urged.

But she drew back indignantly.

"At least grant me one thing," he said in a dull pained voice. "Let me play you a farewell—there is no shame in that, Sylvia."



"Sylvia took them eagerly, and read them over."—*p.* 246.

She suffered him to lead her to a seat, and she listened stupidly while the notes of Mendelssohn's beautiful *allegretto*, from the symphony of the "Hymn of Praise," rolled through the church.

It was the burial of her love—her life's happiness, and Thorold played on with the passion and fervour of his whole soul; till, as the last chord died sobbingly away, he fell face forward on the keys. He had fainted.

His fall roused Sylvia from her stupor. She ran forward, and tenderly lifted his unconscious head. A rush of pity entered her heart as she looked at the dear white face. But she knew she must not stay, so with one half-stifled sob she left him to the care of the organ-blower, who now came forward from his retreat with some simple restoratives.

And that night the poor girl went back to London.

* * * * * *

It is five years after, and a grey November forenoon. In St. James's Park are very few people, for it is a cold cheerless day. But by the water-side walks a young man with a clever handsome face, and a pair of big brilliant black eyes—Thorold Herapath. The five years have brought him fame,

for he is known now outside Longchester circles. He is recognised as one of the leading musicians of the day. A cantata of his is to be given in London, so he is in town to conduct the performance.

Yet he walks moodily along on this grey day, for he is not a happy man. He has never forgotten the fair little love that he lost five years ago.

She is close to him now, so close that, looking up, their eyes meet—for she is coming along by the water too.

She has altered sadly in the five years that have gone. Her eyes, once so soft and dreamy, are bluer and more starry now. Perhaps this is because her cheeks are so thin and pale—for the roses have faded. Her simple gown is black; a demure little bonnet is on her brown head, a severe black bow tied under her rounded, dimpled chin. When she sees her former lover, she holds out her little hand, and a faint colour comes into her sad young face.

"Mr. Herapath!"

Her aunt is dead. She is earning her living as a governess—such cheerless drudgery, that for a moment she forgets the gulf which stands between them, and only dwells on the memory of a perfect summer, five years ago. But memory comes back all too soon, leaving her white and ashamed, with downcast face and hanging head.

A great light leaps into Thorold's eyes, and he goes quickly up to the little dreary black figure.

"Sylvia, my dear one!" he said. "Have we met at last?"

She lifted her white face and said painfully, "You must go away."

"Do not, do not send me away," he whispered. "Forgive me, love. Believe me, I have atoned for my deception by suffering. The past—my past, can never be altered. Forget all about it, my darling, and come to me. I love you so!"

She looked up indignantly, with flaming cheeks. "You have no right to love me, to speak to me so," she said angrily. "Your love is another woman's—your wife whom you once thought to have died."

"My wife!" he said, staring at her in bewilderment. "I have no wife. I never had a wife."

"No wife!" she said, and swayed from side to side. "Then who was the woman I saw?"

He took her passive hand and led her to a seat.

"Rest here," he said gently, with a great hope rising in his heart. "You will be better soon, and then we will explain to one another. There has been some terrible misunderstanding."

Then, under the leafless trees in the quiet deserted park, crooked paths were made straight, and as Thorold told the story of his early life to his sweetheart, he read no disdain—only infinite love and pity in her clear eyes.

"It must have been Mrs. Wood you saw," he said presently. "Wretched woman! But you will not be troubled by her again, dear; she left Longchester three years ago."

"There are only two things I cannot understand," said Sylvia. "The certificate she showed me had the name Edward Robinson, and that is really your surname. Then, I cannot understand how it is you never saw your mother again."

"The similarity of surnames must have been simply a curious coincidence," said Thorold. "As to my poor mother, I do not know her fate. But she and Mrs. Wood, Sylvia, belong to a dead and painful past; we will bury it." ALICE L. DUDENEY.

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO JOHN THE BAPTIST.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptised of him."—ST. MATTHEW iii. 13.

IT is far from being impossible that the two lads, Jesus of Nazareth and John of Hebron, met in Jerusalem at the Passover of which St. Luke speaks in the second chapter of his Gospel. They were both of about the same age, and the opportunity which this particular festival afforded them of being introduced into the fulness of their covenant-responsibility would be equally suitable to each. Jesus, we know, was brought up by His parents from Galilee; and John would hardly have been left at home by his father Zacharias, if Zacharias were living (as he might well have been) at the time, and were not too infirm to allow of him coming up from his native town to attend the services in the holy city. Now, Jesus and John were closely related—they were cousins; and they were certainly animated by the same spirit of religious enthusiasm. And we venture therefore to suppose that the two boys did meet in Jerusalem on this memorable occasion, and stand side by side when the sacrifices were being offered, and the prayers and praises of the worshipping assembly were rising up into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts.

But, if so, what a remarkable diversity displayed itself in their subsequent careers! One of them, Jesus, goes back into Galilee to lead an ordinary human life. He dwells in the cottage of His reputed

father, Joseph; He works at the trade of a common village artisan; He mingles with the peasantry of the neighbourhood, meeting them in the market-place, and attending the services of the synagogue; He eats and drinks and dresses like other people—there is nothing exceptional about Him, beyond His singular purity and goodness. Whilst the other, John, disgusted with the hollowness of the religious society at Jerusalem, and feeling himself incapable of amending it, retires to the wild and rugged wilderness of Judæa, and in a cavern scooped out of the side of one of the many ravines in that locality, spends his days in lonely meditation and communion with God. Holding himself entirely aloof from all association with his fellow-men, he gives himself up to asceticism. His food is locusts and wild honey; his drink the water of the mountain torrent that rushes through the ravine in which he dwells; his dress a rough covering of camel's hair, with a girdle of skins about his loins; and where he is, there he remains until the conviction forces itself in upon him, and grows stronger and more irresistible every day—that the Christ is at hand: and that he (John) has been set apart and called by God to be the herald of His approach.

With such singular divergence of method, and in these widely separated localities, the two cousins whom God intended ultimately to bring together were being prepared for their meeting. I think I may say "unconsciously" prepared; at least, as far as John was concerned. Jesus—as we have already seen—when in the Temple, awoke to the understanding of His mysterious relation to the Father, and knew that He had a work to do. Yet even in His case there must have been a growing perception, an increasing knowledge; and the years, as they rolled over His head, must have brought with them a clearer view and a firmer grasp of the truth which had been revealed to Him on the occasion of His first visit to Jerusalem. With John, the process was probably a slower one. When he first left Hebron and took up his abode in the wilderness of Judæa, we suppose him to have had no idea whatever of the future that was in store for him. He merely meant to seek God in solitude, for he found that he could not seek Him in the midst of a corrupt and hypocritical generation. He had no intention of becoming a great and conspicuous man. Probably such a thought never entered his mind. But as he meditated and prayed and pored over the pages of the prophets—especially of the prophet Isaiah—the vision of the Christ rose upon him in all its glory. Then came the conviction that the Christ was near at hand; and then—the Divine impulse which drove him out from his cavern to proclaim to mankind the approach of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It was shortly after this event occurred that the two relatives met. The voice of John had pealed in thunder throughout the land, and the whole nation had started up at the call. "The Kingdom of God!"—it was what everyone was looking for. Few, indeed, understood its real nature. To the apprehension of most the proclamation spoke of temporal blessings; of peace and plenty for the people; of assured ecclesiastical distinction for the priesthood; of honours for the ambitious; of success for the laborious; and certainly of freedom for all from the yoke of the hated Roman oppressor. And we cannot wonder that, under the circumstances, thousands and tens of thousands of Jews from all parts of the country—men of every rank and station, and men in every conceivable state of feeling and expectation—flocked to the banks of the Jordan either to hear what this strange prophet had to say to them, or to ascertain what message he had been commissioned to deliver from the Lord God of His people Israel.

After a while, John appears to have moved higher up the banks of the stream in the direction of the Lake of Galilee; the people still swarming to his baptism. The moral aspect of the scene is by this time a very striking one. The preaching of the prophet has touched and roused the conscience of the nation; and there they stand—a dense mass, with the prophet at their head—waiting for the figure of the Christ to emerge out of the darkness into which they gaze. Neither John nor his followers know who it is that is coming. "I knew Him not," he says. But both know that someone is coming, and that this someone is the Messiah. And John knows that he has the means of recognising Messiah when He comes. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, the same is He that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." There, then, they stand—the people and John—in an attitude of expectation, eagerly peering out into the future, when Jesus, leaving His quiet home in Galilee, presents Himself in the crowd as a candidate for the rite of baptism. This is the first time, we suppose, that the cousins had seen each other since the day they met as boys in the Temple courts of Jerusalem, eighteen years before. And the obscurity in which Jesus had lived, and the seclusion which John so rigorously observed, would, we suppose, have effectually prevented the latter from forming any idea of the true character of his relative. It is difficult, then, to understand why John should have declined the responsibility of admitting Jesus to the baptism which he administered. Possibly, however, he may have received some sort of Divine intimation on the subject; or possibly there may have been something in the Saviour's appearance and manner which convinced John that He was a superior being to himself; or possibly, again, some recollections of that association with Jesus at the time of the old Passover-feast may have occurred to his mind with a novel force and significance: or, it may be, all these things put together may have wrought in him the conviction of the greatness of Jesus, and of his own unworthiness to baptise Him.

XUM

But why (it may be asked) did Jesus apply for a baptism which is called a "baptism of repentance?" In Him was no sin, and we find, as a matter of fact, that He went straightway up out of the waters of the Jordan without making any confession at all. Again, it is hard to speak positively about such a matter; but the explanation probably lies in the fact that the baptism of John was really a ceremony of admission into the Kingdom—a ceremony not necessarily associated with the confession of sins, unless the candidate for admission had sins to confess. Out of the wreck of a rapidly decaying world a new order of things had arisen—like a Temple—offering refuge, shelter, and the opportunity of worship for all who were inclined to enter in. And through the doorway of that Temple He, who was the forerunner of the vast crowd, must himself pass. "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." But the process of passing, though a consecrating process for all, was one of purification *only for those who needed it.*

But now let us advance to consider the results of the baptism of John in the case of Jesus of Nazareth.

I. In the first place, of course, the circumstances of the baptism put John in a position to fulfil the purpose for which he had been prepared and sent into the world—that of bearing witness to the great Expected, who was at that time also the great Unknown. Centuries before, it had been foretold by the prophet that a messenger should go before the face of the King to prepare His way: that a voice crying in the wilderness should herald His approach, and rouse the nation into an attitude of eager anticipations. These prophecies must be fulfilled. And when the Baptist saw the bright Shekinah-light descending from heaven and resting with a hovering motion like that of a dove upon the person of Jesus, and when he heard the awful voice of the Father sounding from the sky, he knew that they were fulfilled, and he knew also that his own mission was drawing nigh to its close. He seems to have borne a *manifold* testimony to Jesus. He presents Jesus in so many different points of view. He is, he says, the fulfilment of the Scriptures; the personage of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write. Here we have the Messiahship of Jesus. He is, he says, the "Son of God;" a phrase which, though not at the time completely filled with meaning, yet points to the inaccessible position which Jesus, as we know now, holds as the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father. Then passes before us the sacrificial work of Jesus: for He is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. And then the gifts which He is exalted to bestow upon His people: for it is "He that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost."

It seems likely enough that to Jesus and John alone was the sacred light visible and the voice from heaven audible, the crowd on the banks being only dimly conscious that something mysterious was going on, and not being able to enter into the inner significance of the thing. And if so, we may speak of the incident of the baptism in the Jordan as one of the manifestations of Jesus—as the occasion when He was manifested to the great herald, whose business it was to make known His advent to the Jewish nation, and through the nation to the world at large.

II. In the next place, the baptism of John must have had a very marked effect upon Jesus Himself. Maintaining as we do not only the perfect Godhead but the perfect humanity of our blessed Lord, we do not hesitate to believe in the development of His mind and character, and in the gradual unfolding to Him of the great idea of His Messianic life. He was—we feel sure—Divinely educated, and Divinely educated by degrees. We have seen that His relation to the Father had been grasped by Him (perhaps not in its entirety) when He first appeared in the Temple. Simultaneously with that self-revelation rose up in His mind the thought, the belief, the strong overwhelming persuasion that He was to be employed about His Father's business. But what was that business? At the moment, perhaps, He scarcely knew. He was haunted by ideas—grand and glorious, but at the same time dim and indistinct. In the quiet eighteen years at Nazareth, the thoughts would take shape; and just as John began to see more and more clearly that Messiah was at hand, and that it was his special mission to announce His advent, so Jesus would see ever more and more clearly that His work for the Father —the Father's "business"—was the Messianic work spoken of in the pages of Holy Scripture. The culminating point would be the baptism of John. Perhaps even then (I do not know) the Saviour had something yet to learn about the nature of the task assigned Him, and the intense suffering in which He would be involved by undertaking it. And perhaps it was for this purpose, amongst others, that He was brought into conflict so soon after His baptism with the personal head of the kingdom of darkness; it being necessary, as we may suppose, that He should become acquainted by actual experience with the wiles, the malignity, the depths of Satan, the fierce and unrelenting antagonism, the subtle devices of the adversary whom He had come to overthrow. But certainly, at the period we speak of, He knew with a force and distinctness and an emphasis not experienced before, that He was now set apart for the establishment of God's Kingdom of Righteousness upon earth. The day of His baptism was the day of His direct and formal consecration, when He received His great commission from the hands of the Father Himself.

And with the consecration came two things—equipment for the task, and the assurance of the Father's love and favour. Both were needed. Up to the present moment, it may be questioned whether Jesus had been able to work a miracle at all. I think He had not. I think His humanity had not yet been endowed with supernatural gifts for such a

purpose. But now—the Holy Spirit having come down upon Him, come without measure—Jesus is conscious of the inflow of a mighty power, which, under the direction of the Father, will lay all the forces of the world—visible and invisible—at His feet. "God has now anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power," and He goes out to proclaim that the "Spirit of the Lord God is upon Him."

Observe, also, that for such a nature as that of Jesus—intensely conscious of the Father; intensely devoted to the Father; living, if I may so say, upon the Father's smiles—the assurance of the Father's favour, at the outset of a great work (and this was indeed the greatest of all works), was absolutely necessary. And this assurance was granted when the voice sounded from heaven, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Let us not be afraid of the doctrine of the true and real humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is as essential to Christianity as the doctrine of the true and real Godhead. And then—accepting the humanity, let us accept also the fact of the education of Christ, of the growth of His mind, of the development of His ideas. With Him, as with us, enlightenment must have been gradual. But does not the Scripture say so? "Jesus increased" (advanced) "in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man."

A HOME IN SICKNESS.

A VISIT TO THE BOLINGBROKE PAY HOSPITAL, WANDSWORTH.

BY HENRY FRITH.



THE railway labyrinth known as Clapham Junction is the station at which we alight, and an intelligent porter at once points out the way to our destination.

"Cross the railway just beyond the schools there—that tall, red building you see; then bear to the right, up a shady road by the cemetery, which you will notice at once. That road is Bolingbroke Grove; and the Hospital is on the left—about fifteen minutes from here, sir."

Following these instructions, we quickly reached the Grove, and, after a few minutes' walking, found ourselves standing outside the railing of a white three-storeyed building, which, as a board informs us, is Bolingbroke House: a Home in Sickness—the "Pay" Hospital of which we were in search. It consists of a plain main building and two wings. A good-sized shady garden in front, and some grounds at the back, ensure a free passage of air; the soft south and west winds are permitted free access, while the ruder easterly and northerly breezes are prevented from encroaching by the environment of houses at the sides and back.

The Hospital faces nearly south-west, having the open space of Wandsworth Common in front. The entrances are at the sides—a small gate in the north

paling, and a carriage entrance on the southerly side. We may enter by either gate, and ring the bell at the glazed entrance-door.

We have not to wait long under the portico, and on inquiry for the house-surgeon are immediately ushered into the presence of Dr. Lyster, who, in the kindest manner, consents to accompany us over the Hospital.

"I shall be ready in a minute or two," he says. "You saw the attendant just now? I am wanted in one of the wards.—Bring another cup and saucer," he continued to the servant.

For Dr. Lyster was going to indulge in his five-o'clock tea, a meal he shares with his faithful little spaniel, which, after a while, welcomes us as kindly as her master. We pass our interval of waiting in examining the photographs of the Naval Volunteer schooner *Dawn*, in which Mr. Lyster has made some professional trips; but in five minutes he again enters the room, and places himself at our service.

The first impression we receive in this Pay Hospital is the sensation of coolness and comfort: wide staircases, hall, and corridors, spacious airy rooms, and excellent ventilation. This impression is deepened as we cross the well-lighted entrance-hall or vestibule, and enter a ward devoted to male patients. This is the Verdon Ward, and contains five beds.

The patients, with their attendant, in this spacious chamber, are very comfortable. Neat screens divide the beds, as curtains do in upper wards. There are flowers, fresh air, and the light is skilfully tempered to suit all requirements. In this ward the patients tell you of their treatment, and the comparatively small payments they make for what are virtually home comforts, regular attendance, and the attention of medical officers of the highest reputation in the London hospitals. Of course, if any patient prefers his usual medical adviser, he can have him to see him at any time. There is no restriction.

Another large apartment, also on the ground floor, is named Elvington. This is sometimes used as a committee-room. On the occasion of our visit it was occupied by a private patient who was enjoying the society of his friends, on whom we did not intrude. Another ward—the Cazenove Ward, for women—is on the same floor. Here we found four patients, cheerful and chatty, who were enjoying some excellent tea and bread and butter. We were informed of particulars in each case, and all were doing well. These cases were too severe for home treatment, and yet the patients were of a class who shrink from the larger hospitals. So the Pay Hospital received them, and although severe and critical operations were needed in some cases, and in others feared, the former were successfully accomplished; and the dreaded knife by skilful treatment avoided, in other cases, with conspicuous success.

In the case of a tricycle accident continual watching was necessary, the brain and scalp having been injured. But the staff proved equal to the severe demands made upon it, and the patient is convalescent. The ladies tell you how comfortable and well-fed they are, with their home comforts about them, and with much more attention than anyone could hope to have in their circumstances if at home or with friends; while in the cases of servants, governesses, and others who are dependent, the gain is truly incalculable.

Ascending the wide staircase, we must not omit to notice the historical clock—a feature of Bolingbroke House—and then we pass into the female surgical ward, in which are four beds. Such operations as those for cancer and severe abscess, and others unnecessary to name, are here performed by first-rate surgeons. We then successively enter the Harriet and Wheeler Wards, and venture to peep into the Matron's sitting-room in her absence—a cheerful, roomy apartment, adjoining her sleeping-room.



Up-stairs, on the higher floor, are the private wards for patients who prefer to be alone. All these rooms are large, airy, and nicely fitted. The ventilation is admirably managed by the doors in the highest storey,



"WAITING TO SEE MOTHER."

by means of which an imperceptible amount of fresh air is continually directed through the building. The sanitary arrangements, it is hardly necessary to say, are perfect. In the basement are the extensive kitchens and culinary offices, and the "Wandsworth Common Provident Dispensary," which makes up the medicines for the hospital, in addition to its other beneficent work.

Concerning the patients themselves there is something to be said. All ordinary medical and surgical cases are admitted; but what strikes one is the general cheerfulness and brightness which prevail. There does not seem to be any despondent inmate: from the doctor to the last probationer, all are lively, if one may so speak. In many cases the patients scarcely pay the expenses incurred, and some are a decided loss to the Institution; but they are admitted, nevertheless, for there is a true charity existing in the minds of those in charge of Bolingbroke House.

The payments vary from two to three guineas a week, and in some cases even less than the former sum. This includes medical attendance and board, with every comfort. Special operations may necessitate special fees, but this is a matter for arrangement. The percentage of cures is remarkable. Notwithstanding the severity of the operations in numerous cases, and some diseases of many years' standing, there were only thirteen deaths in the one hundred and ten patients admitted during the year 1887—88. Sixty-five persons were discharged cured, and thirty-two were relieved.

The inhabitants of the populous districts of Battersea and Clapham are—not too soon—beginning to rouse themselves to the existence of the benefits which lie so close to them, and the result of last year's working is the most satisfactory of any period since the opening of the Pay Hospital. There is no doubt that this species of institution will be in great demand, and were the benefits of Bolingbroke House more widely appreciated, many supposed incurable cases would be relieved, and many poor people would be saved the cost, worry, and anxiety of nursing friends and relatives at home; for in the Bolingbroke Pay Hospital they have a "Home in Sickness," where they or their relations, for a small sum weekly, may enjoy every comfort, and even luxuries to which ordinary hospital patients cannot aspire.

YOUTH.

THE hoary years renew their youth
In tender flushes, roseate hues,
And winter weeps away her frost
In early rains and fragrant dews.

We cannot, if we would, forget
The early rapture of life's spring—
Those quick pulsations stir again
When swallows are upon the wing.

And youth, with summer in her veins,
In sweet accord with earth and skies—
A harp by viewless fingers stirred—
Is one with nature's harmonies.

The hoary years renew their youth,
And strains prophetic fall as dew
Upon the fair, awakened earth,
"Behold, I will make all things new!"

CLARA THWAITES.

DISGUISED BLESSINGS AND CURSES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED."



THINGS are not what they seem. We sometimes mistake prosperity for adversity, gain for loss, and *vice versâ*. We often look gratefully back to some event, which at the time seemed the worst thing that could have happened to us, as the cause of much happiness and prosperity; and, on the other hand, we come to shudder at what once appeared the thing most to be desired.

It did not seem to a lady, of whom I have heard, a blessing when she was robbed; and yet she discovered before long that this was the case. She had directed her solicitor to invest a large sum of money in shares of the City of Glasgow Bank some months prior to its collapse. Imagining that her instructions had been carried out, she heard the news of the closing of the bank's doors with dismay, as the claim of the creditors would have entailed her total ruin. The subsequent discovery, however, of her agent's embezzlement revealed the groundlessness of her apprehensions, her loss being limited to the amount entrusted to her dishonest representative. On the other hand, the unlucky recipient of a single City of Glasgow Bank share as a wedding-present should for once have looked a gift-horse in the mouth, and had no reason to congratulate himself on his father-in-law's liberality, involving, as it did, the loss of all he possessed.

To curse his enemy, so to speak, a member of a certain club, where the person disliked was being balloted for, put in a black ball. It turned out that by doing so he had done the opposite of what he had intended—he had blessed rather than cursed him. The rule was that twenty members at the least should vote, so by adding his twentieth ball, even though it were a black one, to nineteen white ones, he had unconsciously and unwillingly elected him.

> "We, ignorant of ourselves,
> Beg often our own harms, which the wise Powers
> Deny us, for our good; so find we profit
> By losing of our prayers."

This has, more or less, been the experience of us all. Our prayers were not answered at the time, or in the way we wished, and afterwards we came to see that this was a blessing in disguise, and that if they had been so answered we should have been cursed. When the Israelites tempted God, "He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their souls."

A writer on "The Orkneys and Shetland" tells the following:—A native of Hoy went one day to his minister, and said: "Oh, sir, but the ways of Providence are wonderful! I thought I had met with a sair misfortune when I lost baith my coo and my wife at aince over the cliff, twa months sin; but I gaed over to Graemsay, and I hae gotten a far better coo, and a far bonnier wife."

This reminds me of a man I heard of, who, in his youth, was desperately in love with a certain lady. He thought that he could not live without her, and felt broken-hearted when she refused to marry him. Years afterwards he died, and in his will left her a considerable sum of money, "as a small return for your kindness in refusing to marry me, for I have had a happy bachelor's life, and I feel sure, from what I since learned of myself and of you, that if we had married we should have made each other very miserable."

Writing about children, a lady tells us that she had a relation who was married some years without having a child. Her feelings partook not only of grief, but of anguish. At length a lovely boy was granted her. "Spare, O God, the life of *my blessing*," was her constant prayer. Her blessing *was* spared. He grew to manhood, squandered a fortune, and broke his mother's heart.

"Give me children, or else I die," said the impatient and weeping Rachel. Her prayer was heard, and at the birth of her boy the mother died. Another impassioned mother, as she bent over the bed of her sick infant, called out, "Oh, no; I *cannot* resign him." A person present, struck with her words, noted them down in a daily journal which he kept. The boy recovered: and that day one-and-twenty years he was hanged as a murderer!

The fact is that in this strange, unintelligible world, things are so related that we know not what may be the result of any given set of circumstances. "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-gley." Some little factor that we did not notice, or that seemed too small to be attended to, makes its disturbing influences felt, and forces upon us the truth of the saying—"Man proposes, God disposes."

I know a man who suffers the keenest remorse when he makes a mistake, even when he has done his best. This is very unphilosophical, for without omniscience it is impossible to know what in any particular juncture of affairs is the wisest course to take. A pilot once undertook to steer a vessel out of a very dangerous harbour, and he said to the captain, "Now, you take the wheel, and I will stand amidships, and give you warning when we come near the rocks, for I know every rock." He did so, and no warning was given by the pilot, but presently, as the vessel went along, she gave a violent bump, which threw everybody on board down. The pilot, looking rather foolish, then said to the captain,

"There is one of them." Alas! we are like that pilot, for we often only know of a rock when we are upon it. All we can do is to act up to the light we have, and leave the rest to a Pilot who can be trusted as no earthly one can. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God, that giveth the increase."

"Call no man happy until he die," was a precept suggested by the experience of life; for the happiness a man is enjoying to-day may cause him misery to-morrow, just as the relations and interactions of things may develop a future blessing out of what seems now to be a bitter curse. Even death itself may be a blessing in disguise. When his judges pronounced sentence of death upon him, Socrates said, "You, my judges, should cherish good hope on the subject of death, and remain firmly convinced of this one thing—that for a good man, no event can be evil, whether he lives or dies, seeing that his concerns are never disregarded by God. Nor does that which now happens to me happen without purpose on God's part, for I am persuaded that it is better for me to die and have done with the things of this world. And now it is time that we separate. I go to die, you remain to live, but which of us is going the better way, God alone knows." Shall we who profess and call ourselves Christians have less faith than this man who never heard of Christ? Shall we believe less than Socrates that for a good man "no event can be evil, seeing that his concerns are never disregarded by God?"

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

BY C. DESPARD, AUTHOR OF "INTO A LARGER ROOM," "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XII.—THE NEW LIFE OPENS.

THE bungalow taken for Sir Richard was on Malabar Hill, the most beautiful and fashionable suburb of Bombay. It is some distance from the Port, but the drive is enchanting. The travellers were driven first through the European quarter of Bombay, which is magnificent with large spaces and fine public buildings, each of which has room about it, so that its towers and pillared porticoes and balconies can be perfectly well seen. Then the spaces between the buildings are planted with trees—spreading fig and golden-blossomed acacia, and the banyan sending down ragged stems to the earth; and in the enclosed garden of the square in which they stand there is colour—glowing colour—from the masses of purple Bougainvillea that at this season throws itself over tree-stems and railings; and marigolds and sunflowers, not pale as we know them, but burning with vivid gold, and crimson Poinsettias flaming in the sun, that marvellous sun of the East that glorifies everything upon which its light falls. And these wonders of colour are set in the midst of foliage rich and cool, whose forms are strange to the English travellers. "Can that be a palm?" asks Thekla, as she sees a springing, slender stem and a crown of feathery green against the deep blue of the sky. "Yes, yes; it must be! It is!" As she hangs out of the carriage, looking with all her eyes, which are beginning to smart in the dazzling light, she feels that she is really in the East.

These are tree-ferns! How beautiful and graceful they look! And that plant with the gigantic leaves of a glossy dark green, many of them ragged and fringed—can it be the plantain? After this it is scarcely strange to see the people, dark-limbed and statuesque, with turbans on their heads and red and white clothes about their bodies, who move slowly through the wide and sunlit thoroughfares.

Presently they come out by the sea again, and the road begins to rise. It is overhung on the land side by rocks, clothed with ferns and hanging grasses, and crowned with feathery bamboos, cocoanut palms, and the light-foliaged tamarisk. Below, on the shores of the Bay, barges are being laden and unladen, and large-sailed boats are putting out into the shining sea, and building is going briskly forward—all the work done by the slender, dark-limbed people, who, to Thekla, look like statues in bronze. Again and again she longs to stop and watch them. But they go on. Presently they leave the business behind them. They are in quiet roads, bounded with gardens, in the midst of which are deep-porched bungalows—beautiful, cool retreats, embowered in green.

They were near the top of the hill before the carriage went in through an open gate and pulled up in front of as pretty a bungalow as they had yet seen. Its deep porch and verandah were so deeply hidden in creepers and ferns that you scarcely knew where the garden ended and the house began, while the garden was a very nest of greenery.

"This, then, is our new home! I hope you will like it, girls," said Sir Richard. He addressed them both, but he looked towards Marion.

"Like it? I shall adore it! This is bewildering—enchanting. I feel as if I were in a dream," cried Marion.

"Oh! look! look!" said Thekla.

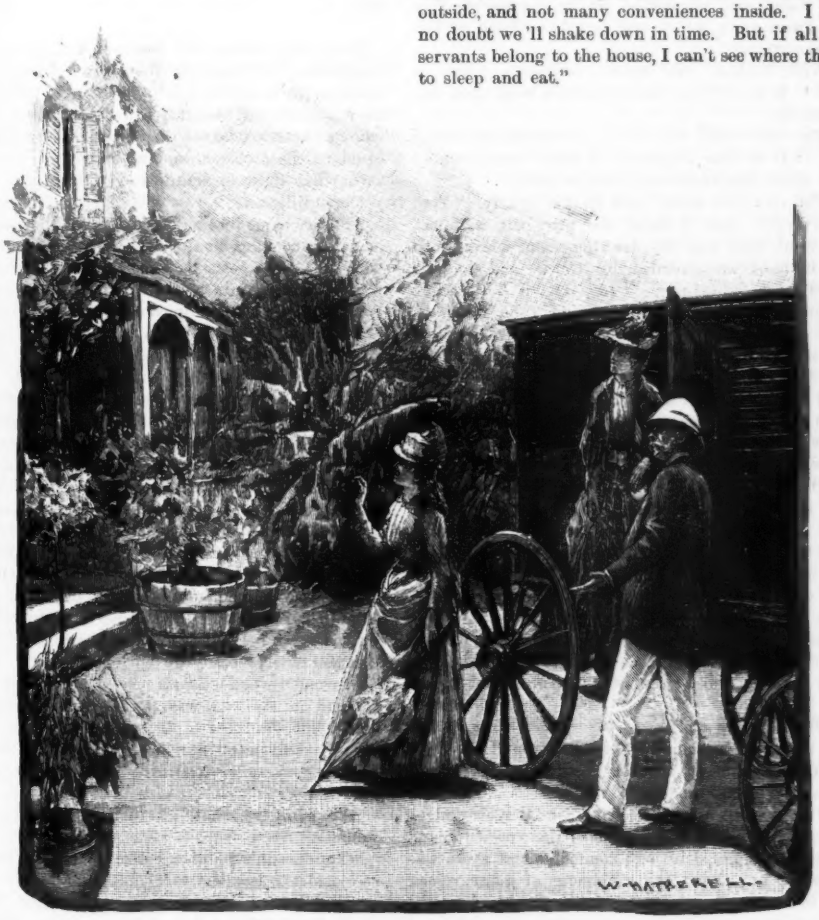
All in a moment, the porch and verandah had become filled with white-robed figures, and all the figures were bowing, and the eyes of every one of them were fixed upon the travellers.

"Very picturesque and pretty. The servants, of course. How silently they come," said Marion.

"And how nice they look in their white clothes and turbans!" said Thekla. "Ah! there is the man who came on board this morning. His name is Gopal, I believe. They are bowing to us, Marion. I *wish* we had learned their language. I should like to have something pleasant to say to them."

"It is quite as well that you don't know the language," said Marion. "You would be too pleasant. Everybody says you must be strict with these people, or you spoil them. That 'll do, Thekla. You needn't be so demonstrative in acknowledging their salaams. —Dismiss them, Khansama," to the head man. "You can take us round."

With a wave of the hand, the magnificent Gopal dispersed the eager little crowd of servants, and, bowing low, begged the Sahib and the Miss Sahibs to follow him. As they went through he cast furtive glances at them from time to time, being anxious both to take their measure for himself and, in the interest of his own Sahib-log, to discover how the place impressed them. The house was spacious and airy; but the inside scarcely came up to the promise of the outside. It consisted of one large hall, lighted from above, and divided, by means of a fine carved screen of dark wood, into two rooms, one for dining, and the other for the ladies' drawing-room. Out of this central room opened the bed-rooms and bath-rooms, three on each side, and deep verandahs ran round the whole building. The furniture was plain and light, and, to English ideas, rather scanty. Janet, who had come on before with the luggage, was busy already laying out her young ladies' dresses. She looked rather serious, and Thekla asked her how she liked it. "Well, miss! there's no saying," she answered. "It 's a queer, heathenish-looking place outside, and not many conveniences inside. I make no doubt we 'll shake down in time. But if all these servants belong to the house, I can't see where they 're to sleep and eat."



"'Oh, look! look!' said Thekla —*p.* 256.

"Don't trouble yourself about them. Indian servants eat and sleep anywhere. That's the beauty of them," said Marion. "I suppose there's a compound outside, with huts."

"Huts! Holes!" said Janet indignantly. "I took them for kennels and cattle-sheds. However," turning to her work, "if *they* like to live in holes, that's no business of mine."

"None whatever," said Marion, laughing.

A cry of delight from Thekla, who had wandered out to the verandah at the back of the house, was heard, and when Marion joined her little sister, she found her standing, with parted lips and sparkling eyes, looking down upon a lovely prospect. There was the Bay, curving shorewards—a sheet of burnished silver, with ships from all nations gathered on its bosom; and floating between sea and sky were the hills and islands that protect the harbour, in the near distance of a pale green, and fading away, as they retreated, to purple and lilac; while close beneath them, rising gradually from the silver sea, was a city, warm and wonderful, set in the midst of a lush green plain, which was faintly outlined by far, far mountains.

"Well, Thekla," said Marion satirically, "lost, as usual! It is well that one of us has a head upon her shoulders."

"But who could help it?" murmured the young girl. "It is like Paradise. I have never seen—I have never imagined—anything so lovely."

"The view, you mean," said Marion lightly. "Yes; it is pretty. And I think the place will suit us." She went back into the drawing-room, where stood Sir Richard, accompanied by Gopal, and looking round him doubtfully. "It wants a little more decoration, and that kind of thing," she went on. "They don't quite know how to do things here. I saw that on board ship. Even Lady Lucy, nice as she is, struck one as being a little behind the times. We must show them how to live; and the first step must be to make our house attractive. I shall have to spend a few pounds, of course. But you won't mind that, I know, father dear. You are always such a darling."

"Do as you like, child, so long as you don't ruin me," said Sir Richard; and he added, looking at her with admiration, "Our house is sure to be attractive."

"Thekla, father means that for a compliment to *us*," said Marion. "Isn't it sweet of him?—Thank you, dearest," dropping a curtsey. "Admiration from one's own family circle is one of the most satisfactory forms of flattery. But—seriously—we should be vain if we imagined that the outside world looked at us with your eyes, and we must really make our bower less like a barn."

"My dear, you shall have *carte blanche* to buy what you please. Just now——" looking round.

"You are hungry, poor darling. So am I.—Khansama, how about lunch?"

"One moment, Miss Sahib, wait," said that obsequious person. He bowed himself out of their presence, and his voice was heard in loud command, and there was a rushing to and fro, and a clamour of many voices, and in another few moments, while Thekla was still dreaming over the view from the verandah, and Marion, who was far too prudent to wish to ruin her father, was making mental calculations as to what outlay would be necessary to make the place pretty, back came that stately Indian, with triumph in his looks. He walked before them to the outer room, and he held back the curtain for them to pass under, and, lo and behold! there was the table spread with cold meats, and salads, and fruits, and crystal bowls of ice, and cooling drinks and coffee. The windows and doors were open to the verandah, and light straw mats, stretched from pillar to pillar, excluded the glare, and punkahs being waved over the table kept the atmosphere cool. It was a very haven of rest and beauty after the rough-and-tumble life of the *Amazon*.

Marion was enchanted. "Why," she said, clapping her hands, "this is like Monte Cristo and the slave of the lamp."

She took her place at the head of the table, and looking thoughtfully at the chicken mayonnaise in front of her, said, "I think, do you know, father, that I shall like life in the East. I think it will just suit me."

Early that evening, Mr. Isaacson, and his travelling companion, Mr. Stanhope, dressed in faultless evening costume, drove up the hill to the new establishment, having promised to dine with Sir Richard. Gopal, who had been warned of their coming beforehand, was equal to the occasion, and a dinner was set before them that drew encomiums even from the cynical young millionaire.

"You've come into a good thing, and no mistake!" he said, smacking his lips over a pineapple cream-ice. "I wish I could get such a cook. The *Amazon cuisine* was enough to ruin a man's digestion for ever."

"There are plenty of good cooks in India, I believe," said Marion sweetly. "Are we to lose you soon, Mr. Isaacson?"

"Well, you see, there's nothing much besides yourselves to keep us here," said Isaacson; "and Sir Richard—— Oh! by-the-bye," with a familiar grin towards his host—"that was between ourselves. I am the worst person in the world to keep a secret."

"We are to start almost at once, Miss Ellerslie," said Mr. Stanhope—he was a far more polished person than Isaacson; "we have an invitation from the Nizam—a large hunting-party. I expect it will be very good fun. After that we shall do a little camping-out and hunting on our own account. I leave orders for camp-equipage and servants to follow us. In the spring I must go into Cashmere, and Mr. Isaacson will probably go with me."

"I wonder when we shall meet again?" said Marion. She had not the least wish to see either of them any more; but she liked to say pleasant things.

"We shall meet somehow," said Mr. Stanhope, looking very much gratified. "Will these be your head-quarters?"

"Yes; but we shall go to a hill station in the summer."

"You needn't be at all afraid" (this was a *sotto voce* made by Isaacson to Thekla); "I'm like the bad shilling, don't you know, always turning up. I say"—she had not even smiled at his witticism, which was

exquisitely funny to himself—"what makes you so grave? Had you rather I didn't?"

"Good luck go with you, Isaacson," said Sir Richard. "I only wish I was your age and had your opportunities. I would be off with you to-morrow. What are you going to shoot—tigers?"

"That is my intention, sir. Bring back a dozen or so fine skins, to hang up in the ancestral mansion. Miss Thekla shall have the biggest to make her forget the scolding I once procured her. What! going already?" In answer to an imploring look from Thekla, Marion had risen from the table. "I'm so sorry," went on the irrepressible young man. "When I set that ancestral mansion of mine going," he proceeded, resuming his seat, "I shall taboo this sort of thing. Why should the ladies leave us alone over our dessert? It's ridiculous; it's Eastern."

Marion, in the meantime, was giving her little sister a scolding. "You mustn't be so transparent, Thekla," she said, "showing your little likes and dislikes in that childish way. Tolerate everybody. That's the way to get on in society."

CHAPTER XIII.—HOW THEKLA SPENT HER FIRST YEAR IN THE EAST.

THEY settled down very soon. The first days were full of a curious sort of enchantment which none but those who come fresh to the East, after they have reached years of discretion, can realise. To Thekla it would seem sometimes as if she were moving in a new world, where puzzles which she could not hope to solve were closing her in on every side.

Marion enjoyed the picturesque side of the life. She loved to play the queen, and here she had every opportunity for the indulgence of her taste. As, dressed in a light muslin tea-gown, fresh flowers in her girdle, and a coquettish little lace cap crowning her golden hair, she sat morning after morning in the verandah, while the obsequious Gopal, to whom she had notified the fact that she wished to buy a few pretty things, brought curiosity-sellers in a shoal to spread their treasures at her feet, she might have passed for a princess of the West, receiving graciously the homage of Eastern subjects. And what treasures they brought! "No need to buy," they would say cunningly, showing their bales and boxes; but each one of them, as he watched for signs of approval, felt sure that there was something in his store he could leave with her for a more than fair equivalent in money. And, indeed, though she tried to look indifferent, Marion would often break into an exclamation of surprise. To see all these beautiful things together—that was the wonder of it!

There was frosted silver—delicately wrought cups and flagons, and necklaces and bangles, from Delhi and Lucknow; and there were turquoises and rubies and sapphires from the hills; and there were moonstones from Ceylon; and there was gold and silver woven cloth from Benares; and from Jeypore came garnets and perforated brass-work; and from the north-west curtains of the æsthetic colours—the dead golds and dull reds that Marion loved; and men from Cashmere, so fine in face and figure that they were themselves a sight worth seeing, spread out winningly their rich embroideries and costly furs before the fair Western beauty: and, besides these, there were softly tinted silks from China, and finely wrought weapons from Japan, and quaint pottery from all parts of the East. Could anything be more interesting to a lover of pretty things?

So in the morning Marion bought and in the afternoon she arranged her purchases, setting everyone to work to help her.

In a few days, although she could only speak to her servants through the Khansama, she became pleasantly aware that she was impressing them. And, in fact, her swift decision, her strong will, and her faculty of looking at everything from her own point of view, were just such qualities as could be thoroughly comprehended by the Eastern mind. It went about the house that the big Miss Sahib, as she was called to distinguish her from Thekla, meant to be mistress; and, as this is a determination against which the properly constituted mind of an Eastern subordinate never strives, they made up their minds to obey her.

Thekla, in the meantime, was learning what she could about the new land in which she found herself. If she could have done as she liked she would have spent all her time in the native bazaars and markets, which possessed a wonderful fascination for her. Sometimes in the early morning Janet would walk with her through them, and occasionally Marion would take them in her evening drive to the Apollo Bund; and Thekla would gaze and gaze, her mind full of strange, new, indefinable thoughts.

What did it all mean, this coming and going? For whenever she passed through, it was the same—the crowd that no man could number—the never-ending procession of humanity. Parsis, in white clothes and stiff metallic turbans; and dark Mahrattas from the Ghâts, and finely built men from the north-west, padded calico cloaks thrown round them; and warriors from Punjaub and Scinde, their dark eyes flashing from under voluminous many-coloured turbans; and the lithe, graceful coolie women of the country, red *sarees* wound about their slender limbs; and Parsi ladies in delicate silken mantles; and stealing here and there through the crowd, a woman veiled in white from head to foot—as these and many more flocked by, mysterious figures, all with a life of their own, but all so strange to her, Michael Grierson's words would come back to her: "The East—strange, dark, unfathomable."

They brought with them a sickness of heart that she could neither control nor understand. Would she ever in all her life hear his voice again? What would she not have given—worlds, she said, in her girlish exaggeration—for one only of those long, delightful talks under the moon and stars that had brooded over the southern seas!

On her return from one of her morning expeditions, she begged to be allowed to learn the language of the country, and Marion, thinking it well that one of their party should understand it, consulted Gopal, who, as usual, was equal to the occasion. In a very short time a small, humble-looking man, with soft

dark eyes, presented himself, and having made his salaam, said that he was a native man—a Moonshee—who knew English, and who had made studies in Sanskrit and Persian. He had taught with success, as his papers would show, if her Presence would permit him to open them before her.

Marion requested the Khansama to make a bargain with him, and the little man was engaged to give Thekla daily lessons in Hindustani and Persian.

The bungalow, meanwhile, was rapidly approaching that state of ideal perfection which Marion had imagined for it.

"I think, dear," she said one morning to her father, as they sat at *chota-hasari* in the verandah, "it is about time for us to begin visiting. The house looks pretty well, and Janet has got my wardrobe into fairly good order. What do you say to making a beginning to-day?"

"Arrange as you like," said Sir Richard. "I leave these things to you."

"Very well, then! Look up your letters of introduction, and we will leave as many of them as we can this afternoon."

"Need I go?" said Thekla.

"No; I think not. We must keep you in the background a little while longer. It is to your own interest, you know. What do you say, father?"

"I do not wish Thekla to go out this season. Next year, if all be well, we will bring her out. I hope you will see the reason of this, Thekla," said Sir Richard.

"Dearest father, I am perfectly happy at home. I had rather not go out. What made you think I should be discontented?" cried Thekla.

"I hope you will not. I hope you will always be as obedient as you are now," said Sir Richard gravely. And then, giving her no time to reply, he began to discuss with Marion the order in which they should pay their visits.

The visiting which began that day went forward gaily, and, in a very short time, the wisdom of Marion's policy became apparent. Curiosity concerning the new English residents had first been awakened. When they notified their desire to become known, admiration and popularity followed. Marion and Sir Richard Ellerslie were visited by everybody, and all the notabilities of Bombay set to work to entertain them.

Then Marion, who felt that she must necessarily return the hospitality that had been shown to her, threw the pretty bungalow open, and there were morning *chota-hasaris* on the verandah, and wonderful little lunches and afternoon teas, when she displayed her pretty things and wore her pretty gowns, and talked sweetly to parched old Anglo-Indians, who, seeing that she was so pretty, were too indulgent to contradict her about her theories concerning life in the East, which, she was firmly convinced, no one, up to this, had understood or practised.

Gaily and pleasantly that winter passed away.

Thekla, meanwhile, kept in the background. She studied the Eastern languages, and watched the people, and read some books which she was fortunate enough to find in the house, on the religion, philosophy, and literature of ancient India, and always, as she dreamt and studied, the world seemed to be growing larger about her. Some of those who came and went wondered if the little girl whom her father and sister so persistently kept in the background was really as contented as she appeared to be. It seemed unnatural to them that a girl of her age should like to live quietly in the midst of gaiety. The fact was that Thekla had no time to consider her own little personality. In the largeness of the world that was passing before her mental vision, in the overwhelming magnitude of the problems that would now and then force themselves upon her, the little life of the present was dwarfed.

But the days, of which she took so small account, were changing her. Both mentally and physically she was growing. Every day added to her beauty and charm. The depth and strenuousness of her intellectual life gave expression to her large grey eyes; her body caught a new grace from her Eastern friends (she had been allowed to visit some of the Parsi ladies and Hindu women of high rank in their own houses), and the warm sunlight and soft airs of the delightful Indian winter gave colour to her face and roundness to her form.

Before the winter was over she knew enough Hindustani to enable her to speak to the servants, and when the pretty little ayah, Luchmee, came to her, she made still swifter progress.

To Luchmee I must give a few words—very few, for this history has to do with Thekla and her sister, and Luchmee and her little daughter, Sonya, whose sad and often tragic story ought, for the benefit of others, to be told in full, only touched upon it at one or two points.

When Marion began to go out and entertain, she took up all Janet's time, and it was thought well that an ayah should be engaged to wait upon Thekla. Inquiries were made, and one day a pretty Indian woman, upright and very slender, with soft dark skin, and the most plaintive, beseeching eyes that Thekla had ever beheld, came into the verandah and stood, with bent head and half-veiled face, before the two English girls. In the gentlest manner—for the poor little creature looked as if a word might frighten her away—Thekla asked who she was, and bending still lower, she drew a letter from her bosom. The letter was from the principal lady of the Zenana Mission in Bombay, who, having heard that the sisters wanted an ayah, had sent them Luchmee, in the hope that they would at least give her a trial. No recommendation could have been better. Luchmee was added to the household, to which she presently attached herself with the faithfulness and devotion of an Indian woman.

Thekla was enchanted with her, but when she heard her history and saw the little girl Sonya, of whom this poor Luchmee, who seemed only a child herself, was the mother, her liking was quickened by the deepest—the most absorbing—interest.

Luchmee, who belonged to the second highest or Kshatriya caste, the women of which always live in seclusion, had been married when she was a mere child to another child of her own caste little older than

herself, and in due time, being then about fifteen years of age, she entered the family of her husband, who, unhappily for her, were grasping, cruel, avaricious people.

Her husband died of fever, after they had been four or five years together, and from that time, according to the cruel social customs of the country, she was condemned to live as one who is dead. Allowed only enough food to keep her alive, deprived of the little vanities and recreations that are natural to her age, scorned, down-trodden, and made the drudge of the house, she dragged out miserably the first two years of her widowhood.

But even worse was to come. To her father-in-law, who was a trader, reverses came; his sons, who had worked with him, went out to seek their fortunes in other towns; the expenditure of the household had to be narrowed down, and the maintenance of poor little Luchmee became a burden heavier than he cared to bear. Harsh before, he was now systematically cruel, and his household followed his lead. Heavier tasks were imposed upon Luchmee; a mistake or inadvertence was punished by blows, and no morsel of food was given to her without a cruel grudging word. But it was not this—it was the looks she sometimes saw on the faces of those about her, that nerved the poor little creature to the desperate step which she afterwards took. She and her child were useless encumbrances. They hated her. Would they compass their death? None knew better than Luchmee how easily a helpless woman could be put out of the way in her country. The sickening terror gave her courage and strength, so that one day she took her child in her arms, and escaped from the dreadful house.

This is not the place to tell of the miseries she underwent in her flight, the tortures of mind and conscience, as well as of body; for she had sinned against her caste, and outraged the social creed taught to her from her infancy. That, with the difficulties encountered by the brave Englishwoman who finally rescued her, must be left to another record. It is sufficient to say here that when she became Thekla's ayah, her family, who declared that, having degraded herself beyond forgiveness, she could never enter their household again, had given up their right in her. She was allowed to serve the foreigner. As for Sonya, her child, now a lovely little girl about six years of age, no one, for the present, disputed her mother's right in her. She lived in the Ellerslies' compound, sharing her mother's hut at night, and being taken care of during the day by the wife of one of the syces, or grooms.

CHAPTER XIV.—AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

A YEAR has come and gone since Sir Richard Ellerslie and his two daughters settled themselves in the bungalow on Malabar Hill. It was winter then: it is winter again now. December—the bleak, dull month, when, in London, a nipping frost is followed by a cold drizzle, and that again by a fog so dark and deadly, that to breathe it makes men and animals sicken—December—but not the bleak month, rather the joyous month—the month of deep skies and glowing sunshine, and sweet, brisk airs; for winter—the glorious Indian winter—is in full swing, and Europeans, who have panted through the hot days, and melted through the rains, bitterly lamenting the hard fate that has drifted them to these burning shores, take heart once more, fill their lungs with the fresh sweet air, and assert with conviction that, so long as you have your health, which you can do if you are moderately prudent, India is one of the best places in the world to live in.

To the Ellerslies, this year in India, pleasant as they have found it, has not been fruitful in striking events. Marion is disengaged still—a circumstance which surprises her little world, where everyone knows that she has had plenty of opportunities for establishing herself well, had she felt so inclined.

Sir Richard Ellerslie is much stronger than he was. India suits him, and he says he may possibly spend some years there. Thekla is more decidedly handsome, and far more composed in her manners than when we met her first on board the *Amazon*. She is better dressed also; for Luchmee, who has much natural aptitude, and who loves her gentle young mistress passionately, has learned from Janet all the arts of the toilette—how to arrange hair well, and to drape gowns gracefully, and to group flowers with taste and judgment; and since she delights to practise her newly acquired skill, Thekla is often constrained to submit to much more dressing than she thinks necessary.

The Ellerslies did not go to Simla in the summer, as Lady Lucy Leveridge, from whom Thekla hears occasionally, urged, for Sir Richard declared that he could not stand the enormous rents up there. He promised his girls a season there later, contenting himself for this first summer with the pretty and comparatively cool places in the Western Ghâts—Matheran, Mahabaleshwar, and Khandala. It was during their never-to-be-forgotten visit to the latter place that Thekla saw the dark cavern, so mysterious and impressive, with its solemn lines of elephant-crowned pillars, where, two thousand years ago, the Indian Buddhists worshipped. That expedition left in her mind memories which could never be effaced. She suffered in those days from the lack of someone to whom she could talk of her new and profoundly interesting knowledge: for her father, if she spoke of it to him, would say that he was no antiquarian, and Marion would smile sweetly at the funny old places, even as she smiled in the faces of her friends. They were curious, she would say, and it was pleasant to have a motive for an excursion; but what was there, after all, to be enthusiastic about? So, sometimes Thekla would fall back upon Luchmee, who listened, of course, with reverent attention, thinking everything her adored Miss Sahib said perfection; but who could not be brought to understand that the present, past, and future of India had anything to say to herself personally.

Sonya, who had been Thekla's companion and pupil for the past year, showed much more intelligence than her mother. Once or twice she flashed out a word or two that electrified Thekla. "Sonya has genius," she said on one of these occasions to Luchmee.

"We must educate her. Think, Luchmee, if she were to be the deliverer for whom you are all waiting! Oh, how wonderful! how wonderful it would be!" Upon which Luchmee, not comprehending in the least, smiled indulgently, and stooping low, in her graceful fashion, kissed the hem of her young mistress's robe. The *chota* Miss Sahib was Sonya's protector, as she was hers. They lived by her favour. If she was contented, what more could they desire?

This, then, was the position of affairs when the Ellerslies went back to Bombay, the only change in the household being that Janet had left them to be married.

Shortly after their return an incident happened which astonished Thekla exceedingly. There arrived from England a large box addressed to herself, and when she opened it she found that it contained two evening dresses, one of creamy white, and the other of a soft rose-pink, with shoes and gloves and flowers to match them, and two morning dresses and hats.

They were more beautiful than anything Thekla had worn yet, and feeling almost as much bewildered as pleased, she ran to find her father. It was late in the afternoon. He had just come back from the club, and was resting in his library before dressing for dinner.

"Come in, Thekla," he said kindly. "What is it?"

"Oh, father, such lovely dresses have come for me—at least, I suppose they are for me. Did you order them?"

"With Marion's advice. So you like them?"

"They are beautiful—beautiful! Thank you for thinking of me, father."

"But I hear you are to begin to go out this season, my little Thekla, and extra dress at such times is a necessity. Have you anything particular to do? No? Then sit down here close to me for a few moments; I want to look at you."

Smiling and blushing, Thekla obeyed.

"You have changed," said her father, looking at her with a strange fixity. "You are handsomer; your manner and style are better; you have intelligence and adaptability. I think you will make your way in society."

"I hope I shall please *you*, father," said poor little Thekla chokingly.

"Do you really wish to please me?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do. Try me."

"All this year you have been gentle and obedient," went on Sir Richard. "I wished you to be quiet—you have been quiet. I was particularly anxious that you should take no particular interest in anyone outside of your own family. You have not done so. And you have neither pined nor fretted. I believe the quiet year has done you good. I believe you are wiser than you were."

"I hope so, father. But why——"

"Stop a moment, my child, and let me continue," said Sir Richard impressively. "I, who said to you, Keep quiet, and stay at home, say to you now, Accept invitations, go out, let yourself be seen. But—one moment more—I should like you to know that I had a reason for not bringing you out last season. It was not your youth, for many girls come out quite as young; but I saw you had prejudices——"

"Prejudices, father!"

"My dear child"—he took her hand and held it affectionately—"grant that your father knows you better than you know yourself; but, whether or no, listen to me. I gave you this breathing-time to prevent you from ruining your future. Now, thanks to me, you will enter the world with a free mind. That is enough. If you don't understand now, you will later. Shake off prejudice. Look at things and people with your own eyes. Consider your family's interests. Be a little tolerant, a little prudent, and the time will come, no doubt, when I shall be proud of my distinguished daughter."

He rose as he spoke, intimating thereby that he had no more time to bestow upon her, and kissed her affectionately; then, bidding her put on one of her new pretty dresses, and be in the drawing-room early, as he expected friends, and she must, from this time forth, help Marion to entertain his visitors, he sent her away.

It is a lovely evening. The sun has just gone down, and sea and sky are burning with colour, and a light sea-breeze is whispering through the leaves of plantain and fig-tree, and the air is heavy with the perfume of flowers. Humming a Persian lullaby song picked up from Luchmee, Thekla, whose heart is particularly light this evening, stands between the drawing-room and the verandah, looking out with sparkling eyes, and thinking that the world is a very pleasant place to live in. She has dressed early, as her father requested, and, except for the servants—Luchmee, who is watching her from a corner, and Gopal, who is busy adjusting the room for the evening—she is alone. She is aroused suddenly from her reverie by Gopal, who has darted in front of her, and is looking at her in what she considers a strange way. She is about to ask him if he wants anything, when, with an abruptness curiously unlike his usual urbane manners, he drops behind her, and, looking round, Thekla perceives that a gentleman has entered the room, and is walking across it quickly.

She goes forward to meet him, and then he stops and she stops—he with a laugh, and she with an expression of surprise.

"Mr. Isaacson!"

"Yes, it's me; no mistake at all about it," said the intruder. "I wanted to steal a march upon you, and that awkward brute went and spoiled my little game. Well, and how are you?"

"I am quite well, thank you. Won't you sit down? I will tell my father you are here."

"Thanks! I have just seen him. He's in his study. Sent me on to be entertained by you—that's his expression, you know, not mine. Yes, I'll sit down.—You ——," (an untranslatable Hindustani word to Gopal; Thekla understood it, and it brought the indignant colour to her face), "just set my chair here.—Do you know," looking at her with undisguised admiration, "you have changed immensely!"

"Do you think so?" said Thekla quietly. She brought out her work, some pretty silk embroidery,

and began to thread her needle, as a preparatory to going on with it. He noticed that she stood perfectly straight, and that her hand did not tremble in the least. "One moment!" she begged, as he was about to speak again; "the light is rather bad.—Gopal! the lamp, please! Thank you.—Now, Mr. Isaacson," seating herself at the work-table, "I am ready to talk. You were going away to shoot tigers, I remember, when I saw you last. How many did you kill?"

"Not one, I'm sorry to say. I spent two nights in a tree watching for one, and he never turned up, so on the third night I went to bed. But I got a bear or two in Cashmere—I'm bringing you a fine skin, by-the-bye—and some deer, pretty little things, near Agra, and a heap of birds. I went to Simla in the early summer, and found it rather a bore. Such a lot of girls, and all of them so amiable to a fellow! Nice girls, too! But sweetness palls after a time. Don't you think so?"

"I really don't know. I don't think I have ever been tried," said Thekla, smiling.

"Haven't you? That's funny, too," said Isaacson. "Now, I should have thought just the contrary. I suppose," leaning over the table and trifling absently with her silks, "you were surprised at not hearing from me?"

"Oh dear no!" she answered frankly. "I never thought of it."

"Not once? Oh, come! you are joking. Now, I'll let you into a secret. It was Sir Richard's doing. I wished to enter into a correspondence with you then. But he wouldn't have it. 'Wait a while,' he said; 'she is only a child.' I didn't believe him, don't you know, but I see now that he was right. There's a great change in you, Miss Thekla, for the better, if I may be allowed to say so."

She winced. That "Miss Thekla" had brought back unpleasant memories. Would no one come in and relieve her of the task of entertaining this tiresome young man?

"I wish you would tell me about Cashmere," she said desperately. "We think of going there some day."

"Oh, do! Be my guests. I've a first-rate lot of servants. Good managers, up to time, never in the way. Why, it would be the very thing. I'll speak to Sir Richard about it this evening."

At this moment, when Thekla was as red as a rose with vexation, the curtain that shut off one of the inner rooms was lifted by a slender dark hand, and Marion came in.

"I heard voices, I am sure," she said, looking round with a pretty air of mystification; then, as her eyes fell upon her sister and Mr. Isaacson, "You here!" she cried; "what a delightful surprise! This is like old times. And Thekla keeping you all to herself!"

"Well, you know," said Isaacson, stroking his moustache with a gratified air, "she and I were always friends. But that doesn't mean that I'm not glad to see you."

"It is really very kind of you to say so, whether you feel it or not," said Marion gravely, though the corners of her mouth were twitching. "And do you intend to stay long in Bombay?"

"I'll stay as long as my business keeps me."

"Then it is business that has brought you here?"

"Yes, business—most important business for me." He looked roguishly at Thekla, who, being interested in her embroidering, did not respond by so much as a smile. "It may take me long," he proceeded, "it may not. But it doesn't matter in the least. I have time before me, and I mean to carry it through."

"Business! I wonder what it is!—Thekla," said Marion, "I think Mr. Isaacson wants to make us curious. I mean to be perfectly indifferent; don't you?"

"Miss Thekla has just made a very business-like suggestion," said Isaacson.

"Thekla business-like! I shall believe that when I see it," said Marion.

Questioningly Thekla's large grey eyes were lifted. What, she wondered, was this dreadful young man going to say next?

"Bravo!" he cried out. "I've done the trick. I've made her look up. Now, Miss Ellerslie," looking at Thekla with a waggish air, "what do you think of this? A family trip to Cashmere in the summer—you three to be my guests?"

"That was not *my* suggestion," said Thekla.

"You dear little sensitive goose! why not?" said Marion. "I don't myself see the good of rich young men like Mr. Isaacson, if one can't make use of them."

"Bravo! I like that," cried Isaacson. "Give me frankness."

"And if," she went on, looking at him with a bewitching smile, "father can make up his mind to go, I certainly shall not object. Ah! here he is to answer for himself."

Sir Richard looked extraordinarily benignant that evening. He was beautifully dressed, and his snow-white linen and snow-white hair gave him a touchingly simple and patriarchal appearance.

"Good-evening, for the second time, my dear Isaacson," he said effusively.—"He caught me in my den, girls, quite in dishabille. I sent him on to you, and I hope you have been making him feel at home."

"Oh, yes, Sir Richard. Quite so. Haven't felt so comfortable since I was here last year," said Isaacson.

"That is good hearing. But sit down! sit down!"

Sir Richard seated himself where the full light fell upon him, and Thekla rose swiftly, and brought her chair to his side. "Well, child," he said, stroking her hair kindly—they looked wonderfully picturesque together, and he knew it—"so you like to sit near your old father still.—They make all this fuss over me, Mr. Isaacson, but they won't scruple to leave me when the right man comes by."

"Father!" from Thekla.

"That's not quite fair, is it? Well! we'll change the subject. What have you been telling Mr. Isaacson?"

"She has been proposing a trip to Cashmere," said Marion, laughing. "We three, with Mr. Isaacson for our guide, counsellor, and friend."

"We three, with Mr. Isaacson!" said Sir Richard, before Thekla could speak. "That was rather a cool proposal, wasn't it, my little girl? But never mind!"—

as she tried indignantly to protest—"we all know how you meant it."

"But, seriously——" began Isaacson.

"My dear fellow, I can talk of nothing seriously until I have dined. And here is Gopal. Dinner ready! So much the better. Isaacson, you must take in Marion this evening. I see Thekla wants to go with me."

struggle as she would, she could not make either Isaacson or anyone else believe that his society was anything but enchanting to her. Not only so—for she might have hoped that time would correct this misconception—but she was always falling into embarrassing situations. If she exchanged a word with him in public—and her father insisted she should treat him as a friend—someone would smile, or some-



"'Things have gone too far for that.'"—*p.* 266.

Thekla did wish to go with her father. She clung to his arm as they walked through the long room, and, though her eyes were full of tears, smiles were trembling to her lips. "Thank you, father darling," she managed to whisper.

"Ah! but you mustn't be a baby," he whispered in return.

CHAPTER XV.—DRIFTING.

THAT was the first of many strange and perplexing days. How it happened, Thekla could not tell, but one else would enlarge upon her observation, giving it a different and much more intimate meaning than she had intended. Marion was particularly tiresome in this respect. Then her amusing speech—this is how it was generally characterised—would be repeated to her father, with amplifications which made it even more significant; and blush and protest as she would, no one believed that she had not spoken just so.

In the station after a very short time the Ellerslies and Isaacson were always asked out together, and as Sir Richard never gave an entertainment which did

not include his young friend, no day passed without their meeting. And, in fact, though she could not be said to like the young millionaire any better than she had done, Thekla was becoming so far accustomed to him as not to be shocked by his manner and conversation.

One of those pretty little legends, framed no one quite knows how, and believed because no one cares to contradict them, had gone the round of the station. These two interesting young people, it was said, had fallen in love with one another on board ship: Isaacson, who was extremely young and fabulously wealthy, had entreated Sir Richard to allow them to marry at once: Thekla, being madly in love with him, had poured out tears and supplications; but Sir Richard, with a wisdom and disinterestedness as rare as they were admirable, had refused to sanction any engagement until the young people had been put upon their trial. Some could even repeat the magnificent words in which he sent out the young hero on his pilgrimage. "I might take advantage of your youth," so he was reported to have said. "I might cement for ever the union of hearts which you maintain exists between you, by making you one in the sight of man. But consider, for one moment, how I should feel if, for either of you, the hour of repentance came. If you, the rich man, with all the world at your feet, regretted your hasty marriage; if my little girl came to me with tears in her eyes, asking why I had allowed her to leave me so young. No"—and here the reporter would picture his manner: the benevolent, expansive smile, the gentle, but lofty dignity—"No, my dear sir. Leave us to think about you. Take time for thought yourself, and if, in a year's time, you are still of the same mind, come back, and we will see then how my daughter is disposed towards you."

And now he had come back, as rich and as devoted as ever, and the young girl, who had for his sake been living the life of a hermit, had received him with open arms. This legend, which gave an additional interest to the Ellerslies as a family, and threw a new halo of merit round the admirable Sir Richard, was chiefly responsible for the favour with which Isaacson was received.

Thekla did not hear it, and she could not, therefore, have been otherwise than surprised by the way in which her father's friends coupled her with Isaacson. If it was a dinner, he was told off to take her in; if a lawn-tennis match, he was her partner by right; if a riding party, he was besought smilingly to look after her; if she so much as sat down to sing or play in a strange drawing-room, Isaacson would presently be deputed to turn over her pages. She had neither the experience nor the *aplomb* of a woman of the world, and she was first perplexed, then alarmed. There came back to her some of the strange and terrifying scenes on the *Amazon*. Once again she saw Murchison's haggard face and eager sorrowful eyes. His voice, tremulous with passion, rang in her ears: "You are standing on the brink of a precipice, and hands—trusted hands—are pushing you over." Once she appealed to her father, and on another occasion to Marion, but neither of them gave her the least assistance; Marion said, with a touch of scorn, that it was the easiest thing in the world to put a man off, if you really wished to do so; and her father, with something less than his usual benignity, begged her not to be foolish and fanciful.

If, in fine, it had been possible for a marriage to come off without the conscious participation and consent of one of the contracting parties, Thekla would certainly have found herself married before that winter was out; but, unfortunately, from Isaacson's and Sir Richard's point of view, that is out of the question. Before the day could be actually fixed, some sort of consent had to be wrung from her, and, to do Isaacson justice, he did not think that much effort would be required to win it. The girl had become accustomed to him, and he could promise her the sorts of things that all women like—fine houses and hosts of servants, and dresses and flowers and jewellery. Why, there were girls at Simla (and girls quite as handsome as Thekla) who would have jumped at such an offer as he could make! As for love and that sort of humbug—I am quoting, of course, from the millionaire—he did not believe in it. Fellows who called themselves poets, and wrote a lot of trash, imagined it. Other fellows read their ravings and chose to rave too. There was nothing real in the whole business.

Arguing thus, Isaacson went to Sir Richard one day and said that he meant to speak plainly.

"This shilly-shally sort of business," he said, with that elegance which had always characterised him, "has gone on long enough."

And when Thekla's father, who was by no means so sure of the state of her feeling, begged him not to spoil everything by being over-precipitate, he answered shrewdly enough—"If she doesn't like me now, she never will. I don't say even then I'd give her up, don't you know! But we'd have to change our tactics, so it's just as well to know how we stand."

On one of those beautiful sunny afternoons, therefore, they gave him a free field. Marion went out to pay visits, Sir Richard went off to his club, and Thekla was left alone.

She was sitting in the verandah, with little Sonya, to whom she had been reading, at her feet, and Luchmee watching them from a corner, when Isaacson's smart mail-phaeton, driven by a pair of black horses, came rattling into the compound.

Like a flash the Indian woman and girl disappeared behind one of the punkahs, and Gopal, with velvet tread and eyes gleaming like a panther's, stole through the long drawing-room and stationed himself in a dark corner near the door that opened on to the verandah.

"My father is out," said Thekla, advancing.

"So much the better. My business is with you," he answered, flinging himself out of the phaeton, and throwing his reins to the syces.—"Take it round to the stable. Shan't want it for half an hour," he sang out to them in Hindustani.

"My father and sister will not be in till evening," said Thekla. "I think you had better go away, Mr. Isaacson."

She spoke firmly, but that keen-eyed watcher behind the screen saw that she was trembling.

"No," he said as firmly. "I don't mean to go away. I don't mean to leave this place until I have had it out with you. Look here, Thekla; be reasonable."

"By what right do you call me by my Christian name?"

"Come, come!" he said soothingly. "You shouldn't really take the high tone with me. Things have gone too far for that."

"What do you mean?" she flashed out, her eyes blazing with anger.

"I mean that every soul in Bombay believes we are engaged to one another."

"Believes! that we are engaged—you and I? How dare you say such a thing?"

"My dear girl," said Isaacson, seating himself, "I have, and I may say I always have had, the courage of my opinions. When I see a fact, I stick to it; and let me assure you that a fact is a precious hard thing to kick against. Now," argumentatively, "what *are* the facts? I come here, a perfect stranger. I am received everywhere with open arms. That one might understand. But why should we be invited everywhere together? Why should they insist on our being partners at dinner, lawn-tennis, *chota-hasaris*, tiffins, rides and drives? Can you answer? No? then I will. Because we are supposed to be engaged. Don't be angry. I've liked it well enough, I grant you; but I'm not responsible. I give you my word that I never so much as opened my mouth about you to anyone, except your own father, who, of course, knows my wishes, and Stanhope, who is far enough away not to be able to tell tales. Now these are facts; so why not, like a sensible girl, reconcile yourself to them?"

He drew a little nearer to her. She did not stir. She was standing now, with wide-open eyes and set face, looking out before her. One would have thought that she had not heard him.

"I'm not one of your unreasonable sort," he went on. "I don't want protestations, or anything of that kind. It's quite curious to myself how much I like you; but I can't expect you to like me in the same way. Do as your father and sister wish. Say you'll marry me. In the language of the poets, 'Name the glad day,' and I give you my word you'll never regret it."

He drew nearer to her still. What could this dead silence mean but yielding? He could not see—he could not have understood if he had seen—the dull anguish of her face. How could such as he have guessed that a young girl to whom a splendid and flattering offer had just been made should be stricken even to the earth with bitter pain and an overwhelming sense of humiliation? She was betrayed—she was betrayed—that is what the poor girl was feeling. They—her own friends in whom she trusted—had blinded her eyes and dulled her senses, so that she should drift into this. Ah! that was poor Murchison's word; he had warned her, and she had refused to accept his warning. But she was awake now—wide awake—and she would not suffer herself to drift any longer.

So she thought, standing like one spellbound; and, at last, even Isaacson was awed by the silence. "Speak to me, Thekla," he said, taking her hand.

The touch aroused her. She sprang away from him, and scarcely had she done so before she was aware of Gopal, the soft-footed, standing close to her. His head was bent, his left hand was on his breast, and in his right he carried a silver salver, on which there was a visiting-card. His manner and attitude were even humbler and more reverent than usual, and Thekla attributed to her own excited feeling the circumstance that she seemed to see a change in him. It was as if he understood what was going on, and would help her if he could.

"What is it, my good Gopal?" she said.

"A gentleman, Miss Sahib."

"Where is he?"

"Your Presence, I have shown him into the drawing-room."

"Son of a pig!" growled Isaacson, in Hindustani, "what did I tell you?"

"Surely Gopal has not been told to forbid my father's house to his visitors!" said Thekla, with dignity.

But Isaacson did not hear her. He was striding to the stable to find his phaeton.

(To be continued.)

OF HINDERING THE CHILDREN.

(A MOTHER'S CONFIDENCES.—IV.)

MY heart is very full to-night, and indeed it is a great relief to be able to write to you, dear friend, of the things which are uppermost. Evan is out, attending a committee; the children are in bed, and I have two good hours in which to tell you of our last night's talk. At last we have reached the very kernel of our duty to the children. Ever since Evan and I began those Sunday talks, I have been looking forward to this subject with an emotion which you will understand when I tell you that from the moment I held for the first time our first baby in my arms, the call of Christ to the children has been in my ears; in that first hour of motherhood I heard the words distinctly, as distinctly as if my husband had spoken them—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me!" I was too weak and too much beside myself with the new joy of motherhood to wonder then; but since, I have wondered at the apparently audible voice with which these words came to me. Ever since,

that personal message has been to me like the evening bells of a country church: you talk, and forget them; you are silent, and their music fills the air. Truly, I have never had a moment of what you may call soul-silence but I have heard, underlying all other sounds, some strains of that Divine music: "to come"—"to come unto Me"—"suffer"—"suffer the children"—"the little children to come unto Me"—and so it goes on, almost at any minute since I have been a mother; whenever—

"Earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys"

has been stilled, the Saviour's "suffer," "suffer" draws my soul as the moon the waters of the ocean. I have never told all this to anybody, and I daresay I could not write about it now, only for Evan's words of last night.

Whatever lighter thoughts and hopes have lain on the surface, the deep thought and purpose of my soul has been the response—"Yea, Lord, we will bring them!" And oh! if I could only tell you all the searchings of heart I have had on this subject, you would understand how I am still quivering after last night. "Surely you have often spoken to your husband about this?" you say. No: I suppose it is true that—

"Each in his hermit cell, we dwell apart."

At any rate, never till last night did either of us let the other into *that* secret chamber. And then the delight of finding that in this, as in all else, we had been at one—thought for thought, purpose for purpose!

I don't know that I can begin to tell you in an orderly way what Evan said and what I said, and how it all came about. An angel came down and troubled the waters, I think. We *both* said, and felt, and looked, in a way not to be written down, and it is only now, when the stir is subsiding, that I can see what help and healing we found. I shall try to note down a few of the conclusions we came to, both to clear my own thoughts and, I hope, to interest you.

First: Why is Christ so imperative in His demand that the children should be allowed to "come" unto Him?

He Himself gives the answer. They have a certain readiness in themselves: they are like-minded—"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." This quality in the children, which puts them, to speak reverently, in touch with Christ, is what we call *innocence*. Now, innocence is not freedom from sin. Children do wrong continually, and know they are doing wrong; and not only so, but they do acts of greed, selfishness, cruelty, which would be odious in us. "Remember not the sins of my youth," David says; and he might have said, "Remember not the sins of my childhood." It is rather the fashion to talk as if children were always meek, lovely, and gentle in heart and behaviour; but the fact is, there are few of us who have not recollections of childhood and early youth we might blush to recall. But, after all, we are tender over those children—our own child-selves. Evan said, "Oh, I was the most horrid, greedy little wretch imaginable!" but I could see a gleam of tenderness in his eye for that little wretch. There was a glamour about that little Evan, through which his faults showed dimly. When you want to thresh out a subject thoroughly, it is astonishing how long it takes to clear the floor before you can even begin. It took us a long time to thresh out innocence. We could hardly get rid of the notion that it meant goodness in



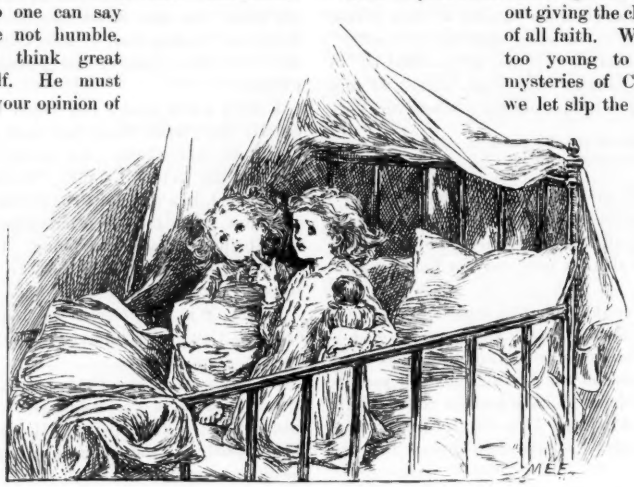
"Crying to be allowed to play with 'that dear little boy.'" - *p.* 269.

some form; but whatever lovely quality we tried, we remembered some instance of the contrary fault, even in our little trio—not to say in our own childish selves.

"'Humble himself as this little child'—there it is," cried Evan: "no one can say the children are not humble. A child cannot think great things of himself. He must take upon trust your opinion of him. Indeed, he does not think of himself at all; there is too much besides to amuse him. Yes, I know there are poor little masquerading beings whose parents have succeeded in making shows of them; but they don't count. We may think of children in a healthy, not a diseased condition, and the child is humble; 'tis his nature to!' Now, if you think much of yourself, there is no room left to think much of another; if you think little—indeed, do not think of yourself at all—there is great room within you to magnify another. There you have the first condition of readiness for Christ—a mind open to think great things of Him. And I do believe that is why Christ is, as you say, so imperative in His demand for the children. They, at any rate, are open to the thought of Him, and able to laud and magnify His holy name. You remember the praises of the children were one of the few alleviations of that last week!"

A little further search brought us to "which believe," and here we thought we found the second quality that goes to make up innocence—the faith, the trustfulness of children. They are not a bit like Mrs. Gatty's caterpillar, who believed everything she was told—*when it is reasonable*. The children do not ask whether it is reasonable or not; they believe because they are told, and here is the very quality Christ demands—the power of believing what we are told. Here we have innocence—in the humility and the faith, or trustfulness, of the little children. Now, see how they delight in fable and fairy tale—in talking beasts and whispering flowers, in the Marquis of Carabas and Cinderella's pumpkin carriage. They live in a world where everything is possible, and where beautiful things are always happening.

And we parents let this "age of faith" go by without giving the children the object of all faith. We say, "They are too young to understand the mysteries of Christianity," and we let slip the time when they can believe, while we wait for the period of their understanding. O fools, and slow of heart! As if human understanding had ever risen to the mysteries of God manifest in the flesh! The sage cannot understand; but the simplest child soul can believe—can comprehend and take into itself the Divine wonder. And why? Nothing astonishes a child, because all things are wonderful. We elders believe with our lips, strain after the truth with our understanding; but because we have so poor a grasp, we measure the King by His service to us. He is our Provider, who gives us all things of this life; our Saviour, who saves us from our sins: more, He is to us, "The Way, without which there is no going; the Truth, without which there is no knowing; the Life, without which there is no living." And well for us! Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are they that have the Lord for their God!



"The unseen King will be about their bed."—*p.* 269

But there is more for the children; for their eyes, is the vision of the King in His beauty, and they, more than we, are able to give themselves to Him with steadfast and passionate loyalty. We want Him for ourselves, for His manifold uses to us. Where should we be without our Saviour, our Healer, our Peace, our Light of Life, our Bread of Life, our Water of Life, the Wine of our Joy? But they, more than we, have the power to apprehend what He is in Himself. It is no mystery to them that the King of kings should live in low estate. Have we not the heir of a

line of kings crying to be allowed to play with 'that dear little boy' in the gutter? All things are possible to him that believeth, and the children are able to believe all things. But how shall they believe except they hear? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And who but father and mother can preach the simple thoughts and easy words the little ones can understand? Here is where we may hinder the children, and here lies the gravest responsibility, as well as the highest privilege, of parents.

"King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes:"
"Hearts are as streams in Whose high hand:"

this is the aspect in which the children shall first know their "Almighty Lover," and that because the first and deepest craving of the human heart is for a King. Evan says he believes one secret of the unfaith of the present day is that the kingly character of Christ is not sufficiently brought before people. He says there is a fountain of loyalty in every human heart waiting to flow for the King, and this fountain is what we must open in the children. It is not only a King to rule over us we need, but a King to honour and serve and delight in, One in whose path we may spread our garments of praise.

I can see that it will not be difficult to make the children live all day long in the presence of the King, in the light of a countenance ever smiling upon them. Do you remember a delightful tale of the Barmecides, told in one of Trench's poems?—how they invited themselves to sup one day with a very poor man, who could spread but a scanty meal for them, and how, when they had supped, the Barmecides, father and two sons, sent for masons to make a doorway in the inner wall of their host's cottage, and the opening showed a "palace of delight" made ready for the poor man by his princely guests. So shall the children know of Christ—a King, going in and out amongst the dwellings of poor men, for each of whom He is preparing a "palace of delight;" for "in My Father's House are many mansions." That they cannot see the King will be no stumbling-block to the children, who have not yet learned to "believe their own eyes"—and no more. The imagination that delights in the marvels of Lilliput-land will aid the child's large faith, and the unseen King will be about their path and about their bed, closer and more real than mother's kiss or father's clasping arms.

Thus, with the thought of the King ever before them, all the children's *best* shall be for Him. The toy, the flowers for the children's hospital, shall be a gift for the King, and shall be that which they cherish most, that they may learn the joy of giving. The little gardens shall be carefully kept for Him, because "He considers the lilies of the field." The best pothooks, the best hem, shall be done for Him, because "He hath done all things well." "The King does not allow——" shall check unlovely countenance, word, and act. "He was subject unto them" shall glorify obedience, and make the children on the alert for every chance to obey. But I cannot disclose, even to you, all the visions my heart is full of—of a holy childhood spent in the garden of the Lord!

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

THE TRUE SOLVENT OF DOUBT.

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

ADDRESSED TO YOUTH ON THE EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."—ST. JOHN vii. 17.

IT is only the most commonplace, though, alas! the truest of platitudes, to assert that we live in an age of bold and reckless speculation on doctrinal subjects. The whole citadel of the Faith has been exposed to assault, including some of the leading essential verities. In the case of not a few there is the avowal of unblushing scepticism; a settled and undisguised dislike and abhorrence of all Revealed Truth. And, when a keen godless intellect is combined with a godless heart, such are only too ready to discard moral evidence. They will accept no testimony short of the dry, stern, logical, material demonstration required in order to substantiate facts in science or history, or every-day life. There must be mathematical Euclid-like demonstration or none. And hence, in one sweep, are cleared away as so many cobwebs, not only the doctrines of Christianity, but the belief in a personal God. The Being to whom they are responsible is, with a sembled humility, veiled under the title of the "Unknown" and "Unknowable."

It is not with such we are at present concerned. It is rather with those who are in perplexity, and uneasy under their perplexities. They have been unable altogether to escape contact with the speculative religious theories in vogue. Their own minds may too (apart from any extraneous influences) have suggested hard, if not insoluble problems. And yet, I repeat, they are the problems and stumbling-blocks of earnest inquirers. Some, either personally known to me, or who have sought anonymous counsel, are in the agonies of an honest search after salvation, but are yet arrested and perplexed, or rather perplex

themselves, with the preliminary inquiry, "What is truth?" What are the creeds and tenets to be *really* believed and clung to? How am I to know, amid this diversity of opinion and of conflicting theological dogma, what are the articles of faith veritably of God? To put the case of such yet farther into verbal shape, we are not wrong in formulating it thus: "I would give all I have to believe; but I feel my footing insecure. I am like one walking on a rotten plank or on the bending ice. I cannot follow the Papal advice and allocution to shut my eyes, and, grasping blindfold a strong unseen hand, to surmount thus the peril of steep glissades and yawning crevasses. Amid my own doubts and the doubts injected by others, I feel very unhappy. Is there any escape from this bewilderment, this chaos of insecurity? any method by which I can disperse these conflicting thoughts, and have truths vital to my happiness and peace verified at the tribunal of my own enlightened reason and judgment? I hear of those whose faith is the solid rock; mine is, alas! the shivering reed, blown about with every kind of doctrine and cunning craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive."

In answering this question, I do not underrate or depreciate other evidences of our holy faith. But I limit myself now to the saying of Christ (Himself incarnate Truth) in the words of our text. This deals with one species of evidence only—the experimental, the reflex, the self-verifying, the evidence emitted and countersigned by a man's own spirit, who has subjectively made trial of the faith and tested it. This, after all, is the true philosophic method, submitting the truth to a personal analysis. As the chemist casts the substance into his crucible, so let the believer take the Rule of Faith as revealed and unfolded in the Word of God, and test it in the moral crucible of his own experience. "If any *man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.*"

Brethren, that text has a force in the original Greek, as you will find noted in the Revised Version, which is not conveyed in our authorised translation. The "*will*" here spoken of (the verb "will") is much more truly and intelligibly rendered by "wishes" or "desires." "If any man *desire* to do His will (*willeth* to do His will), he shall know of the doctrine."

Now this brings us at once to what we fear is with many the real secret of their unrest and perplexity and consequent unhappiness. They know not the doctrine, or they reject and repudiate the doctrine or doctrines. Why? *Because they have never* DESIRED *to* DO *the will.* They have never given themselves, to use the common phrase, a fair chance of believing, by their failing to obey our Lord's preliminary condition, that preliminary condition being an honest wish and earnest purpose to do the Father's will, and follow implicitly the dictates and the precepts of His Holy Scriptures.

Take a familiar illustration. What patient could expect to be cured of disease, who before submitting to the required treatment—a treatment, moreover, that had already been successful in the case of uncounted thousands—insisted on raising speculative doubts as to the ability of the physician to heal, or of the medicines to effect a remedy? Would not the competence alike of the physician and his cure be best tested and ascertained by *trial*, by putting these to the proof? The prescribed remedies might perhaps be severe, perhaps strange; perhaps contrary to the preconceived ideas of the sufferer as to what was best. But when submitting to the regimen, he feels, after a time of patient self-surrender, the rush of health in every pore, the old pang of anguish, first mitigated, and then removed; the sleepless nights gradually exchanged for balmy repose; the appetite that so long nauseated all food, restored: in one word, that he is a *cured man:* what else could his belief be, but that of perfect unhesitating trust in the skill and ability of the dispenser of the remedies? If he had *resisted* his physician's will, questioned and combated the propriety of his prescriptions, a sickly and diseased invalid he would have been still, every avenue of health and of physical enjoyment closed around him. But his *own will* gladly accorded with that of his adviser. He may, I repeat, have wondered much at *some* parts of the cure, and questioned the expediency of others; yet his feeling and determination was, "I *shall try:* I DESIRE to do what he bids me; I shall risk my life in his hands." and thus, "willing to do his will," his restoration gives him, in all time to come, implicit faith in the remedies which had proved so entirely successful.

It is the very same with the moral and spiritual cure of our moral and spiritual natures. Here is the great disease of *sin:* sin with its moral *virus* in the corrupt and corrupted heart. A Great and Good Physician, in this His own Word, His Divine Pharmacopœia, proffers me a remedy. It is announced to be a perfect one—the *only* one. What shall be my conduct when this Heavenly Physician is summoned and His cure propounded? Shall I begin to impugn His veracity, and skill, and trustworthiness? Shall I begin to detail my own serious misgivings as to the efficacy of the ingredients He prescribes, and offer objections and difficulties in the way of farther treatment? This would be at once to diminish or forfeit the chance of recovery. Nay! Submitting to His verdict and prescription, acquiescing in its wisdom; in other words, "*desiring to do* His will," I come to know the reality of the restoration. I come to see the wondrous adaptation of the Gospel as a panacea for all the ills of my spiritual nature. Having thus tested it, I can no longer resist the evidence of my moral sense, the inner experimental evidence. Others may reject my Physician and His remedies, discredit and discount, and denounce them as a spurious imposture, a baseless hallucination. But I have "*tasted* and seen that the Lord is gracious." I have felt the power of the truth; and nothing now can lead me to disbelieve or discard it. I can say humbly in the words of the Great Healer Himself, which He

employed in addressing a perplexed doubter, yet earnest seeker, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." You might as well try to convince me that the sun in heaven is a delusion and fantasy, as that this Bible, to which I owe a saved soul and regenerated nature, is a fabrication palmed on my credulity. To the scoffer still, as to the scoffers of old, who sought to throw discredit on Christ's cure of the blind man, and shake the faith of the cured in his Deliverer, I can say, "This one thing I *know*, that whereas I was *blind*, now I see!"

And, my young hearers, that is the evidence, the simple, truthful evidence on which rests the faith of millions. "To the poor the Gospel is preached." How many among the family of believers, lowly, humble, illiterate, know nothing about the other evidences of the schools; and even if you were to unfold them, these would be unable to take in and understand their scope. On what is the faith of such grounded? Call it not a blind, a devout imagination. Call it not the faith of ignorance or credulous superstition. Go to many lowly cottagers, those who are saints indeed; who have their poverty glorified and gladdened with the hopes of the Gospel, living lives of true yet unassuming godliness that would put many of us to the blush. What, I again ask, is the ground of their simple, yet resolute and unshaken, confidence? Why, it is this *experimental* evidence. They have *tried* the Gospel remedy—"the balm in Gilead and the Physician there"—and they have found in *it* the very remedy, and in *Him* the very Healer they need. Every day, as they continue *desirous to do His will*, they know more and more of the doctrine. You might as well bid them stand in doubt of their existence as question the divine reality of salvation through the Christ of Nazareth!

Nor is this illustrated in the case of the poor and lowly and illiterate only. It would be doing injustice to the truth of God to confine it to these. Nay, verily, the noblest and most impressive cases in which our text is verified are those in which you see minds of high intellectual culture, but sanctified by grace—such, if I might select as examples the names of two of our greatest experimental philosophers, as those of Sir David Brewster and Sir James Mackintosh—accepting with a child's simplicity the glorious scheme of Revealed Truth, living and dying in the unwavering belief of it. True to the principles of the highest philosophy they lived, *doing the will*, DESIROUS of DOING it. And they had the promise (the sure promise) fulfilled—"Ye shall know of the doctrine;" "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on *to know the Lord*." I believe many here may be able, in thought, to revert to someone you have known, of strong, masculine, vigorous understanding, one not likely to be carried away by fanaticism, or to accept of anything as truth unless he *felt* it to be so in his heart of hearts, one who would scorn to live in the profession of a belief he inwardly repudiated. Yet that man spent an elevated and consecrated existence maintaining the glory of the Cross, and he passed away in the calm, unwavering faith in which he lived, unagitated with one sceptic doubt, unharassed with one sceptic thought! How was this? Again the text tells you; he *desired* to do the Father's will. In the old phrase of patriarchal days, "he walked with God;" and the God whom he loved and served, revealed to his inner eye the reality of the doctrine, and made true, in his case (as in all of every rank and position who earnestly seek Him), the pledge—"Them that honour Me I will honour;" "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart;" "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass;" "And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday;" "If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, *if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul*."

You will see from what we have just said that there is but one condition annexed to this soul-surrender to the Great Physician and to the making successful proof of the remedies offered. It is that there be a relinquishment of all moral impediments on our part. We cannot expect light to break upon us if we are still living in darkness, shunning the light and life of purity and holiness, the light and life of God, and if our moral being is out of harmony with His. Before we can dream of being athletes in the Christian race, weights and hindrances must be laid aside. The Apostle states and enforces this postulate in a striking passage, singularly interpretive of the words of our text: "Be not," says he, "conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may *prove* what is that good and acceptable and perfect WILL of *God*" (Romans xii. 2). A higher than the Apostle similarly, and in briefer words, thus emphasises this same condition—the fulfilment of the promise of our text is contingent on it—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Young men (and I speak to any who may specially need such a word to-day), receive humbly, confidently, reverentially, this great revealed prescription of the Great Healer. We know well that *you* are above others laid open in various forms to sceptic assaults and insidious sophistries: appeals from the simple statements of God's Word to proud reason. Listen not to them, but take rather the Divine recipe of our text. Set out in life: begin this all-momentous period of existence—anticipate alike the assault of foe without and of the traitor doubt within—by making proof for yourselves of the *reality* of the truth. Do God's will, and then you shall know of the reality of the doctrine!

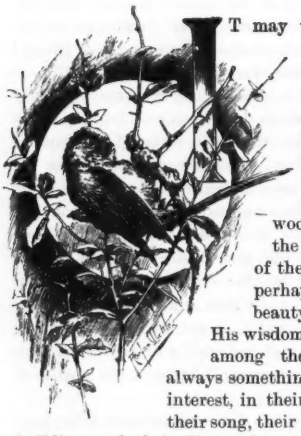
I have met with not a few who, in their folly, have reversed this order: who wished to be satisfied of the doctrine first, before they *did* the will—in other words, who sought to be intellectually convinced before they were morally enlightened. The intellect,

the proud intellect, refuses to be harnessed and hampered in this ethical chariot; and then the wheels refuse to move, or rather, the retrogression, the deterioration, begins. What is the result, the inevitable result, when the moral hold is loosened? The desire to do God's will ceases. In the words of Scripture, "when the house is emptied, swept, and garnished," then the seven devils of unbelief are waiting ready to burst in. And they *do* burst in, and the deadly work of defiant scepticism progresses in a rapid ratio.

Many a man is a sceptic because he wishes to get rid of his responsibility. He flatters himself that, by making it his boast to believe nothing—to spurn conscience as a demon of the imagination, and discard the soul's immortality as a similar unauthenticated dream—he can thus dismiss and bury in oblivion haunting recollections of a sinful past. Though I only repeat what I have already asserted, depend upon it, if you refuse to entertain the "will" to do God's will, you will not only never know of the doctrine, but you will come of necessity to that sad state and phase of mind, when your only belief is that all Christians are hypocrites; that the phrase, "a living faith," is a lying invention; that religion is a sham and a pretence, or its professors dupes and charlatans. This is the shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience; the truth once tolerated comes gradually to be slighted, then despised, then scorned. Unhappy cavillers! going on, not like "doers of the will," from strength to strength, but from weakness to weakness! God has a solemn retributive sentence addressed to such, leaving them in their miserable, proud, petty isolation—"Ephraim is joined to his idols; *let him alone.*"

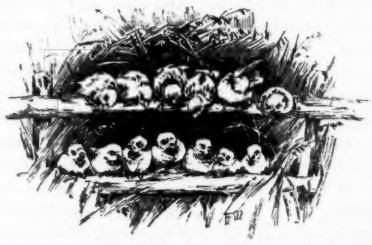
Let me adjure all with the dew of youth upon them, spurning "devil-born doubt," to try this *experimental* evidence by making an early consecration of themselves to Christ. Preoccupy your souls with Him. By thus securing possession of the moral citadel, the intellectual is sure to follow. Mark what St. Paul says: "With the heart" (not with the head) "man believeth unto righteousness." He tells us the secret of his own conquest of unbelief. There was no room for one wavering or questioning in the mind of the man who could say: "*I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" To him to live was Christ; his heart was so full of passionate, enthusiastic love for his Redeemer that there was no possible entrance for any poorer or baser thought or purpose. We may not be able to live or feel or act like that peerless Apostle, and we should be modest in the appropriation of his phrases to our lowlier standard. But we *can* have the same aspiration as he had; God helping us, by *desiring* to *do* the will and to follow in the steps of his great Lord, we shall have the concurrent reward—the fulfilment of the assured promise—by knowing of the doctrine; and thus, in life and in death, be able to say, in a humble sense, as he said it: "I KNOW Whom I have believed!"

ODDS AND ENDS OF BIRD LIFE.



IT may well be said that to all those who live in the country God has given three great sources of pleasure among the beauties and wonders of His hand: the Trees of the wood: the Flowers of the field; and the Birds of the air. And nowhere, perhaps, is there greater beauty, or clearer trace of His wisdom and goodness, than among the birds. There is always something fresh, and full of interest, in their habits and ways; their song, their plumage, their nest-building and their flight—for all who will but use their eyes.

It so happens that I live in what the people about here call a good "birdy" spot. There are quiet leafy fruit and flower gardens all round my house, where the sound of a gun is never heard. Trees shelter us on all sides, and miles of thick green woodlands are within easy reach, where one may find shelter from the fiercest summer sunshine or the coldest blast of winter. Pheasants and partridges abound, carefully looked after by many keepers; but although Mr. Gaiters and his friends slaughter many harmless creatures, both furred and feathered, they are, on the whole, merciful towards the small birds, which are to be found here in greater number and variety than in many a more promising locality. Hence it happens



"A good 'birdy' spot."

that the birds and I have by degrees come to be great friends; and in many a lonely ramble through winding lane, field, and wood, I get quiet glimpses of their social life, fortunes and misfortunes, of curious interest. Just outside my garden gate, which faces the high road, is a rustic post pillar-box, that



THE NEST IN THE LETTER-BOX.

serves for the scanty correspondence of the next two hamlets. The aperture open for letters (at about five and a half feet from the ground) is six inches long, and one wide; while the interior of the box is a small chamber of about eighteen inches high by eight in width. Of this cosy little nook a tiny long-tailed tit has now (May) taken possession, and after a week's careful preparation of the nursery, by lining the whole floor with a carpet of thick moss, and over that a dainty sprinkle of feathers and wool, there she now sits in the dark, jealously guarding her two tiny white eggs. For the last ten years, regularly as May comes round, a tit of the same kind has there built her nest, and brought up a large family, and through the slit in the letter-box safely launched them out upon the world. By this time there must be a very large family of tits in this immediate neighbourhood who have all started in life in this same strange fashion: brought up in the midst of a pile of letters and newspapers, and, when hardly able to fly, tossed out of a post-office (the nursery) window. In this way some scores may have inherited a literary taste, and, remembering what a happy and quiet time they had of it in that dark little room near the garden gate, have shown their good-will to me and my labour with pen and ink by arranging that one or other of the family should always be in residence at Her Majesty's expense. It is totally unlike any bird's usual place for a nest, and yet God seems to have given to them the sense of knowing that it is a place of safety and of peace—though all in the dark, while their friends and companions rejoice in the sunshine and free air.

Whether the present busy little mother is the same who came to us last year it is hard to decide. I have watched both pretty sharply, and can detect no difference. But whichever she may be, though I seldom see her fly in or out of the nursery window, if I softly open the door at seven p.m. I always find her with outspread wings, keeping guard over her dainty treasure, and looking up at me with a small bright eye shining like a spark in the dark, as if to say "What do you want here? Make haste and shut the door!" Of alarm or fear there is no sign whatever.

If the pile of letters and newspapers grows too big and incommodes her in the nest, somehow or other she manages to push back the most obtrusive; in one case biting the edges of an envelope until half the contents were laid bare; and in another pitching the offender bodily out of the window into the road. Every night the postman regularly at eight p.m. unlocks the box,

and takes out the mail, but of him she takes no notice whatever, as if she knew that he had a right to be there, and, if he chose, to turn her out. But Jacob is far too kindly an old man for that.

Though the summers in this part of Hants, as a rule, are intensely hot and dry, the winters are long and severe, and many of our birds must then have a very hard time of it, especially those which feed on insects. In the long frosts of four or five weeks, scores must die of actual starvation. And yet, though I was last year out and about in all weathers, and made my way through many a likely haunt, I very rarely met with a dead bird; certainly not more than half a dozen all through the terrible winter of 1887, and all these were blackbirds, or thrushes, or wood-pigeons, who had perished of actual starvation, and when found were scarcely more than skin and bone in a shroud of feathers.

Of one young cock blackbird thus found dead I made a special note, as he had but one leg; and therefore must have had a doubly hard time of it. We had noticed him before this one summer morning very busy on the lawn, and watched him through a long struggle with a big worm, which he managed to drag out of his hole at last, though it was with great difficulty that he contrived to keep his own balance, and avoid tumbling over on the grass. He had no doubt lost his leg by meddling with one of the keeper's small traps set along the edge of the wood for stoats and weazels. So also, most likely, had a poor, merry chatterer of a starling whom I not long after noticed on the palings in the kitchen garden. Somehow or other he contrived to get through the winter, but one spring morning he managed "to put his foot in it" again, and get into trouble in the chimney of a neighbouring farmhouse, down which he made a sudden and rattling descent with some loose dusty leaves, and fell dead on the kitchen floor.

Within a hundred yards of my house I have noticed more than twenty varieties of birds, which seem more or less to prefer this locality to one more remote from the works and ways of men, both for building purposes and obtaining food. But out of them all, none are more talkative and amusing and peculiar than the starlings, who are with us all the year round; and against whom, when the plums are ripe, old Charles, our gardener, carries on a standing warfare. He alone had not a word of pity for our poor friend with one leg, and only grumbled out something like "He were too fond of them Morellas!"

I have often wondered what the other birds thought of their one-legged companion: whether they noticed any peculiarity in his gait, or whether his wife and children looked askance at his strange way of hopping along the road in a zig-zag, where other people walked straight. But whatever they may have noticed, they kept their thoughts to themselves; unless, indeed, they said a word to the green woodpecker, whose merry laugh I so often heard in the long avenue of beeches; though I never caught more than a glimpse of him creeping up one of the grey mossy trunks. He is a strange, shy sort of a bird, and one can never get to talk to or closely watch him. And in this respect he is not unlike the cuckoos, who haunt this neighbourhood in great numbers, and are about the most puzzling of all our summer visitors. To begin with, the cry of the cuckoo is more like the sound of a human voice than that of any other bird, and, contrary to almost all precedent, it is the female only who utters it. It is not the voice of the gay young spark serenading his lady-love, or chanting a love-song to his wife and family in the nest, but of a young lady in search of a sweetheart, and determined to lose no chance of finding one. I have heard her call him by name upwards of sixty times, without pausing even once to take breath. And if thus oddly behaved in the days of courtship, what shall be said of her behaviour as a wife and mother? She doesn't even build a nest, or the pretence of one, but during the whole of her stay leads a wandering, vagrant sort of life, and attaches herself to no one locality, much less to any fixed abode: flying hither and thither, and laying an egg here and an egg there, as if for mere amusement. And yet this strange instinct, which is such a puzzle to us, has been planted in the cuckoo by the same all-wise and good Creator who gives to each living creature its own special habits and ways of life; who has taught the bee to build her dainty cell of wax, and the bird her mossy nest; and appointed for each and for all of them their fixed times and seasons, in beauty and perfect order.



CUCKOO FOLLOWED BY TITLARK.

The nests the cuckoo chooses for her future children are generally those of birds not half as big as herself, such as the hedge-sparrow, the skylark, the linnet, or one of the finches, and even the tiny wren; but far more often the meadow pipit, a quiet little brown bird, who often follows the wanderer from field to field, or from tree to tree, as if spell-bound, for hours together. In many cases the structure and position of the nest chosen are such that a bird of so large a size cannot possibly lay an egg there in the usual way. It is laid, therefore, elsewhere, and when laid, carried in Madame Cuckoo's bill to its destination, and there cunningly left; and this is easily managed, because it is no bigger than a skylark's, and *Cuculus* has a very wide mouth. But even then she has to be very careful as to date. It must not be between the completion of the nest and the laying of the first egg by the rightful owner, or the intruder's egg might never be hatched; nor while the hen is sitting, when there would be no chance of getting it into the nest surreptitiously. She searches for a nest where one or two eggs are just laid, and in the absence of the owner lays down her burden, and in a trice is gone. Being of the same size as the other eggs, it excites no suspicion, otherwise it might be turned out, or cause the nest to be deserted. After fourteen days it is generally the first to hatch, and no sooner does the young cuckoo see the day than he at once sets to work to secure for himself the whole nursery, and the sole attention of his deluded foster-parents. He cunningly insinuates himself under the other young birds or unhatched eggs, and by degrees forces them over the edge of the nest, to fall and perish; and having thus got all the room to himself, opens wide his gaping mouth for all supplies of food that come in. Caterpillars, insects, worms, and grubs are all alike welcome to his greedy infant palate, however much his diet may afterwards change; and to keep up an unfailing supply of these dainties both his nurses are unwearied.



YOUNG CUCKOO IN NEST OF TITLARK.

No wonder, therefore, that among the feathered race the cuckoo is by no means a popular visitor, in spite of the loving care of his stupid foster-parents, and the infatuated attentions of the little meadow pipit. Again and again I have noticed that at the very first sound of "Cuckoo! cuckoo!" three or four small birds would hurry away after the false singer, and with great anger follow and dash at her, as small birds sometimes do at a hawk. The mystery of *why* the cuckoo builds no nest of her own, but lays her eggs in a stranger's nursery, has yet to be solved. Some day it may be solved; and then we shall find fresh cause for admiring another wonder of His hand Who has created nothing in vain, without Whom not a sparrow falls to the ground.

B. G. JOHNS, M.A.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

THE days and weeks refuse to stay,
And still keep gliding on:
What golden hours, since New Year's Day,
Into the past have gone!

How soon the precious time has sped!
To us may grace be given,
In this our youth, O Lord, to tread
The narrow path to Heaven!

We know the Sun of Righteousness
Upon that road will shine—
To guide our steps, to cheer and bless
Our hearts with joy divine!

Thy loving children, we would lean
Our weakness on Thy might,
And seek the things which are unseen,
And walk with Thee in light!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

FIVE STONES FROM THE BROOK.

BY THE REV. GEORGE EVERARD, M.A.

THERE is a simple but beautiful poem by Bishop C. Wordsworth that refers to the victory of David over the giant, and which breathes a spirit of holy confidence in God's Word :—

Five pebbles from the brook
The shepherd David drew ;
One of these five he took,
And proud Goliath slew.

He went forth all alone,
No armour had he on ;
But with a sling and stone
The victory he won.

There is a holy stream,
By God's pure well-spring fed ;
Bright, polished pebbles gleam
Like jewels in its bed.

The Bible is that book,
The five books of God's Law ;
Jesus, our David, took,
And one from them did draw.

With that, and that alone,
He went to meet the foe,
And with a single stone
He laid the tempter low.

Lord, arm us with that Word,
With faith in Thee our Shield ;
We need no other sword :
Teach us that sword to wield.

Help us like Thee to fight ;
O give us victory ;
So may we put to flight
Our ghostly enemy.

I too would take five pebbles from the brook. The New Testament is the brook, and the five pebbles are five texts. Yet in a sense they may be all linked together. The link is that the same two words, "one thing," are found in each. And when they come in appropriate order, we may see something of a true harmony in the whole chain.

I.—"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL" (St. Luke x. 42).

WE know well the story of Mary's devotion. She sat at the Master's feet, and drank in His words of life and peace. Her ears were open to welcome His instruction, and her heart was yielded up to Him as her Saviour and her Lord. But Martha was busied about the supper she was preparing, and she looked for Mary's help, and seemed ruffled and put out because her sister still tarried at the Saviour's feet. But Christ took Mary's part. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but *one thing is needful*, and Mary hath chosen that good part that shall not be taken from her." Martha *had done well*, for she had received Christ into her house and was anxious to provide Him a bountiful repast, but Mary *had done better*, for she gave Christ that in which He most delighted—an ear ready to hearken, and a heart prepared to receive the riches of His grace and love.

One thing was needful, and Mary had chosen it. To know Christ, to receive His words, to trust and love and obey Him, and so to have Him for her own—this was her choice and her portion. It was greater far than any earthly treasure, and one she could never lose.

"One thing is needful." It was needful for Martha and for Mary eighteen centuries ago ; it is as needful for you and me to-day.

What is needful for a man perishing with hunger? Surely it is wholesome food. And man's soul is hungry, and Christ is the living bread that cometh down from heaven, who alone can satisfy our longing desires. What is needful for a thirsty man? Is it not pure, refreshing water? And Christ is the spring and fountain-head of the river that maketh glad the city of God ; and whoso drinketh of this water shall never thirst. What is needful for a man in rags and tattered garments? Is it not suitable clothing? And Christ is our robe, our covering, our righteousness, in which alone we can stand before God. What is needful for a man stricken with the plague or some deadly disease? Is it not the medicine that will heal and restore him? And Christ is both physician and medicine. His precious blood, His life-giving words, His purifying, quickening, strengthening grace : these alone can heal and restore the sin-stricken soul. In short, man is a sinner, with a soul that will live as long as the everlasting God ; and what does he need but a free and full salvation, a Saviour merciful and faithful, and able to save to the uttermost?

Never forget it! *One thing is needful.* Ten thousand things may be pleasant and profitable for this present life—fair means, and good health, and kind friends, and a comfortable home, and times of recreation, and interesting books, and suitable occupation, and I know not what beside ; but *one thing is needful*—to be at peace with God, to be renewed in Christ's image, to have Him as an Almighty Friend ever by your side, to seek first His Kingdom of righteousness, to live for Christ, to live like Christ, to live in Christ while here below, so that you may live with Christ in His bright Home above. In God's sight, in sight of a dying hour, in sight of the great eternity that lies before you, everything else is child's play, a passing vanity, a thing of nought. O for the heavenly wisdom to follow the one thing needful, to choose the better part of Mary, which can never pass away!

II.—"ONE THING THOU LACKEST" (St. Mark x. 21).

WHAT a contrast we have here to the words spoken of Mary! These words were spoken by Christ to the Jewish ruler. True, there was much in him we admire. He came earnestly, seeking instruction from Christ. He came running and kneeling to Christ, and said to Him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

He was, moreover, moral and upright in his daily life. As to the letter of the law, he had kept it from his youth. There were in him none of those dark blots and foul blemishes which disfigure the life of so many young people. So, we are told, Christ beholding him, loved him. Yet, after all, he came sadly short of the true standard. Christ tested his earnestness and resolution, and it faded away in a moment. His high tower of goodness and obedience collapsed. He manifested that neither love to God nor love to man was with him supreme. "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross and follow Me."

It was a hard saying, and he could not keep it. He lacked that sense of sin which would have made a Saviour better to him than his great possessions. He lacked that faith which would have enabled him to see the treasure in heaven far more to be prized than earthly riches. He lacked that love to Christ that would have led him to esteem Him as the pearl of great price, and to sacrifice all gladly for His sake. He lacked that unselfish love to his neighbour that would have made him content to part with his wealth to feed the poor and hungry. A man may go a long way in religion, and yet after all may come short of the Kingdom. Here was one who combined great earnestness, high morality, respect, and honour to the Saviour, and, no doubt, a life of careful attendance on religious ordinances, yet when put to the test he failed utterly, and forsook Christ instead of humbly following Him.

How is it with you who read these lines? Are you earnest in religion? Are you moral in your outward conduct? Do you regard Christ as a teacher, and come to learn of Him? Perhaps all this, you say, is the case. So far it is well. But what is there further? Is there any depth in your religion? Have you dug deep, and built your house on the rock? Is there an honest conviction of your sinfulness in God's sight? Is there a desire for a new heart? Is there a readiness to take up the cross, to own Christ before the world, to give up what you value for His sake, to perform unpleasant duties—in fact, to choose Christ and His service, in shame, poverty, loss of friends, and all things, rather than the world's favour, with all that it can bestow? Would you prefer Christ in a parish poor-house rather than sin and its service in a palace?

Which do you follow, the young ruler, who kept his wealth and forsook Christ, or Matthew, who rose up from the receipt of custom, and left all and followed Him? "*One thing thou lackest.*" What a sorrowful reflection it may be by-and-bye!—"*I once was very near Christ, but I left Him. The world's chain was too strong for me. I thought of Him, I came to His House, I desired to be His,* but I could not take up the cross and count all things as loss for His sake. So I turned my back upon Him, and with Him I lost my soul, my heaven, my all."

On a stormy day I have seen a ship in the far horizon come out from the thick darkness of the black cloud, and cross a bright patch of sunshine on the ocean, and then go back into the darkness, and thus be seen no more. May it not be so with many a soul? There is a time when a voice calls and there is a response. There is a coming for a moment into the light of Christ's presence, and a glimpse of all the glorious privileges of His Gospel. But, alas! this is all. The soul goes back. The darkness covers it. And Christ mourns over another that chooses "darkness rather than light," and the transitory possession of a day instead of the lasting joys of eternity.

III.—"ONE THING I KNOW" (St. John ix. 25).

IMAGINE the joy of the man who uttered these words! All his life he had been stone-blind. He had never seen one ray of the glorious sunshine or the countenance of one dear to him. But He who was the Light of the world, and who giveth sight to the blind, drew near. He made clay and anointed the man's eyes, and sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam; and the man went, and came seeing. But there were those who hated the Lord Jesus, and tried to make light of His glorious works. It was so in this case. The Pharisees questioned the man, and spake against the Lord for healing on the Sabbath. The man said but little, but he stuck to his text. He had received sight, and he knew it, and was sure that He who had done this work must be some great one sent of God. The Pharisees tell the man to give praise to God, but that He who had healed him was a sinner. But the man stands firm as a rock. He had gained such a benefit as was beyond all price, and he glories in it. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. ONE THING I KNOW, that whereas I was blind, now I see." What a picture of true conversion!

A light arises in the soul, and the soul cannot but be conscious of the marvellous change. Many things may yet be a source of difficulty; but of one thing there is no uncertainty. I was blind, and now I see. I was blind to the greatness of my sins. Ten thousand times ten thousand breaches of God's holy law were written down against me, but I saw nothing of my sin or danger. But now I see sin everywhere: sins of thought, word, and deed, sins of neglect and omission, sins of motive and principle; above all, the sin of refusing the marvellous love of redemption. I was blind to the imminent peril in which I stood. A soul unsaved, a heart unchanged! The pit of destruction opening close at my feet! But I see it now; I see the fearful abyss of woe from which grace has redeemed me. I was blind to my Saviour's love; I knew nothing of the tender pity that brought Him from heaven to save the perishing. I knew Him not as the merciful Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. But I see it now; at least I can see something of the exceeding love which reaches a lost sinner like me, and promises to bring me to everlasting glory.

I was blind to the joy and comfort of true religion. I reckoned it a burden and a bondage. I put it from me as a painful necessity, that perchance might do for a sick-chamber or for a dying-hour. But I see it now. I see there is more true joy in one hour's service of Christ than in a lifetime of sinful indulgence. To know God as a most pitiful Father, to know

Christ as an unchangeable Friend, to claim as my portion the precious promises of the Word, to hope for a blessed rest hereafter—here is joy that never fails.

The old security is gone
In which so long we lay;
The sleep of death has been dispelled,
The darkness rolled away.

New hopes, new purposes, desires,
And joys Thy grace has given;
Old ties are broken from the earth,
New ones attach to heaven.

"ONE THING I KNOW." But let each of us inquire: Do I know it? Have I a plain witness that all is changed? I may not know, as this man did, the exact time that it took place, but is it a reality? Does it influence my daily walk? Have I such a sight of the Lord Jesus as in some measure transforms me into His image? O let me seek certainty in religion; not "I *hope*," but "I *know*"; and the witness of the Spirit will give this.

IV.—"ONE THING I DO" (Phil. iii. 13).

I SEE here a racer. His whole soul is given to one object; everything else is as dust in the balance: shall I win this glorious race? Shall I receive the crown of victory? So he presses forward, with his eye on the goal. If he falls, he speedily rises again; he turns not aside; he tarries not to pluck the flowers by the way; he has no time to talk with the spectators on the course. Such a one was Paul; he had known the power of God's Spirit; he had learnt the secret of a true conversion to God. Once blind, on the way to Damascus the light burst upon him; he had seen the marvellous glory of the Saviour's love.

Now he goes further: he runs in the path of God's commandments; he is bent on knowing more and loving more, and serving better the Master whom he loves. He loses sight of the steps already trodden, and eagerly covets the highest attainments, and the most successful labours to bring in souls to the Kingdom. "*This one thing I do:* forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

Such, too, should be the desire and aim of each true-hearted disciple of the Lord Jesus. One short life, and yet how much to be attained and how much to be done! How much evil yet cleaves to us, how much of possible grace and virtue we have not even seen or touched! How much more prayerful, unselfish, zealous and self-denying we ought to be! How much more complete should be our consecration to the will of God! How much more we might abound in intercessions and good works on behalf of Christ's Church! Therefore let us follow this "*one thing*" of the Apostle.

Let me lay aside by-ends and double motives, and self's excuses, and the world's enticements, and set out with new aspirations to the glorious position of a whole-hearted follower of the Lamb of God! Let me catch the spirit of the Master: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Let me steadfastly determine to make no compromise with the world, the flesh, or the devil, but aim, at all seasons, in all duties, and under all circumstances, to do and to suffer the will of God and to glorify my Father in Heaven. And let me do this depending continually upon grace from on high, even the working of the Holy Ghost in the heart given by the exalted Saviour. Apart from Christ I can do nothing and be nothing; but relying upon His promise—"My grace is sufficient for thee"—I may follow in the footsteps of Paul, and press on till the crown be in sight.

V.—"BE NOT IGNORANT OF THIS ONE THING" (2 Peter iii. 8)—

"WHAT one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We come to the last link in the chain. We have here the last of these *one things* which we have been pondering. And what is this *one thing* which St. Peter here points out? It reminds us of two points worthy of our notice. First, what a short dream is life and all that pertains to it! If in God's sight a thousand years be as one day, what a brief span is our sojourn here—at the most only some three-score years and ten, and often far, far less. Then, too, we are reminded that Christ will soon appear in His glory. True, more than eighteen centuries have rolled by since He ascended from Mount Olivet, but this makes no difference. One or two thousand years are as nothing before Him who has all eternity in which to accomplish His work. Let me ever bear in mind these two points. My life here is but a vapour, a shadow, a hand-breadth, and all its joys and sorrows, and cares and burdens, are but for a moment. Then, also, I must remember the King is coming to reward abundantly His faithful ones, and to take them to share His Kingdom and His glory; and no less to judge men for their wicked ways and deeds, and to bring out before the universe the secret thoughts and hidden schemes of iniquity by which they have dishonoured Him and wronged their fellow-men.

In the sight of that day, how every one of the truths I have named assumes a most solemn importance!
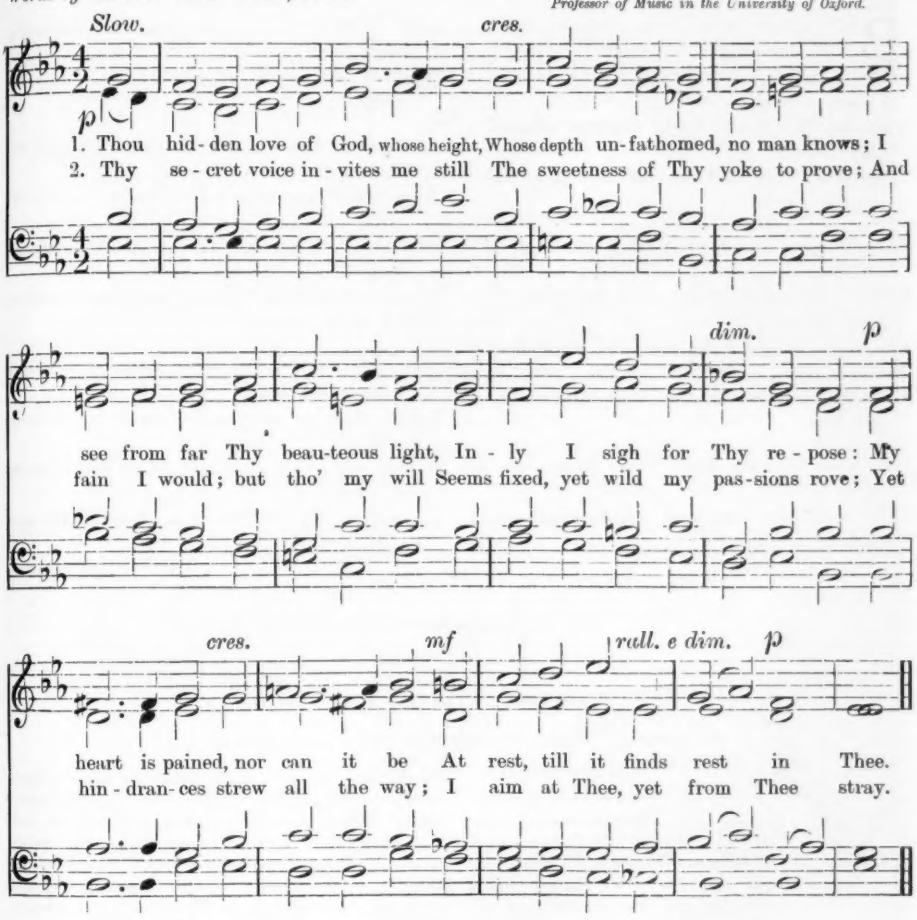
No doubt will then exist as to the *one thing needful*, and how little was everything else compared to it. Where there has been the *one thing lacking*, all outward professions will then be utterly in vain to conceal it. The *one thing known*, the eyes opened by grace to behold the Saviour, will then give place to a still clearer vision, the beatific vision of the glorified Redeemer coming with ten thousand of His saints. The *one thing done*, the single eye that sought only to win the heavenly race in pleasing and serving God, will bring its great reward, the crown of life that fadeth not away.

"Lord, grant me the one thing needful. May I never lack the grace to love Thee, nor to give my life to Thy service; and when Thou shalt appear, set me at Thine own right hand to share Thy glory for ever. Amen."

Thou hidden love of God.

Words by GERARD TERSTEEGEN, 1735.

Music by SIR JOHN STAINER, M.A., Mus.D.
Professor of Music in the University of Oxford.



3.

Tis mercy all, that Thou hast brought
My mind to seek her peace in Thee;
Yet while I seek, but find Thee not,
No peace my wandering soul shall see:
Oh! when shall all my wanderings end,
And all my steps to Thee-ward tend?

4.

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with Thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every nation there;
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in Thee.

5.

O Lord, Thy sovereign aid impart,
To save me from low-thoughted care;
Chase this self-will through all my heart,
Through all its latent mazes there;
Make me Thy duteous child, that I
Ceaseless may "Abba, Father" cry.

6.

Each moment draw from earth away
My heart, that lowly waits Thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
"I am thy Love, thy God, thy All."
To feel Thy power, to hear Thy voice,
To taste Thy love, be all my choice.

"OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN."

BLINDFOLD among vain shadows one was groping as she went,
And for a treasure dear to man, the pearl of heart—content—
When, lo! the Saviour's tender call was threaded in her dream:
"Come, learn of Me, and thou shalt find; I am Life's crystal stream."

Then rise there solemn questionings anent this boon of boons—
They vex the watches of her night, they haunt day's soft saloons;
And wider yet and wider parts the rifted Heaven above,
And in its strengthening glow she sees One worthy of her love.

And by its light the misty towers grow wondrous clear to see;
"Who would not turn aside and look on such a sight?" says she;
And so, the dawn is on her face, the everlasting day,
Now her soul is in the glories of the City far away.

So might he look who saw the doors of heaven uplifted high,
When to his crown Elias sped, fast as the steeds could fly;
So Stephen set his angel-face, so gazed the orphan ring
When, out of sight, a throne of pearl bare up and up the King.

And Grace hath locked those palms of hers, now innocent and still;
Nor can they part asunder, save on errands of goodwill;
Her Saviour's own handmaiden now, her body, strength, and soul,
In meekness still to follow on, long as His ages roll.

GEORGE S. OUTRAM.

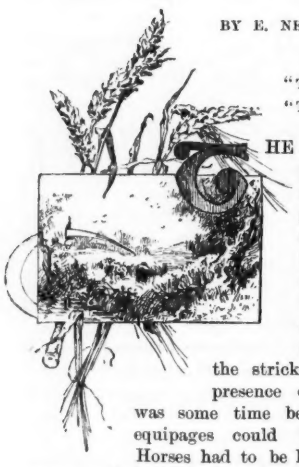
WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

"TEARS, IDLE TEARS!"

"The tear forgot as soon as shed."—GRAY.



THE news of Mrs. Kenyon's illness spread rapidly amongst the guests who had assembled to do honour to her grandson's majority. Everyone was anxious to get away as quickly as possible, and relieve the stricken household of the presence of outsiders, but it was some time before the numerous equipages could be brought round. Horses had to be harnessed and coachmen to be found, and meanwhile the lawn in front of the house was crowded with people waiting for their carriages, and talking in undertones of the sudden catastrophe that had brought the Verecroft *fête* to so abrupt a termination. There was no one to take leave of, and people stood uncertainly about, wondering what to do, and waiting for news. A thrill of expectation ran through the crowd when the white-haired old butler came down the great steps at last, and gave a note to Mr. Burgess, the family lawyer, who was a distant connection of Lady Vereker's. He stood up in his carriage, which had just arrived, and made his voice heard above the crunching of carriage-wheels and the hum and buzz of voices—

"I am commissioned to apologise to you all for the absence of Sir Raymond and Lady Vereker, and to inform you of its melancholy cause. I regret to say that Mrs. Kenyon has been seized with paralysis, and that little hope is entertained of her recovery. She is believed to be dying—no!" said the old man, pausing, and pointing solemnly to a window where a hand was already drawing down a blind. "She is not dying—Mrs. Kenyon is dead."

He took off his hat and stood a moment silent, and then he bowed gravely, and was driven away, and everyone else followed as silently and speedily as they could. It was impossible not to be shocked and dismayed. Whispers of consternation and sympathy were heard on every side, and even those who only knew Mrs. Kenyon slightly were impressed by the tragic ending of the festal day. Everyone



. . . "The dawn is on her face, the everlasting day,
Now her soul is in the glories of the City far away."

"*OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN.*"—*p.* 280.

looked subdued and sad, and Lady Rosalie wept aloud, and was roundly scolded by Miss Jackson for doing so.

"What was Mrs. Kenyon to you, or you to her?" she inquired, when at length their coachman was found, and they were driving back through the park, where the village boys were still playing cricket, and gaping at the long line of carriages that passed by.

"Oh, do you see?—they don't know!—they haven't heard!" sobbed Lady Rosalie. "Baker, tell them to stop——"

"Drive on, Baker!" said Miss Jackson. "Dear me, Rosalie, what business is it of ours? Why should these lads lose their game because there's an old woman less in the world? And why should you cry your eyes out for a person you didn't care two pins for when she was alive? I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Ashamed of being kind and sympathetic?" Avice asked sarcastically. She did not like Hilda Jackson at any time, and she never liked her so little as when she was domineering over the friend whose bread she ate.

"Never mind," said Lady Rosalie, drying her eyes cheerfully. "I shall be better now. But I really was upset, and a good cry does one a world of good."

"Good? When your face is the size of a pumpkin and the colour of beetroot!" said Hilda scornfully. "You're not a *young* woman by any means, but that's no reason you should give up all regard for your personal appearance. There's something quite indecent in going about with a face like that. Pull down your veil, and don't whimper any more, for goodness' sake!"

Lady Rosalie meekly obeyed, and Avice did not know if she was more indignant with the tyrant or the slave.

It was a very silent drive. Avice had abundant food for thought; Lady Rosalie sniffed behind her veil, and tried furtively to wipe her eyes without being detected; Miss Jackson mused savagely on Captain Hallam's defection, and amused herself with watching Lady Rosalie's manœuvres, and fixing a deterrent eye on the unlucky handkerchief as soon as it appeared; and Daisy, who always found tears infectious, sat in her corner with quite an April face, and smiled and cried alternately. She was much impressed by Lady Rosalie's grief, but she had never even seen Mrs. Kenyon, and there was so much, so very much that was pleasant to remember in this day that had had so tragic an ending. It had been delightful to watch the cricket, and really get to know what a "long-stop" was, and what was meant by an "over" and a "bye." Mr. Vereker had told her a little, and Captain Hallam a great deal, and Daisy felt quite learned as she thought it all over now. Then there was the delightful luncheon, where Lord Blackstone had been as good as a *chaperon*, and a great, *great* deal more amusing; and then—and Daisy smiled and glowed till Lady Rosalie was quite scandalised at the radiant face—*then* there was a wonderful walk by the river, which she did not think she could tell even Avice about, unless Avice "pumped" very much. The Avon was one small blue flower the poorer for that walk, and Daisy how much the richer! She felt as if everyone must know, as if everyone must see the tiny spray of green, with its pale turquoise crown, that was fastened in her dress, and stirred with every throb of the happy little heart. Surely Miss Jackson was looking at it now! Daisy put up her hand, as if to guard her treasure from that withering look, and ran up-stairs as soon as she got home, to put it safely away in her Birthday-book.

She looked at the little gilt-edged volume rather wistfully. Which of the three hundred and sixty-five days it contained was *his* birthday, she wondered? What were the words that had been fitted to it, and were they of good omen and worthy of their honourable place? But as she did not know which the remarkable day was, she laid her forget-me-not in the space allotted to the 20th of June.

"Just to remind me when I had it," she told herself, with a happy little laugh. As if there was any fear she would forget!

And meanwhile Lady Rosalie was talking to Mrs. Meredith, and enjoying herself thoroughly. She had come in with Avice and Daisy to give their mother an account of the memorable day, and as Hilda was not there, she was free to dilate on the tragedy of Mrs. Kenyon's death, and weep over it as much as she pleased.

"Rosalie *likes* crying—those large women always do," Hilda had often said, with immeasurable scorn; and there was a certain amount of truth in the charge. Melodrama was dear to Lady Rosalie's soul; she liked to have her nerves thrilled and her feelings harrowed by other people's troubles, and her real sympathy for them was curiously mixed with a sense of personal enjoyment. She would not have hurt a fly, but if the fly *was* to be hurt she liked to be there to see. She was really grieved that Mrs. Kenyon was dead, but it was delightful to have anything so startling to relate. The tragic story, with its pathetic contrasts of feasting and merriment under the very windows of the chamber of death, lost nothing of its horror and pathos in the telling. She described with infinite zest the maid's unexpected appearance, her breathless agitation, and their own horrified surprise. She told of the consternation that had spread amongst the guests when Lady Vereker and Sir Raymond had been summoned from their midst, and of the thrill that had passed through them when the blind of Mrs. Kenyon's room was drawn down. And she wept copiously, and enjoyed herself with an intensity of enjoyment that was only tempered by the reflection that Hilda would be sure to ask what had made her nose so red.

Mrs. Meredith listened with all the interest Lady Rosalie could have desired.

"Mrs. Kenyon dead!" she said, in low, awestruck tones; and her interest never flagged till the end of the tale. She did not say that she had ever known Mrs. Kenyon, but Lady Rosalie felt that her tones implied more sympathy than is generally aroused by the death of a perfect stranger, even in circumstances as tragic as these, and plumed herself on the success of her narration.

"She was as interested and as sorry for her as if she

had known her herself," Lady Rosalie said afterwards to Hilda Jackson.

"How do you know that she didn't?" Miss Jackson asked. "Do you know *anything* about Mrs. Meredith, Rosalie, except that she's your next-door neighbour, and that you took one of your absurd fancies for her and forced yourself on her acquaintance? I was asked a dozen times to-day *who* the Miss Merediths were, and I hadn't a word to say. Who are they? I wonder myself often! They are ladylike, I grant, and Avice is good-looking; but who knows anything about them?"

"Who wants to know anything about them?" said Lady Rosalie, with a sort of feeble defiance.

"*I* do," said Hilda promptly. "The girls go about with us, and it puts us in a very awkward position to have to confess we don't know who they are. Does Mrs. Meredith ever mention her husband, or her father either? We infer that such people have existed, but we never hear anything about it."

"Her husband is dead, we know."

"*Do we?* We know that Mrs. Meredith wore widow's weeds, but do we know more than that? Sometimes I think the deceased Meredith never existed, and sometimes I think he's in existence still! Perhaps he's in an asylum, or perhaps he drops his h's and isn't presentable. If he *is* dead, why doesn't she talk about him, like other widows do? Why doesn't she hang up his likeness, and descant upon his virtues, and vow there never was such a man before or since? *We* shouldn't know if they used to have their little tiffs! We should take it all in—or *you* would, my dear; and I don't believe she's ever mentioned him in all the years you've known her."

"She is very reserved, I know; but I don't see why you should fancy such horrid things. I dare say she would tell me all about her husband if I wanted to know, but she has never happened to mention him, and so of course *I* couldn't."

"You mean you didn't particularly care about it. If you had really wanted to know, I don't think delicacy would have restrained you," observed Miss Jackson with asperity.

She was standing on the soft bear-skin hearth-rug, in her favourite attitude of aggressive alertness, that always reminded Avice of a belligerent sparrow, and looking at Lady Rosalie with an irritation the poor woman felt to be undeserved. Was it *her* fault that Captain Hallam had transferred his attentions to Daisy Meredith? That was what was making Hilda so bitter against the Merediths, Lady Rosalie thought; but she knew her friend a great deal too well to betray her suspicions.

"There's a mystery," Hilda said now, regarding the unhappy Lady Rosalie with a menacing glance. "There's a mystery, and I mean to find it out. It didn't matter when you only introduced them here, but now, I suppose, Lady Vereker means to take them up, and if they get into the county set, there'll be no end to their pride and folly."

"Lady Vereker can see they are ladies, and that is enough for her."

"Lady Vereker is one fool, and you are another," rejoined Miss Jackson, whose good manners were apt to disappear through the window when temper came in at the door, as love is said to do when poverty enters in like manner, "and as I don't mean to make a third, or—or to allow anyone I care for to do so, the sooner you find out the Merediths' history the better."

"I thought you meant to find it out yourself," said Lady Rosalie, with a faint attempt at self-assertion.

"I mean you to find it out for me," Hilda said calmly. "What chance should I have alone? I have not the *entrée* of the Hermitage, nor am I intimate enough with Mrs. Meredith to ask her questions like that."

"And do you suppose I shall use my intimacy to ask her things she does not wish to have known?" asked Lady Rosalie indignantly. She was not without honourable feelings, and she was really angry with Hilda for suggesting what seemed to her dishonourable, and still more angry with herself because her conscience told her that, however she might protest, she would end by doing as she was bid.

Hilda knew it quite as well as Lady Rosalie. She fixed her small cold eyes on her friend's shrinking face, and announced her intentions with unmistakable clearness and decision. "You will find out for me who and what Mrs. Meredith's husband was, and whether he is alive or dead——"

"As if I could ask her that!" murmured Lady Rosalie.

"There is no need to ask her in so many words, and she would probably refuse to answer if you did. Surely you can find out without the clumsy blunder of *asking?* You don't want for wit when you choose to use it, and you will please to use it now."

"I can't see what you want to know for."

"That is my affair," said Miss Jackson with an inscrutable smile. "Yours is simply to get me the information, and leave the rest to me."

She went out of the room, as if she considered the matter settled, as indeed it was. Lady Rosalie might protest that her friend was unreasonable, and the thing she asked impossible, but Hilda knew very well that she would do her best to comply with her request.

"She will cry for five minutes," she thought, with a derisive laugh, as she ran up to her own room, "and while she dries her eyes, she will be considering what to say to Mrs. Meredith! She knows better than to disobey *me*."

CHAPTER XIII.

"MINE OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND."

"Beware the friend who only speaks to praise,
Stabs with a smile, and with a kiss betrays."—C. L.

Miss Jackson had not exaggerated or over-estimated her power. Lady Rosalie was better born, better bred, and decidedly more clever than her husband's cousin, but she was governed as absolutely by the woman who lived on her bounty as ever helpless dependent was by overbearing patron.

Everybody who knew the Rosery knew that Hilda Jackson, and not Lady Rosalie Finch, was the actual ruler of the pretty little house. People joked about it, and wondered at it, and speculated not too kindly

about it. There must be some reason for this reversal of the usual relations, and no doubt Miss Jackson knew something or other which gave her the whip-hand of poor Lady Rosalie.

But for once the gossips were wrong. In the days when most unaccountable things were accounted for by witchcraft and magic, a woman who was accused of obtaining undue influence by the aid of these dark arts, made a reply that has lived to this day. "The only witchcraft I used," she said, "was the ascendency of a strong mind over a weak one," and Hilda Jackson might have made a similar defence. Hilda was not so clever as her friend, but her will was as the will of ten beside Lady Rosalie's, and nine times out of ten Lady Rosalie was quite grateful to have her mind comfortably made up for her. When the tenth time came, and she was not glad, the force of habit was too strong for her, and she was sure to submit in the end.

On the present occasion she was less tractable than usual, but as Hilda had foreseen, she gave way at last, and went off to the Hermitage quite meekly, telling herself that after all—unless Hilda's suspicions were correct, which she did not for a moment believe—there was no difficulty in the matter. It was true that Mrs. Meredith was reserved, but they were such old friends now, and even the most reserved of women are glad to unbosom themselves sometimes.

So Lady Rosalie adopted a rather sentimental vein, talked of the many years they had known each other, and related many anecdotes of her own youth, in hopes of drawing responsive recollections from her friend. It was provoking, at the end of an hour's ingeniously artless chatter, to discover that Mrs. Meredith had told her nothing at all, or nothing but what she already knew. Of her children's early days, of Lady Rosalie's kindness to them and to herself, of all the details of her Leamington life, Mrs. Meredith was quite willing to speak; but of anything anterior to that, not a hint was dropped, nor a word spoken.

"She might have known what I came for," Lady Rosalie thought, looking at the proud, reserved face.

The window was open, and Mrs. Meredith sat beside it, embroidering an apron for Daisy, and looking, to Lady Rosalie's fancy, unusually handsome and dignified.

"What a splendid woman she must have been twenty years ago!" she reflected. "I wonder who and what she was?"

Lady Rosalie tried to recall the different beauties she had known, but either her memory failed or Mrs. Meredith had moved in a different sphere from herself. The latter seemed the more probable supposition, her friend thought now, for Mrs. Meredith must have been strikingly like Avice, and Avice's was not a face one was likely to forget. "Quite as handsome and quite as proud!" thought Lady Rosalie, feeling that she had come on a "bootless bene," and wondering how she should excuse herself to Hilda for her failure.

The thought acted as a spur, and she made another effort. Hilda had stigmatised direct questions as clumsy devices, but Lady Rosalie was at her wits' end.

"I have told you so much about my Charlie—will you not tell me about *your* husband now?" she asked, laying her hand on Mrs. Meredith's with an affectionate gesture. She told herself she meant no harm, but all her life long she could not forget the anguished look in her friend's beautiful eyes, she could not forget how cold her hand turned, or how white her lips became.

"My—*husband?*" she faltered slowly. "Never—*never* utter that word to me again, Lady Rosalie. I have no husband, as you know. It is my one hope and prayer that I may forget that I ever had."

The repressed passion in her voice electrified her hearer.

"I beg your pardon," she stammered. "I did not know—I had no idea you felt about it like this. You never told me before——"

"I did not mean to tell you now," said Mrs. Meredith. "I was surprised into it." She looked at her friend beseechingly. "Lady Rosalie——"

"Call me *Rosalie*," said Lady Rosalie, pressing the poor cold hand. She meant to repeat whatever she might be going to hear to Hilda Jackson, but that did not prevent her being very sorry for Mrs. Meredith, and feeling quite affectionately towards her. Mrs. Meredith looked at her searchingly.

"You are my friend, I think," she said, "and Heaven knows I need one! I ask you, as a friend, not to repeat what I have been foolish enough to say. I would not have the girls know." Her voice failed her, but her eyes were full of eloquent appeal.

"They do not know, then?"

"They know nothing, and if I can help it they never shall! They think I am a—they think I am like other widows, like the happy women to whom the memory of their husbands is their dearest and most sacred possession. It—it is not so with me."

"Was he so unkind?" asked Lady Rosalie, with genuine interest, and another sympathetic squeeze.

"No—not unkind. One could forgive unkindness," said Mrs. Meredith bitterly. "But I cannot talk about it, even to you. All I ask is that you should not repeat what I have said."

"I will not—indeed I will not," promised Lady Rosalie—for was it not just possible that Hilda might forget to ask? "I cannot think how you can keep such things to yourself!" she said, with unaffected astonishment. "Why did you never tell me anything before? What are friends for, if it is not that we may open our hearts to them, and relieve our sorrows by telling them to those who can sympathise with us?"

Mrs. Meredith smiled with a fine disdain that reminded Lady Rosalie of Avice in her most disdainful moods.

"Do you think I want sympathy?" she asked. "If I had wanted that, I should have stayed amongst those who knew. *They* sympathised with me—oh, yes! they sympathised!—and their sympathy drove me as nearly mad as a woman could be whose reason still remained. I should have gone mad if I had stayed amongst them, or I should have died. And so I came away, and brought my children here, and vowed to know no one—until your kindness overcame my resolution."

"I am glad it did, both for your sake and my own," said Lady Rosalie, with a kiss that brought a grateful dew to the sad, haggard eyes. "Was it far from here, dear, that you lived, when all this trouble came?"

The garden gate opened, and Avice and Daisy came in. The mother's eyes rested on them tenderly, and then turned to Lady Rosalie with passionate appeal.

"*Remember!*" was all she said; but a thousand



"'How beautiful they are!' said Lady Rosalie."—*p.* 287.

"Far enough to be sure that no one would suspect where I had gone."

"And does no one know?" asked Lady Rosalie, wondering where Mrs. Meredith's income came from, and who it was that paid it. Someone must know her present abode, she thought, or how would remittances reach the Hermitage?

"No one knows but my lawyer," said Mrs. Meredith briefly.

fears, a thousand prayers for secrecy and silence were in the agitated word.

"Indeed, you may trust me!" whispered Lady Rosalie. But half an hour later she was closeted with Hilda Jackson, and before she was allowed to make her escape she had yielded up every detail of her visit to the Hermitage to that pitiless catechist.

"I told you there was a secret," Hilda said triumphantly. "Was it likely that anyone would bury

themselves alive in that way, unless there was some reason for it? It is exasperating to think you did not get it out of her after all."

"The girls came in," pleaded Lady Rosalie. "But, indeed, Hilda, though she told me there was a secret, I do not think she would ever have told me what it was."

"Very likely not," agreed Miss Jackson. "She is just the sort of woman who would be cut in pieces rather than say a thing she did not choose. Well! we must find it out. We know there *is* a secret, and I will not rest till I know what it is."

"She will tell me nothing more, I am sure."

"And so am I, so you must use your wits. You are in and out of the house continually, and there ought to be no difficulty in finding a clue. I wonder if their name really is Meredith?"

"My dear Hilda!"

"My dear Rosalie!" mimicked Miss Jackson, scornfully. "Did you never hear of such a thing as changing one's name? When people want to keep their existence as profound a secret as Mrs. Meredith seems to desire, it is generally the first thing they do. However, that may or may not be, and it is not the real point after all. But I must say I should like to examine the marks on that quaint old silver which you rave about! Is the crest the Meredith crest, I wonder; and is it marked with an M? Mind you look at it well the next time you go in."

Lady Rosalie promised, and Hilda took care that the promise was kept.

"It seems such a mean thing to do!" poor Lady Rosalie said. But though she murmured, she obeyed, salving her conscience by assuring herself that it could do the Merediths no harm, and relieving her feelings by sending the girls some Indian bangles which were just going out of fashion, and buying a "Christian Year" for their mother, in which she inscribed, with many flourishes, and a good deal of wonder if the name she wrote was the true one—"Mrs. Meredith, from her affectionate *Rosalie*."

She put it up in a sheet of note-paper gay with roses and finches, and took it across one morning, when she had delayed her visit as long as she dared.

Only Avice was at home, Mrs. Meredith and Daisy having gone for a walk, and perhaps Lady Rosalie was not as sorry as she professed to be. She was always more at ease with the girls than with their mother, and Avice admired the little book so much that Lady Rosalie's self-complacency was almost restored.

"I'm so glad I thought of it! I thought it would be just in your mother's way, though I like a different style myself."

Avice smiled. She knew that Lady Rosalie spent her Sunday afternoons in singing emotional hymns, with tears of quite sincere appreciation running down her cheeks, and was glad that she had chosen something so much more to her mother's taste.

"How kind you are!" she said gratefully. "I think sometimes that all the happiness of our lives comes to us through you."

Lady Rosalie's complacency was quite restored now. She had many weaknesses, but perhaps her pet weakness was the desire to pose as a *deus ex machina* to all her friends. She would have been glad to see them happy on any terms, but she was still more glad when she could persuade herself that she had been instrumental in bringing their happiness to pass. There was a thrill in Avice's voice, a depth of gratitude that almost made her uncomfortable, considering what her errand at the Hermitage was; but after all, she was going to do no harm, and it was natural enough that Avice should be grateful to her. She knew what it meant, of course. Avice was thinking of Sir Raymond, no doubt; and certainly, but for her, they never might have met.

"I'm so glad I got you to Verecroft," she said. "You'll always remember that your first invitation came through *me*, won't you, dear? And you'll ask me to your swellest dinners——"

"Lady Rosalie!" cried Avice, flushing scarlet, "what do you mean? What are you talking about? I did not say a word about Verecroft——"

"You didn't mention it, certainly, and I won't tease you, dear. You're a very good girl, and he's quite too delightful, and the course of true love does sometimes run smooth, whatever that old fogey of a Shakespeare may say! You haven't seen him since the *fête*, I suppose?"

"Seen whom? Shakespeare?"

"No, Miss Simplicity; that won't quite do! Seen whom, indeed! But of course he can't go out much just yet. The funeral was not till yesterday, you know; but now that is over, I suppose we shall see our friend again. I hope you'll be kinder to him than you were on his birthday, Avice! I really thought you were a great deal too bad."

"I cannot imagine why. Sir Raymond Vereker is nothing to me——"

"Of course not! A young man never *is* anything to a young woman till the engagement-ring is on her finger," cried Lady Rosalie gaily.

She shook her head and laughed, and then she got up, and began to walk about the room, turning over the magazines on the table, admiring Avice's work, and fluttering to the book-shelves, where she stood reading the titles of the books. "Oh, dear!" she cried, as she ran her eye over them, "here's another 'Christian Year;' what a pity you have one already!"

"Everyone has, haven't they?" said Avice, floundering amongst her pronouns in the reckless way we all do. "Mamma's is a very old one, and I am sure she will like to have another."

"I hope so," said Lady Rosalie, taking the book down and looking at it. "But this isn't your mother's, is it? It has '*M. Dalrymple*' written in it—'*M. Dalrymple, from her affectte husband Hugh.*'"

"It is mamma's. Oh, yes! I can remember that little brown 'Christian Year' with its red edges ever since I can remember anything."

"Was Dalrymple her maiden name?"

"I think not. Mamma never talks much about her people, but I know we have an uncle Fazackerley, and I believe he is her brother."

"Fazackerley? Not the banker, I suppose?" said Lady Rosalie, with vivid interest.

"I don't know."

"I think you *would* know, if it were! Fazackerley

the banker—that would be an uncle worth having! Why, Avice my dear, perhaps you're an heiress in disguise!"

"Very much in disguise, I'm afraid," said Avice, laughing; but Lady Rosalie did not laugh.

She was full of curiosity and conjecture, and the unexplained name in Mrs. Meredith's book made her as eager to see the handsome old silver in the dining-room as if she had been Hilda herself. She made the excuse of setting her watch by the dining-room clock, and went in, to the dismay of the nervous little parlour-maid who was laying the cloth. It was a simply furnished room, but some richly chased goblets and butter-boats stood on the sideboard, and Emma was just placing a set of old-fashioned castors on the table.

"How beautiful they are!" said Lady Rosalie, taking up one goblet after another, and seeing with a thrill of interest and excitement that they all bore an unmistakable "D." "It is quite a treat to look at such beautiful things. Are they heirlooms, Avice, or what?"

"We have always had them," said Avice; "I believe they belonged to poor papa."

Lady Rosalie said nothing for a moment. She felt that she might be on the edge of an important discovery, and her heart was beating rather fast.

"Can you remember him?" she asked, averting her eyes.

"I can, but Daisy can't remember him at all. She was only three when he died."

"And where were you living then?"

"Oh," said Avice, looking a little surprised, "I don't remember that. It was a big place, with horses and soldiers, and Uncle Ru—that's my uncle, Rupert Fazackerley—was there. I remember that, because he came to tell us that papa was dead."

"Then your father was not with you when he died?"

"No, he was away. And mamma—oh! poor mamma!—they thought she would have died too. She was ill a long, long time, and then we came here; and she cannot bear to talk about him even yet."

"Oh!" said Lady Rosalie. She was really too astonished to say more. It was evident that Avice entirely believed the account she gave, but Lady Rosalie suspected that she herself knew more than the daughter had been allowed to learn. The mother's anxiety for her silence proved that, and she respected it so far as to say nothing to Avice now.

She told herself she would say nothing when she got home, but it was not long before Hilda knew all about it, and about the book which was Mrs. Meredith's, but which bore the name of "M. Dalrymple."

"And the silver is marked with a D," ended Lady Rosalie. "I had never noticed it before, because of the chasing, but it is quite plain when you look at it closely. Do you think their name can be Dalrymple?"

"It is quite possible, but I don't see that we are much further, if it is. Why did they change it?—that is the question," said Miss Jackson. Suddenly she sprang up. "There's the luncheon-bell, Rosalie, and you've got your hat on still."

Lady Rosalie hurried away, for a cold or spoilt dish was an equal abomination to her friend and herself. Both the ladies gave their whole attention to the *salmis*, and it was not till the sweets were put upon the table that Miss Jackson said—

"Where have I heard the name of Dalrymple lately? It seems quite familiar to me. Oh, I know! Captain Hallam was talking about some Dalrymple Pasha, an Englishman who is likely to come to the front in Egypt."

"But he can't have anything to do with the Hermitage?"

"No," said Miss Jackson, with a faint little sneer. "He's rather a distinguished man, I believe, and people don't change their names to avoid creditable connections."

CHAPTER XIV.

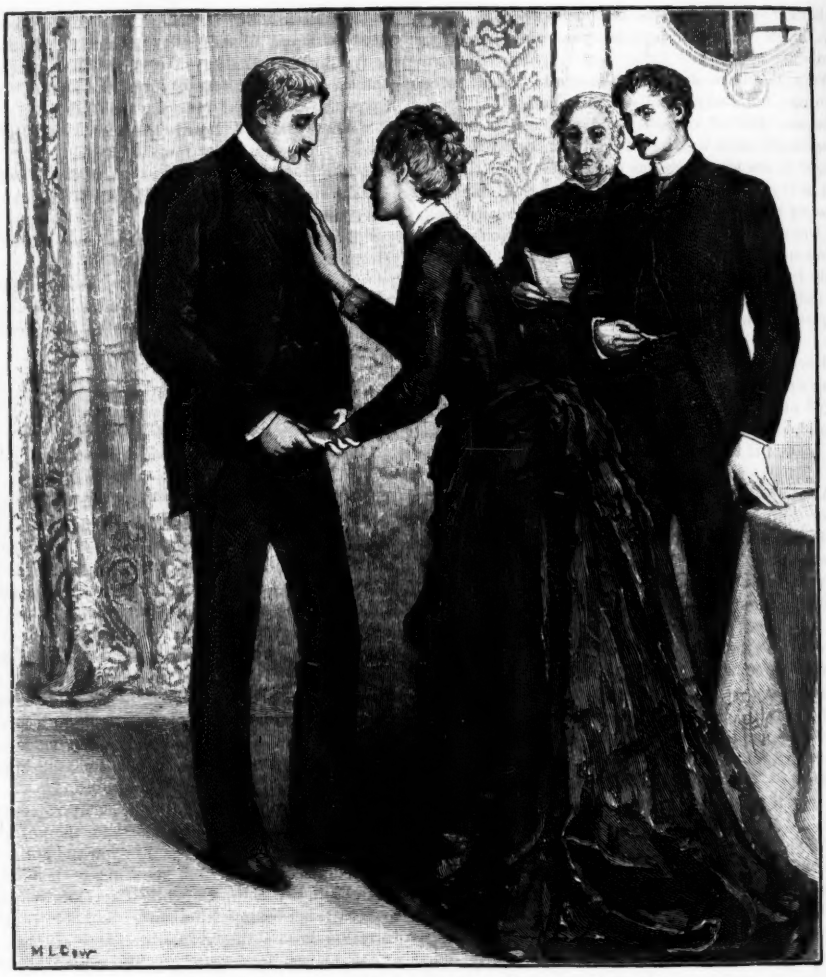
MRS. KENYON'S WILL.

"The manner of giving shows the character of the giver more than the gift itself."—Lavater.

The death of Mrs. Kenyon threw a gloom over Verecroft that even Sir Raymond's presence could hardly dispel. Lady Vereker had been deeply attached to her mother, and the sense of bereavement was accentuated by the tragic suddenness of her loss. For some days she seemed quite prostrated by the shock, and Lancelot found himself obliged to put aside his own private troubles to console the dear lady for whose sake he bore them uncomplainingly. Better, far better, Lancelot thought, that his own life should be wrecked, and his own soul go a-hungered, than that the woman who had been as a mother to him should mourn over her son's disappointed hopes, and reproach him as the cause.

In some ways he was a better comforter than Sir Raymond, who was full of remorse for the unfortunate quarrel he had had with Mrs. Kenyon the night before she died, and shrank from speaking of her unless he was absolutely obliged; while Lancelot was pleased to recall her many kindnesses, and to dwell with Lady Vereker on the virtues that were all that either of them cared to remember. The eccentricities that had been so puzzling and annoying, the injustice Lancelot had so often resented on his cousin's behalf, the irritability that had grown upon Mrs. Kenyon of late years, were all things that might be forgotten in the gracious silence that falls upon the failings of the dead. Lady Vereker remembered only that her mother's love for her had never varied or failed, and Lancelot that he had lost one of the best friends he had.

If he had thought so before, he might be excused for thinking so still more when the will was read. It was a surprise to everyone concerned. Mr. Burgess had brought with him a formidable document engrossed on the orthodox blue paper, and couched in the cumbrous phraseology in which lawyers delight; but a sheet of notepaper which had been found in Mrs. Kenyon's work-basket made it, as the lawyer said, "as useless as a piece of waste paper." The little sheet of cream-laid was enclosed in an envelope, inscribed "My Will," and both that and the writing



"'Did you think I looked as if I wished it otherwise?'"—*p.* 289.

within were in Mrs. Kenyon's hand. The new will had only been made the night before her death, but it was duly signed and witnessed, and was in all respects a valid instrument. It ran thus:—

"I, Ada Kenyon, widow of the late Marcus Kenyon, Colonel in H.M.'s 17th Lancers, being of sound mind and in the full possession of my senses, do hereby give, devise, and bequeath the whole of my personal property, in the Funds and otherwise invested, to Lancelot Vereker, son of the Rev. Raymond Vereker, Vicar of Stowe-by-the-Marsh, Lincolnshire, deceased, to have and to hold for his own personal use, without let or encumbrance in any way whatsoever, save only—

"That if in the Providence of God, in whose hands are all human affairs and the issues thereof, it shall ever come to pass that the young man known as Sir Raymond Vereker of Verecroft, Baronet, shall be in need or want, while the said Lancelot Vereker, through the accruing of other monies, shall be in no need thereof, these monies of mine shall pass to Sir Raymond Vereker of Verecroft, whether he may be known by that name or by any other.

"Whereto witness my hand, this 19th day of June, 1882. (Signed) ADA KENYON.

"Witnessed by { HANNAH STEVENS, lady's maid. / GEORGE HOPKINSON, gardener."

The will might be valid, but it was certainly a curious one, and the last clause was incomprehensible.

"Did she think I wanted to change my name?" Sir Raymond said, as he shook hands with his cousin, and wished him joy of his unexpected good fortune.

"I am a great deal too proud of being Vereker of Verecroft for that."

"I should think so," agreed Lancelot. "Why, Ray, I'd rather be Vereker of Verecroft than King of England!"

It seemed to each too natural a sentiment to elicit any comment then, but both remembered it afterwards with curiously mingled feelings. It was Mr. Burgess who said, with his formal little bow—

"I suppose I may be allowed to say, Mr. Vereker, that I hope there is as little chance of one as of the other."

Lancelot hoped it so sincerely that he did not even trouble to say so. He was indeed quite confused by his unexpected inheritance, and was only anxious to get out of the room and be able to think things over by himself. It was true that Sir Raymond had told him that Mrs. Kenyon had declared her intention of leaving her money to him, but he had regarded it as an idle threat, and the reading of the will had found him entirely unprepared. He wondered—he could not help wondering—if Lady Vereker and Sir Raymond understood that the surprise was as great to him as it could possibly be to them. He looked at Lady Vereker with deprecating earnestness. He knew her face so well that he could not but see that she looked hurt and grieved.

"I knew nothing of this," he said eagerly. "Ray told me, but I did not believe it. If you think I ought not to take it——"

"My dear Lance! you cannot help taking it," said Lady Vereker. "Did you think I looked as if I wished it otherwise? I do not, I assure you. I am glad—we are both glad, are we not Ray?—that the money should be yours. If I looked hurt, it was not about the money—it was that my dear mother should have spoken so strangely of Ray. She does not call him her grandson—she calls him 'the young man who is known as Sir Raymond Vereker'! How angry she must have been to speak of my boy like that!"

"But you see she wished Ray to have the money if he really needed it," said Lancelot.

"Yes," said Mr. Burgess. "That is evidence of a kindly feeling, Lady Vereker, and you must not think too much of the rest. It was a strange expression, certainly, but it struck me as I read the will that Mrs. Kenyon had been trying to write like a lawyer, and when ladies do that they are apt to use very strange expressions indeed. It is a pity, a very great pity—if Mr. Vereker will excuse my saying so—that the old will cannot stand; but there is no doubt as to the validity of the new one, and I cannot honestly advise Sir Raymond to contest it."

"Contest the will? I'm delighted with the will!" cried Sir Raymond, shaking his cousin's hand again. "We wanted Lance to be independent, didn't we? And now he is, and I'm heartily glad of it."

Lancelot wrung the hand that looked so dark against his own, and got himself away, too much moved to speak, and Mr. Burgess rose to take his leave.

"There will be no need now for the rent-charge we were speaking of, I suppose?" said the old lawyer, who was more interested in keeping the estate together than in portioning remote cousins, however deserving they might be. "Mr. Lancelot is independent without it, and I doubt if he would accept it now."

And indeed Lancelot so entirely agreed with Mr. Burgess's view, and so flatly refused to avail himself of any further provision, that the old man was made happy the next day by being empowered to destroy the deed he had begun to draw up. Mrs. Kenyon's "monies" did not amount to a large sum, but it was sufficient to justify Lancelot in refusing any further assistance, and to give some colour to the report that he had come into a fortune.

"I suppose that is why he never comes near us now?" said Lady Rosalie a week or two later. "Dear me, Avice, don't look at me like that! You couldn't look fiercer, child, if I'd abused Sir Raymond himself. *He* comes in just as he always did, and I think it is very odd of Lancelot to desert us so completely."

Perhaps in her heart Avice thought so too, though she did not do him the injustice to imagine that his change of fortune had anything to do with it. He was not the sort of man to be unduly elated by an accident of that kind; and besides, the change, whatever it was, had been before that. Avice could not forget his altered manner at the Verecroft *fête*, and though she had thought of it often since—far oftener than she would have been willing to confess—she had not been able to find an explanation. She had not seen Mr. Vereker to speak to since. Once or twice she had met him on the Parade, and she knew that there was the same difference in his manner, that his bow was just a shade colder and his smile much graver than before. It was nothing to her, she protested to herself a dozen times a day; but her pupils found her unusually impatient over their blunders, and Daisy knew that her nights were restless, and wished Sir Raymond would speak out.

"Do you think he will be at the party?" Daisy asked wistfully, breaking in upon the musings that were giving so sad a curve to the beautiful lips.

"Who is *he*?" Avice inquired irritably. There was no need to ask what party, for since a card had come for a dinner at Lord Blackstone's, Daisy had talked about nothing else.

"I meant Sir Raymond," Daisy explained diffidently.

"How can I tell? I shall think it very bad taste if he goes out so soon," said Avice, and the sympathetic little sister felt that such majestic indifference was a thing she would have been quite unable to achieve.

"There is the flower-show to-morrow; perhaps he will be there," she said consolingly. "There are always such a lot of things from Verecroft, and some of the Verekers will be sure to go."

But, to Daisy's disappointment, Lancelot was the only one of the Verecroft party to witness Mr. Hopkinson's triumphs at this particular show; and it was not till near the end of it that he came to speak to Lady Rosalie and her friends. The tent was crowded, and Lady Rosalie and Daisy were a little in front. By the time he had spoken to Avice, they had passed

on, and he could not leave her alone. It was the first time he had been alone with her since the memorable night when Sir Raymond had confessed his love. He had not dared to seek an interview, but it seemed to him now as if he must say something, must offer some explanation of conduct that must have seemed so like caprice. But no words would come. How, indeed, could he explain? How could he tell her that he had resolved to withdraw a suit he had never attempted to urge? How could he assume that she had even noticed his change of manner—much less that she had been affected by it? To apologise would be to insult.

Avice walked by him as silent as himself, until pride forced her into speech. She could not let him suppose that she was hurt or offended, for what right had she to be either? She cast about for some safe topic, and the sight of Daisy, looking rather wistfully about her, suggested Captain Hallam to the elder sister's mind. She was so anxious for a reliable opinion of the man whose attentions to Daisy were so marked, and Mr. Vereker would be sure to know all about him.

"What do you think of Captain Hallam?" she asked shyly, glancing up at the grave, silent face, just as the silence was becoming unendurable.

"Think of him? I think he is one of the finest fellows I know, and one of the best," said Lancelot heartily.

"Oh!"—with an accent of surprise he could not help remarking—"but men and women see things so differently."

"How do you mean? Don't you like Captain Hallam, Miss Meredith?"

"Doesn't he—isn't he rather fond of—flirting?" she asked.

"It depends what you mean by that. I think he has been very foolish in one particular instance," with a glance and smile that pointed the words.

They had come out of the tent now, and Avice saw with a thrill of indignation that Captain Hallam and Miss Jackson were disappearing down one of the shrubbery paths, apparently absorbed in the most intimate conversation.

"Yes, he has been foolish there," said Lancelot, in a tone of excuse; "but—but there are reasons why I think it would not be quite fair to judge him from that."

Avice remembered Lady Rosalie's declaration that it was "all Hilda's doing," and appreciated the reticence that would not blame a woman even to clear a friend. She made up for it by blaming the man quite fiercely herself, and, though she said nothing, it seemed as if Lancelot understood.

"I think you are too hard on him," he said, looking down on the severe young face. "You do not understand. You are so different yourself, you *could* not understand. If you really knew Hallam, you would like him—yes! and respect him too. What he wants is to fall in love with a really good woman."

"Do you think a really good woman would care for a man like that?" said Captain Hallam's severe young censor.

"If she knew him, and made allowances, and did not judge by appearances——"

"What else can one judge by, when one does not know?"

"And yet they may be so false—so misleading!" cried Lancelot, with a thrill of personal feeling in his voice. "I cannot explain what I mean, but I know so well how impossible it is not to be misunderstood sometimes. There are circumstances that may oblige a man to seem false in order to be true—oh! you cannot understand it, but indeed it may be so, and then——"

"And then?" said Avice softly. She understood at least that they were not talking of Captain Hallam now.

"And then," said Lancelot gravely, "he can only trust to his friends' charity, to think as kindly of him as they can."

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE SCENT.

"There is a lust in man no charm can tame,
Of loudly publishing his neighbour's shame."—HARVEY.

AVONMEAD, the house Lord Blackstone had taken for the summer, stood a little way out of Warwick. It was not his own property, but a furnished house the old man had taken in order to be near his son, and the guests at his table to-night were chiefly Phil's friends and brother officers. The head of the table was taken by Miss Hallam, the eldest and only unmarried daughter, an uncompromising old maid, who drove Hilda Jackson to the last pitch of exasperation by constantly appealing to her as to a contemporary who might be expected to have similar tastes and feelings. Miss Hallam, who was some ten years older than her brother, looked all her forty years, and at least five more; while Hilda, *petite* and well made up, hardly looked more than seven-and-twenty, and carried her thirty-five summers with airy and juvenile grace. Miss Jackson excessively resented the assumption of equality of age, and felt that the joys of dining at Avonmead were considerably discounted by the depressing conviction that her hostess would allude to the time "when we were girls together" half a dozen times before the evening was over.

Miss Hallam was a tall, angular woman, a plain likeness of her brother in features and colouring, and possessing a good deal of her father's ability and shrewd common sense. Her hair and eyes and complexion were all of a pale neutral tint, unrelieved by the bronzed cheeks and vivacious blue eyes that saved her brother from looking as insipid as most men of his type. She had been visiting friends in Scotland, and had not been at home for some months, but she had heard enough of the Merediths to look with a good deal of interest at the two beautiful girls who followed Lady Rosalie into the room, and whose plain white dresses were so much more to her taste than the elaborate costumes in which Lady Rosalie and Miss Jackson appeared.

Hilda had made a desperate attempt to regain her lost ground in Captain Hallam's affections, and was robed in a *chef d'œuvre* of Madame Pontet's skill, in which she looked as harmoniously gorgeous as a tropical flower; while Lady Rosalie flattered herself that she looked a Finch all over in a dress of soft grey

tulle, with a black velvet train, and a stomacher composed of crimson roses. She wore a bull-finch in her hair and another in the centre of her fan, and carried a large bouquet of roses.

"And if people don't know that I am Rosalie Finch, it won't be my fault," she said with great satisfaction, as she shook out her puffings and settled her train, and craned her neck to catch a glimpse of herself in the pier-glass before which Miss Braithwayte seemed a permanent fixture. "But, dear me," added the kind-hearted woman, "no one will look at *me* when you three girls are by."

She said it in all good faith, and the lucky little speech sent Hilda into the drawing-room with a glow of satisfaction on her face, and made her quite civil to Lady Rosalie for the rest of the evening. But if Hilda was for once pleased with her friend, she was pleased with very little else. Captain Hallam did not take her in to dinner, but left her to old Colonel Parker—as if she had been a dowager—and went in with Daisy Meredith himself. Mr. Selwyn, the vicar of Buddington, took in Miss Hallam; and Lord Blackstone, Lady Rosalie; while Avice was left to the tender mercies of Captain Lennox, a silent man who studied the *menu* with close attention, and when he had advised her what to eat, drink, and avoid, seemed to think he had fulfilled the whole duty of man, and devoted himself to his dinner with a quiet mind.

Captain Hallam had no attention to spare for his left-hand neighbour, and Avice found the long dinner decidedly tedious and dull. How fast everyone else was talking, she thought, her own taciturn captain always excepted. What a running fire of jests and laughter Lord Blackstone and Lady Rosalie were keeping up! How noisy Miss Jackson and the Colonel were! how much Captain Hallam seemed to have to say to Daisy, and how he dropped his voice when he spoke to her! Avice had plenty of leisure to note all this, and to reassure herself by recalling the terms in which Lancelot had spoken of Philip Hallam. She would not let herself be too anxious after that, and when Captain Hallam turned at last to his silent neighbour, he found a readier smile and a kinder look than Daisy's sister had ever given him before.

He was very grateful; but after all, it was not Avice, but Daisy he wanted to talk to—Daisy, who had never given him anything but kind looks and ready smiles, just tempered with a coy, delicious shyness that seemed to him the most beautiful thing in the world. She was too happy to be shy to-night, and was smiling and chattering artlessly, almost as much to Lord Blackstone's delight as his son's.

It was perhaps as well that none of them could see Hilda Jackson's face, or the looks she cast at happy little Daisy. Miss Hallam would have nothing to say to the new style of floral decorations, and a great epergne that had been presented to Lord Blackstone when he left the bar always stood in the centre of the table. It stood there now, and if it was of no other use, it served at least to screen poor Daisy from the malefic glance of Hilda's jealous eyes. Avice saw it once, and shuddered to think that Daisy should have roused such vindictive passion. She turned towards her with an elder sister's instinct of protection, but Captain Hallam's broad shoulders intervened, and Avice—little as she had once been disposed to like him—found herself comforted by the thought of such stalwart guardianship. How glad she was that she had asked Mr. Vereker's opinion, and that it had been so favourable!

And then she caught Mr. Vereker's name, and found that Mr. Selwyn and Miss Hallam were talking about Verecroft, and was glad that Captain Lennox was too absorbed in discussing a dish of quails to be in any danger of interrupting with irrelevant remarks.

"They all feel it dreadfully," the vicar was saying, and she easily understood that he was referring to Mrs. Kenyon's death, "but Vereker—that's the cousin I told you about, you know——"

"The young man who is so useful in the village?"

"Yes. He wanted to take holy orders, I believe, but Lady Vereker objected."

"Objected! Oh, why?"

"I couldn't quite make out. Mrs. Kenyon was at the bottom of it, I fancy, as she was of most things that went on at Verecroft."

"How they must miss her!" said Miss Hallam.

"Yes, indeed! And, as I was saying, Lancelot Vereker seems to feel it more than anyone else. There was always a strong attachment between them, though I used to think it was more on Mrs. Kenyon's side than on his. But I never saw a man so changed."

"Changed! How!" Miss Hallam asked, and Avice's earnest gaze betrayed a depth of interest of which she was quite unconscious.

"Oh, in every way! It seems as if he had lost all hope and interest, and that sort of thing. I thought at first there must have been some unpleasantness about the will; but Lady Vereker, and Sir Raymond too, are as nice as possible about it, so it can't be that."

"Perhaps he's in love?"

"In love? Oh, no!" laughed the vicar, with a touch of scorn at the feminine suggestion. "He's not at all the sort of man for nonsense of that sort. Besides, if he were, this legacy ought to smooth his way. He's not what people call a great catch, like his cousin, you know; but he's as eligible as most young men now, and people are too glad to get their daughters off in these days, to stand out for more than a competence."

Thus the vicar, who was perhaps all the more useful in his day and generation for knowing his world so well; and Avice listened with a beating heart. But no more was said about Verecroft, and once more the dinner seemed flat and insipid to Avice Meredith. She was glad when Miss Hallam looked at Lady Rosalie, and the ladies rose at last.

"You sing, don't you, Miss Meredith?" Laura Hallam asked, and Avice went to the piano willingly enough. Singing was easier than talking to-night, and as her voice rose and fell on the soft night air, it seemed as if some of the burden that oppressed her took flight on the wings of song.

"Trust me all in all or not at all,"

Avice sang, and she saw no longer the lamplit Avonmead drawing-room, with the moonlight coming in at

the open windows, and mingling weirdly with the rosy light; she was at the flower-show again, and Lancelot Vereker was speaking, and her heart was answering his appeal.

Her voice brought the men in from the dining-room, but she would not sing again. Miss Hallam took her place, and played very delicately some old-fashioned pieces, with a great many runs and spread chords; and Hilda Jackson sang the "Lost Chord" in a voice that could never have been strong, and was now hardly audible three feet away.

"'The sound of a great Amen!'" Captain Hallam whispered wickedly to Daisy. "I really think it's the smallest I ever heard."

Miss Jackson could not hear him, but she looked conscious of failure, and fell on Lady Rosalie for playing her accompaniments too loud.

"I must get someone else to do it if you bang them out like that!" she said indignantly, as she sailed away to the corner where Captain Hallam was leaning over Daisy's chair.

But as she approached they vanished into the moonlit garden, and Hilda sat down on the deserted chair in a dumb fury her whitened lips and panting breath betrayed, and fanned herself into something like composure. No one was near her but Lord Blackstone and Colonel Parker, who were talking politics, and were much too engrossed to notice her, and by degrees she recovered herself, and listened mechanically to their discussion of the "Egyptian Difficulty," and the question whether Admiral Seymour and his iron-clads would bombard Alexandria or not.

It was the question everyone was asking, but which no one not in the secrets of the Government could answer. They could only wonder, conjecture, and surmise, and were certain of nothing but of the valour of their fellow-countrymen, whether on sea or land. Of the prowess of their adversaries there were the conflicting opinions for which a large ignorance allows so fine a field, and Captain Lennox, who had joined the others, had strong views on the point.

"The fellaheen can't fight. Rice-fed beggars never can," he said with conviction.

"Well, I don't know," said Colonel Parker. "Look at the Turkish troops! They're not much better fed, and I wouldn't wish to lead a finer set of fellows. Upon my life, I was tempted to sell out, and take the Sultan's service, when all that fighting was going on, two years ago."

"Like Dalrymple Pasha," said Lord Blackstone, and Hilda sat up and listened with sudden interest.

"Who is Dalrymple Pasha?" she asked, and Colonel Parker turned round courteously.

"Who is he, Miss Jackson? I thought everyone knew about the Dalrymple case, but I suppose it was before your day."

"And who was he?" she asked again.

"He was a man who was cashiered for forgery. I forget the details of the case——"

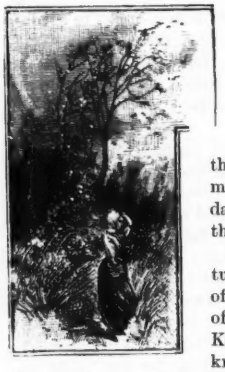
"It is the details I want!" said Hilda, compressing her lips till they were like a fine red line.

Lord Blackstone laughed.

"In that case, Miss Jackson, you had better come to me," the old judge said, "for I was the man who tried him."

(To be continued.)

THE WAIFS' PICNIC.



THINKING it would be of interest to our readers, especially those who have contributed towards the support of the "QUIVER Waifs," to hear from time to time how they are faring, we give this month a short account of a day in the country which they enjoyed together.

It has been our good fortune to pitch our tent in one of the most charming parts of the charming county of Kent. Our secluded valley, known by the romantic name of the Valley of Castles, with its little stream flowing through meadows and hop-gardens, its wooded hills on either side commanding an extensive view into the broader valley of Holmsdale, is a locality sufficiently lovely to delight those familiar with the finest scenery of England, and must be nothing less than Paradise regained to the little London child that finds its way thither.

So we invited the "QUIVER Waifs" to our house, and by appointment met them at Holborn Viaduct Station in time for the early morning train; and, after an hour's ride, reached our destination. Our own little girls were waiting to receive us, and, after the first shyness had worn off, they and the Waifs became excellent friends, and romped to their hearts' content.

As our readers will remember, little Willie is fortunate enough to be boarded out in a small village in Hampshire; still, though the pleasures of a country life are not new to him, he appeared to enjoy himself thoroughly. It was not his first visit to Kent, moreover, for he remembered well, in the old days when he had tramped the country with his mother, some time spent there among the hop-pickers. Willie is growing a fine little fellow, and his frank remarks, delivered in Hampshire brogue, are very amusing. He has lately arrived at one of the first mile-stones on the way to manhood—namely, the dignity of trousers. He still ponders

very deeply over his future in life: the last time we saw him he had fully determined to be a soldier; he has now, however, mentally beaten his sword into a ploughshare, for he tells us that he has made up his mind, this time for good and all, to be a farmer, adding, in confidence, that there is a gentleman living in his neighbourhood who has treated him with great kindness, and who, he thinks, has some intention of taking to him when he starts in life. He now runs errands for this gentleman between school-hours, and is going to be taught how to milk the cow—a first step towards becoming a farmer, no doubt.

Christine grows a big girl, and bids fair to become a fine strong woman—unlike Winnie, who is a gentle, delicate little thing. We could not help wishing it were possible to give her a month in the country instead of a day.

After an early dinner we started for a favourite spot in the woods two miles distant, where we had planned to take tea in amateur gipsy fashion. There were so many things thought indispensable for a picnic, that when they were all stowed in the little pony-trap that was to take us, there was only room enough left for half the party, so we of the stronger sex, including little Willie, had to foot it across the hills to the place of rendezvous.

We had fine fun in the woods: all hands joined heartily in collecting sticks and making a fire to boil the kettle, and the cloth was spread on the grass beneath a giant beech-tree. Certainly, the ground was rather uneven, but, with the exception of upsetting a cup of tea and the preserve, all went well. We disposed of our legs as best we could, most of us adopting the Eastern plan of reclining at meals, though scarcely with Eastern grace. The tea was voted unanimously a success, in spite of the gnats, who seemed to enjoy our company all too well. Then our artist, who had been officiating as light porter and stoker, drew out his sketch-book and busied himself with making the accompanying sketch of the Waifs' corner of the table—if I may so call it. The sturdy little girl to the right is Christine; next to her sits Winnie, and little Willie reclines in Eastern fashion like one to the manner born.



THE "QUIVER" WAIFS.

(A Sketch at the Picnic.)

This trying ordeal over, the children made the woods ring again with their shouts. In swinging, playing at hide-and-seek, and in gathering blackberries, the time flew swiftly by, and as the dusk of the September evening gathered round we made our way home as we had come.

There was still an hour to spare before starting for the train. The lamps were lighted, Christine's eye caught the piano, so the day was brought to an end by the singing of a few tunes which were familiar to all.

On the way to the station Christine exclaimed with great energy, "I can't help thinking what a nice day we have had," and Winnie's little voice chimed in, "I should like to come to your house again, sir." We could not but reflect how little it costs to make a child happy, and regret that we had not more often sought that purest, most sane of all pleasures—the giving of pleasure to children.

THE CITY OF GOD: ITS HISTORY, CHARACTER, AND PRIVILEGES.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER ROBERTS, D.D., PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS.

"Ye are come unto the city of the living God."—HEB. xii. 22.

WE cannot but observe, as one of the most remarkable characteristics of the New Testament, the little account which it takes of death. This appears both in positive statements which it contains, and in the implied ideas which it not unfrequently suggests. Thus, in one passage, we find the announcement that Christ has "abolished death," as if no such event now entered into the experience of His people. And in another passage, we hear the Saviour Himself declaring, "Whosoever believeth in Me shall never die," as if there lay before the Christian no such thing as a descent towards the tomb. Well may language of this kind arrest our attention and excite our inquiry, for nothing like it is to be found in any other volume, or has ever been heard except from Divinely inspired lips. All books of mere human composition refer to death as an awful necessity, which will cut off our present existence from that which is to follow, and which is surrounded by a mystery that we strive in vain to penetrate. But the New Testament represents it as being merely the removal of the believer from a lower to a higher state of existence. It is to him no terrible occurrence—no penal infliction—it is simply the messenger that says to him, "Come up higher;" and transports him from the position which he has occupied upon earth to his home in heaven.

In accordance with this view, we observe that the sacred writer speaks in the words at the top of this paper of believers as having already "*come* to the city of the living God." They have no dark gulf to cross before they can become members of the family of God. They are already numbered among His children; already within the precincts of the heavenly Jerusalem; already entered upon that blessed region which is for ever gladdened by the light of His love. The Church on earth and the Church in heaven form but one great community, living under the same King, and partakers of the same happiness and glory. Hence, dissolution is not *death* to the believer, in the true meaning of that fearful word. It does not overtake him as a herald of wrath, but comes unto him as a harbinger of blessing, putting an end to all his sorrows, and introducing him to unspeakable felicity and peace. And thus we understand the language employed by the New Testament with regard to the point in question. An eminently gifted writer, thoroughly imbued with the teachings of Christ and His disciples on this subject, has said—

> "Is that a death-bed where the Christian lies?
> Yes; but not his—'t is death itself there dies."

And as thus the true followers of Christ never have to grapple with the real "King of Terrors," but simply pass at dissolution from a lower to a higher place in God's Kingdom, it may truly be said, with regard to all such, that Christ has "abolished death," and that they are already "come to the city of the living God."

Several questions naturally suggest themselves in connection with these words. Among these, we are led, first of all, to inquire, so far as we are able to know it, into

THE HISTORY OF THIS CITY.

WE glance at the famous cities of earth, and we eagerly listen to what can be told regarding them. It may be Nineveh, with its buried magnificence, or Jerusalem, with its ever-living interest, that attracts us. It may be Thebes, with its hundred gates, or Babylon, with its massive walls, of which we read. It may be Athens, with its intellectual triumphs, or Rome, with its military conquests, which wins our attention. Be the place what it may, we desire in every case to know something of the history pertaining to those cities which have held a prominent position in the annals of our world. And much more may this feeling be excited with respect to that City which is referred to in the words before us; for all true believers are themselves members of it, and have therefore a personal interest in every particular connected with it.

But, when we begin to inquire, we find that very scanty materials have as yet been furnished for making us acquainted with the history of this City. In fact, it is only one chapter of that history, so to speak, with which we can be said to have almost any acquaintance. This world of ours forms but a small part of the City of God, yet it is of scarcely more than the earth which we inhabit, with the comparatively brief spiritual history belonging to it, that we derive any knowledge from Scripture. Who can tell what events may have taken place on the surface of our planet in those prehistoric ages of which no record has been preserved? Many narratives of surpassing interest may be written in the annals of eternity with respect to the City of God on earth during those inconceivably remote periods of which science can give us only a dim and uncertain glimpse. And then, when we pass from our world altogether to a contemplation of that mighty universe of which it forms but an insignificant portion; when we think that "the City of God" embraces within its far-extended limits myriads of globes which are thousands of times larger than our own; and when we reflect that, in all probability, these have been for innumerable ages the abodes of intelligent beings—we feel what a grandeur belongs to the City here spoken of.

and we can imagine with what a thrilling and ceaseless interest its history, so varied and exhaustless, will be perused throughout eternity.

But, in the meantime, we cannot travel beyond what is revealed in Scripture with reference to the City of God on earth, in connection with the fallen children of men. And, brief as the record is, in comparison with what remains to be told of the universe at large, we need not hesitate to believe that the story is at least as marvellous as any other connected with the unnumbered worlds which God has made. I love to think that every star in the firmament has its own special revelation which it makes of the Almighty. The highest conception which we can form of the design of creation is that which regards it as being in its several parts a book in which is written some account of the infinite perfections of its Author. And scarcely a more sublime or attractive idea of our occupation hereafter could arise in the mind than that which supposes our being permitted to read leaf after leaf of that mighty volume, and thus to acquire an ever new and increasing acquaintance with the nature and attributes of God. But I confess that I can form no higher notion of what may be told of our Father in heaven than that which is conveyed to us by the history of our own world. Let every orb in the sky have its special revelation to make respecting God. Let the whole universe be inscribed with an account of His wondrous and adorable perfections. Let us discover ever fresh cause to worship and praise Him, as we pass from one to another of the works of His hands. Yet never, surely, shall we find a loftier display of His attributes than that which has been made in our own world. For here has dwelt God incarnate; here has the great plan of redeeming love been accomplished; here has been offered that Divine sacrifice in virtue of which sinners are pardoned and accepted; here has been revealed that mercy which not only forgives the transgression of the guilty, but, in its exuberant bounty and grace, constitutes them heirs of everlasting glory.

Let us think, then, of the history of the City of God on earth: and are we not impressed with its marvellous character? Let us take our stand at its central point, the Cross of Christ: and, looking round from that position, do we not feel what a striking revelation of God's nature is set before us? We see love that has stooped from the glory of heaven to the shame of Calvary; and as the result of that love, we hear salvation proclaimed to the guilty inhabitants of our world. From Eden onwards we behold the blessed effects of Divine grace upon the souls of sinners. The burden of their transgressions has been removed, the depravity of their hearts has been subdued, their league with Satan has been destroyed, their downward course to destruction has been arrested, and amid the adoring and rejoicing wonder of the heavenly hosts those who were by nature "children of wrath" are changed into the loving and beloved children of the living God.

We next proceed to inquire more particularly into the *character* of those who dwell within that "City of God," the history of which has already received a brief consideration.

Now, the moment we glance at the inhabitants of this City, whether as viewed in heaven or on earth, we perceive that there is one feature which they all possess in common, and which imparts to them an essential unity, notwithstanding all the differences which otherwise belong to them. There are diversities of rank among the angels, and there are degrees of glory among the redeemed; but all are distinguished by their *purity*, and could not otherwise have a place in God's presence. The law of the Kingdom of Heaven is that "into it nothing shall ever enter that defileth." Not a stain of spiritual pollution rests upon any of God's servants above. They are all pure, even as He is pure, reflecting His glorious image as in myriads of resplendent pearls, and thus multiplying throughout the holy City in which they dwell that unspotted radiance which beams upon their souls from the throne of the Almighty.

The same law holds good with respect to the City of God on earth. Here, too, righteousness, though as yet only inchoative and imperfect, is the characteristic which marks out the true followers of Christ from all others. Infinitely diversified they may be in other respects, but they agree in having been "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," and in desiring to advance in the way of holiness. No two believers that ever lived have been exactly alike in talent, disposition, or attainment; and yet all have been at one with respect to the aspirations after purity which dwelt in their hearts. We perceive, on glancing at the saints of God as portrayed in the Scripture, how varied were their natural characters, and how they retained these diversities after they became partakers of God's grace. It is easy to see how marked was the distinction between St. Peter and St. John, or between both and St. Paul; and we have every reason to believe that such original differences of character will be preserved for ever. God delights in variety throughout all His works. There is no monotony either in creation, providence, or grace. Every pebble has its own distinct configuration; every flower its own special beauty; every human form its more or less marked differences from all others; every mind its peculiar measure of capacity and power. There have been no two years, no two days even, since the creation of the world, which exactly resembled each other; no two histories, either of nations or individuals, that have been precisely alike. And this diversity, which so strikingly pervades the natural world, is found equally to prevail in the spiritual. No two cases of conversion to God have presented quite similar features, and no two souls which have been sanctified by His Spirit exhibit the very same kinds or degrees of excellence. Variety is thus characteristic of all God's operations in every department of that mighty Kingdom over which He rules. And, as this diversity

amid unity—this specific difference amid generic oneness—imparts a charm to our existence here, so we cannot doubt it will be hereafter. In that variety of rank, and tendency, and attainment, which will distinguish God's people in heaven, we find a foundation for the friendships which they will form, and the mutual aid, as well as enjoyment, which they will furnish to each other throughout eternity.

But along with all this variety which pertains to the people of God now, and will doubtless exist in them for ever, there is, as I have said, also an essential unity by which they are distinguished. "Without holiness," it is expressly said, "no man shall see the Lord." The desire after righteousness—a growing conformity to God's will and image—is the infallible criterion of a man's spiritual state, and furnishes the only sure evidence that he has a place among those of whom we are told that they are "come unto the City of the living God."

Having considered the history and the inhabitants of the City referred to in the words before us, let us now contemplate, for a little,

ITS PRIVILEGES.

THESE privileges are many and great; and feeble indeed is all that human speech can say regarding them. We must leave it to eternity to develop them in their full extent; while, at present, we can simply glance at one or two of those blessed peculiarities by which, as we know, this City is distinguished.

First, it is possessed of *absolute security*. There is a great King within it—even the King of kings and Lord of lords—and His omnipotence is the pledge of its eternal safety. No enemy can prevail against it. Salvation has our God appointed for its walls and bulwarks, so that all within its enclosure are safe for ever. Now, is not this an enviable privilege? Truly blessed is it, in a world of danger like ours, to possess such an assurance of safety. Others may be tempted and perish, but no fatal danger—no final disaster—can happen to those who, by faith in Christ, have entered into the City of the living God. To every such one are these grand old words addressed—"The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand; the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night: the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul: the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

Another special prerogative of this City is its *enduring happiness*. Need I quote the emphatic terms in which this is set forth in Scripture? "And there shall be no night there," we read, "and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." No night of sorrow to interrupt their joy; no night of ignorance to cast its dark shadow over their minds; no night of spiritual apostasy to cut them off from fellowship with holy beings; no night of death to put an end to their happiness; but, continually rejoicing in the light of God's own countenance, "they shall reign for ever and ever." Well may the hearts of believers be cheered under their present trials by the anticipation of such blessedness hereafter. Yet a little while, and heaven, with its endless joy, shall efface all remembrance of the sorrows of the earth. For conflict there will be peace; for anxiety there will be comfort; for pain there will be pleasure; for the dread of death there will be the assured anticipation of an endless life; and, looking forward to this, all true believers may well adopt the language of the Apostle, and declare, in the midst of present afflictions, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Again: the City here spoken of will be distinguished by *increasing glory and happiness for ever*. This is both the most precious and peculiar of all the privileges which belong to it. When we look back upon the past history of our world, we see many cities rising up before us whose glory was once great, but has long since passed away. Scarcely anything is more melancholy than to stand on the site of queenly capitals like Babylon or Nineveh, and contrast their present desolation with the accounts which have come down to us of their former magnificence. But, even where no such striking changes have occurred, how numerous are the cities which seem to bear inscribed on their modern aspect the sorrowful words—"Ichabod—the glory is departed." A few squalid huts now rise upon the ruins of the once luxurious Corinth, and the once warlike Sparta. Tyre, that grand commercial city, whose merchants were princes, has now literally become "a place to spread nets upon;" while Ephesus, with its world-famed temple, is altogether forsaken, except by the antiquarian, who may be seen searching curiously among its ruins. Such is the fate, sooner or later, and in a greater or less degree, of all the cities of our world. They flourish for a time, and then sink into decay: their grandeur vanishes as the wing of centuries sweeps over them; and at last their greatness becomes only a matter of history, in striking contrast to the humble appearance which they come ultimately to present. But it is altogether different with this City of God. Its glory, instead of waning, continually increases with the lapse of time. We can see how this has been the case in the past, while age after age has developed more fully the character and attributes of the Church of Christ on earth. And so shall it be for ever. More and more will the City of God increase in every element of happiness and glory. Infinite progression will attend her throughout the endless ages of eternity, and constantly accumulating bliss will flow into the souls of those who, through an earnest faith in Christ, have attained to the inheritance which is above, which is "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

BILLY'S WINDOW GARDEN.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.



"'Hallo, dad! So yer've got company!'"—*p.* 300.

MR. JOHNSON, more particularly known as "the Corporal," had an ugly, kind face. Whether a myth or no, I cannot tell, but it was said that in a southern county where he was born and bred, and where more frequently than in any other part of England heronries are to be seen, one of the members of these brotherhoods had disobligingly pecked out his right eye. This scar had not only given him a sinister appearance, but it had necessitated his leaving the army, and being put on a pension. This "unattached life" was to him a matter of reluctant compulsion, as he had been proud of the service, and an unusual favourite with the rank and file. But now that he was thrown on his own resources, necessity, as has often been proved, was "the mother of invention." One thing was certain: Johnson, from his antecedents, could not be relegated to a life of idleness. He had inherited a very small but competent income from his father. This, with the aforesaid pension, made him, in his own eyes at least, an independent man, and, with his modest social aspirations, he felt he had not only enough, but to spare. As he had the singular and somewhat inharmonious combination of a love of boys and a love of flowers, he happily thought out a safety-valve for his favourite resorts by hiring, at his own expense, a room in one of the most needy districts in the great East of London. This,

by degrees, he had furnished on a frugal but substantial scale—a desk, a relay of second-hand school forms, one or two maps on the wall, and a lot of framed coloured lithographs of seeds, grasses, leaves, and flowers. He had long been known and liked in his old regiment for the interest he took in the young recruits. It had been his persistent endeavour to instil into them his own love of flowers and of nature in general, and he contrived somehow to have always a few sympathetic hearers and disciples. In repairing, therefore, to Lime Lane, he was only carrying on and carrying out old employments. Undeterred by a series of rather unsuccessful efforts, he had, in course of time, succeeded in getting, after their day's nondescript work, a few waifs and strays whose natures were tolerably amenable to civilising influences. He had to submit at first to a good deal of rude banter—uncomplimentary remarks on his conspicuous, or rather inconspicuous, eye, and other things. But everyone soon discovered his genuine goodness, kindness, and generosity, and the Corporal came to be installed quite as a small chieftain, among the youth at least of these heathen tribes of the East.

He found he could secure his non-military recruits best—indeed, alone—by personal call and solicitation, and it was one of these occasions which forms the ground of this story.

Leaving the exact position of Crocket Court indeterminate, also reserving a description of the room in question, let me record a few scraps of the conversation between the Corporal and one who, he was discriminating enough at once to see, would prove an acquisition to what, in compliment to his military life, he used to speak of as his "roll-call." It will be observed that Billy, the small hero of our narrative, made havoc, as might be expected, with the Queen's English, and was largely tainted with the East End vernacular.

"Well, no; I ain't got no objection to coming—leastways, if the chaps won't chaff a feller like me."

"We shall be glad to see you, my lad," was the Corporal's hearty reply, "and next Tuesday is the day we give the flower-seeds.

"You have plenty of birds," said the Corporal, "to keep you company. They seem, anyhow, to enjoy the mossy roofs as much as you."

"The sparrers?" said Billy. "You 're right there, and werry good company they are—about the best in the court. Look at 'em now, a-peepin' over that old trough. They is the pluckiest little chaps. W'en it 's bin rainin' cats and dogs, till yer'd think they hadn't a dry feather on their backs, they'll come out as h'uppish as you like, a-puttin' their 'eads first on one side and then on t'other, askin' as plain as can be if there ain't no crumbs to be dispoged of this day."

But at this point it became manifest that Billy's visitor, with all due deference to the sparrow community, was edging his way towards the door.

"I'm afraid, friend, I must bid you good-night," he said, "for I have two other calls to make; but I shall see you on Tuesday at eight, and Tim will show you the way if you don't know it."

"All right," rather pleased at being unexpectedly accosted as "friend"; "I expect I'll turn up, and 'ave a go at them seeds."

"All right, my boy. I like the look of you, and shall be pleased to have you in my regiment of East Enders."

* * * * * *

It was very early on the Wednesday morning following the visitor's call, that Billy stood again at his window. His face wore the comfortable and self-satisfied aspect of one who has a great deal of important business on hand.

"Hallo there! what are yer after now?" interposed a snarling voice from the bed at the other end of the room. "Yer might have been lightin' the fire and bilin' the water, in place o' potterin' among that old crockery of yours, wot 's no good to nobody!"

Billy was apparently quite used to this form of address, and to the tone which accompanied it, for he scarcely stirred from his former attitude, and only responded with filial reverence, for the voice had come from all he had hitherto been taught to regard as father.

"Look 'ere," continued Billy, suppressing any little hurt feeling, at the same time rising and going up to the bed, "that gemman as called t'other evenin', wot I told you of, has given me all them seeds. And he says if I looks after 'em proper, and gives 'em a wash of an evenin', by-and-bye I 'll 'ardly know but I'm in Covent Garden w'en I looks out of my window. This 'ere 's red 'satonaria,' I believe he calls it, and this 'ere 's blue, and this, wot I'm sowin' first, is mignonette. Don't you remember, when I wor a werry little chap, mother had a plant of 'im in the h'old garden, and sometimes w'en we'd be watchin' at the door she 'd say to me, 'Here, Billy, father 's a-comin' home; yer can pick a bit of my mignonette and give it 'im to put in his coat'?"

The father made no answer, but turned on his side, and, as Billy thought, fell asleep again. If he had not been so engrossed with his flower-seeds he might have heard the sigh that followed his words. He little knew the vision he had awakened of a past which the stern man oftenest tried to banish rather than to recall. Visions of a far different and more sunshiny abode—visions of a pale face and welcoming smile—visions of its growing paler and paler—visions of thin hands clasping Billy the tighter as they grew more transparent, and of tears falling on his curly hair. Ah! how often tender human hearts are found to beat and throb and yearn under rough exteriors, and hard voices, and unmannerly ways; and how little it takes to wake up the slumbering chords of music that have long been silent!

Meanwhile the boy first returned to his seat by the window; then, with sudden resolution, up he jumped, fetched a few sticks from a corner of the room, and with evident familiarity with the art,

proceeded to light a fire and put on an old kettle, whistling *sotto voce* all the time. Having concluded, he took a penny from the mantel-piece, and went off to invest in the usual supply of milk.

"It was werry jolly," related Billy, on his return, in reply to a question old Will addressed to him as to the doings of the previous evening. "There was a lot of fellers all in a big room with picters 'angin' up. Bob Noggs was there, and ain't he turned a swell! And that gemman wot come here stood at a table. I was a bit late, yer know, and he was speakin' w'en I got in. But as soon as 'e see me 'e says 'Good evenin', Bill; how are yer?' I wished I hadn't 'ave gone quite so late, for all them turns and stares at me as if I wer' a scarecrow. But Mr. Johnson, 'e says, 'I'll show you a seat,' and he puts me down right before the table on a form, and he says, 'This ere's Bill Blackley, and 'e 's the first lad I've found wot 's cultiwatin' flowers on his own 'ook, and I'm werry glad to 'ave the opportunity of introdoosin' 'im to yer!' Then if the mister didn't give us a rare talkin' to about what he had seed in Indiar and Chinar, and all about cactuses, and palmses, and holives. Then he comes home to Hengland, and how he kept us all alive about grasses and soils and climates, and took us, too, all in his mind like, a walk through woods, and even gave us a word in passing on hinsects and hanimals. And he was lovely on birds; and then this brought him to speak of my sparrows, and all the chaps looked at me, and some sniggled, and some nodded their 'eads approvin' like, which gave the place to me more of an 'ome look. But though the gemmin doesn't preach and sermon at you, he tries to say something that will do a feller good, and I'm not sure but he's set me a-thinkin', and drove a nail, like, into my 'ead. Well, this was what he did and what he said, just as he was finishin' up. He takes one seed out of one bag and one out of t'other, and 'e says, 'Look 'ere. This is saxonaria, and this is convolvulus, and this is mignonette. This'll be red, and this blue, and this 'ere is more for the smell nor the colour. Yer'd never believe,' says he, 'unless yer saw it, that such fine flowers would come out o' them brown-lookin' things. Now,' 'e says, 'I'm goin' to tell you about a different sort of seed, afore we diwide them.' All of a suddint 'e looks up, and 'e says, 'But this is the beginnin' and end of the thing. Listen! Wotever yer sow'll be sure to come up—that, and nothink else! Now, keep in mind that, my lads. W'en it's done, it's done.' Then 'e says, 'Wot sort of seeds do yer think yer've been growin' all these years? I expect some of yer have been sowin' thistle-seeds for a good long time, wot'll bother yourselves and yer neighbours for many a year. Instead of bad deeds and bad words, it 'ud be a precious good thing if we could hall say this evenin', and w'en the last evenin' of our sowin' comes, that we'd put in nothing but wot'll come up sweet and beautiful and——'"

"There," said Will, unaccustomed to so long a palaver, and perhaps the reaction after his good breakfast setting in, "if your tongue ain't tired, my ears is. I've 'ad about enough of yer, so I'm off."

* * * * * *

The months are flitting away, and Billy's first evening in the Iron Room has become quite an old story, though many a one has been passed since then in the same place. The seeds in the window garden, too, have sprung up, and somehow managed to struggle into beauty, gathering in every ray of sunshine and every gentle raindrop, and wonderfully unaffected by the unfavouring influences around. Billy watched their development with admiring eyes, and tended them with all the care of which his rough nature was capable. They were his first thought in the morning, and his last waking dream at night. It is true he had less time at his disposal than of old; for somehow in the damp spring weather old Will had managed to take a cold, which settled in his chest, and at length kept him an unwilling prisoner; while Billy had to take his place at the barrow, and go from street to street and house to house from early morning till the shadows began to fall.

With the occupants of the court, neither in days of health or sickness, had Will ever cultivated an acquaintance. There was one house directly opposite which had never had a tenant within his remembrance, but always stood there quiet and dreary, with faded yellow blinds drawn closely down, and damp weather-stains like slimy finger-marks upon its walls. Rumour said that once on a time, in that very room, a murder had been committed, and that no one since then had cared to make it a home. Certain it was that not a sign of life had brightened it within Billy's recollection, and that everyone, with general consent, had a sort of cold-shouldered feeling to the deserted dwelling. There was even a legend that it was haunted—a myth which was made the most of by all the youthful "nurse-gals" of the vicinity, and played a redoubtable part in the training of the young and rising generation.

As we have already hinted, during his invalid life Will spent a considerable portion of the day at his window, and weary enough he was of the prospect.

One day, in the dark autumn weather, Will felt worse than usual, and only crept from his bed to his chair late in the afternoon. Perhaps, then, being more weakly than usual, it was not to be wondered at that when, having taken up his post of observation, he saw, or fancied he saw, a slight movement of the blind at the opposite window, accompanied by a suspicion of some shadowy form reflected on it, he imagined it a confirmation of the ghostly story. Will looked again. No; it is gone, his eyes have been playing pranks with him. But sure enough, before he has time to withdraw them, there it is again, and of this there is no mistake. It was the face of a little child, with the bonniest blue eyes he had ever seen—and such a pair of rosy cheeks! The apparition was so abrupt, and altogether so different from his imaginings, that Will could not resist smiling to himself as he looked

across. The small maiden seemed as much interested in the old man as he could possibly be in herself; or rather, we must, in the first instance, give the credit of the compliment to Billy's window garden, at which the child was evidently pointing her finger. But when that sudden smile flitted over the grave thin face, the new-comer at once took it as a token of friendly welcome, and returned it with interest. This sudden liking for the little stranger was all the more remarkable, as Will had rather a settled objection to the children of the court.

Next morning, he wondered, indeed, whether he could have dreamt it all. But, no; sure enough, when he rose, sooner than usual, the opposite blinds were drawn up to the top; there was a glow of firelight in the room, and now and then, as it passed to and fro, glimpses of a tall, slight form in widow's dress, and a little figure that always followed in its wake. The broken pane of glass, too, was mended; the windows rubbed till they shone again, and the place of the weary blinds taken by neat white curtains. Then, by-and bye, a railway van came rattling up with a well-worn but comfortable armchair, some bedding, a large brown chest, and the inevitable nondescript crockery.

As the days went on, there was quite a telegraphic communication of nods and smiles established between the old man and the blue-eyed child, such as would much have surprised Billy had he been in their secrets.

Will never thought the day properly begun until he had taken his usual seat and looked out. He had a silent morning greeting from his opposite neighbour. I scarcely think, as time passed, he could have slept as soundly as usual without the "good-night" kiss of the hand that was wafted to him from the other side of the street.

With the opening of the year came real January weather—frost and cold—which seemed to shrivel poor Will up, and brought back that hacking cough which summer days had modified. Ventilation is a very good thing in its way, but when the wintry wind pours through the chinks of the window, and the snow oozes its way on to the ledge, it is scarcely the thing for an invalid. So the old post of observation had to be resigned, and the chair to be drawn to the fireside. Poor Will! The days seemed very long, and he counted the hours till Billy's return.

Now, it happened one morning that he confided this feeling of weariness and *ennui* to his son, and that day being an extra snowy one, and no custom coming in Billy's direction, the latter determined, by way of happy surprise, to return two hours before his usual time. With this pleasant thought in his head, he stole softly up the creaking stair on tiptoe, boots in hand, lest they should advertise his coming. But as he neared the top he suddenly paused, and bent forward in an attentive attitude. Could it be? Yes, there was his father's voice. Was the old man talking to himself? No, there is another voice, clear and high. Billy's curiosity can stand it no longer, for at that moment a peal of laughter, such as had never been heard in the room since Will's occupancy, floated to Billy's ears. He opens the door with a sudden jerk. He is quite right; his father is not alone, for on one knee (as if he had been accustomed to fondle children all his life) sits the blue-eyed neighbour of the opposite house, whilst on the other lies an equally blue-eyed specimen of the doll sisterhood, staring complacently up at the grimy ceiling, and apparently long resigned to the loss of a portion of her upper and lower limbs.

"Hallo, dad! So yer 've got company," remarked Billy, the first surprise being got over. "I comed 'ome early to see as how you were gettin' on, not knowin' as yer were expectin' two young ladies."

Will had felt it nothing out of the way before Billy came home to ride a rosy little girl on one knee and a dilapidated doll on the other. But when his son's sharp black eyes appeared at the door, a sort of shamefacedness came over him. Some sweet, tender feeling, new, yet old, had awoke in his heart at the child's touch, and he would fain have sheltered and veiled it, as we do all sacred things. Will, too, was not quite sure in what light his young hopeful might look on this invader of his territories, and an embarrassed pause might have ensued, had it not been for the small maid herself, who asked, looking from one to the other, "Is this yer little boy?" whereat Billy, after one stare of surprise, burst into a laugh, and exclaimed, "Well, yer are a rum 'un! Wot's yer name, granny?"

"My leal name, wot they gived me in church, is Nelly Malia, but my 'ittle name wot mother calls me is Wosebud, or Wosie, and my 'ittle girl's name is Maly—that's mother's name. Wot 's yours, boy?"

"He's called Billy," said old Will, "and he's more nor twice your age, Rosie."

It was wonderful how the old man's tone mellowed before the child's gaze.

"Billy? That 's a vely nice name; but you ain't never said 'How do you do?' and getting down from her perch, she ran towards him.

Billy looked at the small fat hand outstretched to him, and for the first time felt his own was far from being in a state to grasp it. He took it, however, in his grimy palm. But Rosebud was not satisfied; her merry mouth fell.

"Why, you ain't never tissed me," she said.

Billy's eyes opened, if possible, wider than they had done since his entrance, and for a moment he hesitated. Then the quick glance softened unwontedly, and stooping, his lips met the persistent upturned face. With that kiss vanished all Billy's doubts as to the acceptance of this new acquaintanceship. From that hour Rosie found a place in his garden as Queen of Flowers.

(To be concluded.)

Our Vicar's Wife



LONG years ago, when I was young,
And wore a frill and Tam-o'-Shanter,
In our church choir there sat and sung
A fair and most inspired chanter—

A little girl, named Nellie Dale,
With golden and luxuriant tresses,
Whose cheek, like any lily pale,
Won ever matronly caresses.

She was as gentle as a dove,
And though of very lowly station,
Sang, as she had been taught above,
The strain of holy adoration.

A cripple from an early hour,
She had not shared those many pleasures
Which spring from health and active power,
But God had given her other treasures—

In the bright world that lay around,
The flowery mead, the wood, the river—
And with a gratitude profound
She e'er was mindful of the Giver.

The bird and bee were friends of hers;
The butterfly with painted pinion
Would linger long about the furze
Which blossomed in her fair dominion.

All Baby-land rich tribute paid
To her, and shared with her its gladness;
And not one subject was afraid
To seek her in its hour of sadness.

She was beloved by rich and poor:
The wise from her might wisdom borrow;
And pride before her cottage door
Would droop its plume, and sigh, "Good-morrow."

One morning in the month of May,
When bloom was all the landscape crowning,
She by the mill-pond chanced to stray,
And found a little lambkin drowning.

Her crutch was stretched with eager hand
(For not to aid were cruel slaughter),
But as she helped the wean to land,
She slipping fell into the water.

When next she saw the light of day,
She found the miller bending o'er her,
And, in his own rough, honest way,
Doing his utmost to restore her.

A fever followed, long and sore;
Life was despaired, but prayer and labour
Strove not in vain—at length once more
We met our darling little neighbour.

But, wondrous! from that very day
She won another lease of life, sir,
Her crutch was banished far away:
She's living still: our Vicar's wife, sir.

JOHN GEO. WATTS.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Feb. 16th. The Ministry of John the Baptist.

To read—St. Luke iii. 1—22. *To learn—St. Matt. iii.* 2.



I. CALL. (1—6.) Nothing whatever heard of John since his name was given at his circumcision, except one verse (i. 80). That told of his growth in body, mind, and soul—preparing for his future work. Remind what the angel had foretold as to his greatness (i. 15). The time now come for him to be shown to Israel. Notice—

(*a*) *The time.* Rulers and chief priests specified.

(*b*) *The message.* God's word came, perhaps in a dream as to Joseph (St. Matt. i. 20), perhaps by an angel as to his father (i. 11). Anyhow, he recognised God's message and obeyed at once.

(*c*) *The place.* The low-lying lands about the Jordan, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

(*d*) *The prophecy.* Isaiah, 700 years before, had foretold his coming and its object, viz., as a pioneer to prepare the way for Christ the King. (Is. xl. 3.)

What would be done for a king? A road made. Obstacles must be removed — people informed about the king. So with Christ the King from heaven.

Therefore John preached repentance—put away sin; prepare hearts to receive the Messiah.

Told also of Christ's coming to bring salvation.

II. The Preaching. (7—14.) A revival of religion takes place. Multitudes, even from far-distant places, crowd to hear this new preacher.

Notice what he says to the different classes of people—

(*a*) *The multitude, i.e.* of Pharisees and Scribes (*see* St. Matt. iii. 7), noted for formality in religion and undue attention to outward observances.

They must show fruits in their lives—mere profession not enough.

The day of testing close at hand.

(*b*) *The people.* Noted for niggardliness. Must be self-denying and generous. True religion thinks of wants of others.

(*c*) *The publicans.* Farmers of taxes—noted for extortion. Must be fair and honest. Do duty to man as well as God.

(*d*) *The soldiers.* Noted for brawls and discontent. Must live peaceably and be contented.

That is, each person must give up his own special sins.

III. The Baptism. (15—22.) People began to think he must be the Messiah. But what is the difference between him and Christ?

He is the servant—Christ is the Master.

He baptises with water—Christ with Holy Ghost.

He preaches of judgment—Christ executes it.

And now Christ Himself comes to be baptised. Why?

(*a*) To set an example to His people.

(*b*) To institute Baptism as means of admission among His people.

(*c*) To fulfil all righteousness, *i.e.*, to perform all that He Himself enjoined.

What signs of God's favour were shown Him?

1. The Spirit of God descended upon Him.

2. The voice of God proclaimed Him His Son.

Lessons. 1. *The nature of repentance.* Lay aside besetting sin. (Heb. xii. 1.)

2. *The blessings of Baptism.* Admitted into God's family. "If children, then heirs." See that ye walk worthy of vocation.

Feb. 23rd. The Temptation of Jesus.

To read—St. Luke iv. 1—13. *To learn—Heb. ii.* 18.

1. The Circumstances. (1, 2.) Christ, baptised as man, is now to be tempted as man—thus shared man's whole life, able to sympathise and help. (Golden Text.) Notice these points—

The time. Directly after baptism—full of Holy Spirit.

The manner. Led by Spirit—not going wilfully into temptation.

The place. Wilderness — wild beasts for companions. (St. Mark i. 13.)

The season. A forty days' fast when hungry and faint.

The tempter. Satan himself, prince of fallen angels.

II. The First Temptation. (3, 4.) *To doubt God.* Why might Christ not work this miracle?

He would be casting doubts on—

His Sonship—just declared at His baptism.

God's power—to keep Him alive without food.

God's love—in letting Him feel hunger.

It would also be taking His own way to supply wants.

So He answers, "Man shall not live by bread alone." (Deut. viii. 3.)

How is this an answer? Because it states—

(*a*) God's power in the past—kept Israelites alive in other ways than by bread.

(*b*) Man's true life is to obey God's Word.

III. Second Temptation. (5—8.) *To forsake God.* Notice these points—

The sight. The world's pomps and vanities.

The offer. Earthly power and glory.

The condition. To fall down and worship Satan!

At once Christ answers, "Get thee hence," etc. Why?

Because this world's blessings are all empty (vain).

Because God alone is to be worshipped.

III. Third Temptation. (9—13.) *To presume on God.* Notice—

He took Him to the Holy City and Temple.

He quotes Holy Scripture to Him. (Ps. xci. 11.)

He assures Him of the care of holy angels.

He tempts Him to presume on His Sonship.

But (*a*) Holy places do not necessarily keep from sin.

(*b*) He left out important words, "in all thy ways." This would be out of Christ's way.

(*c*) God's angels keep us safe only when we are doing God's will.

(*d*) The Son would not put His Father's loving care to such unwarrantable proof.

So Christ answered, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." To tempt God is—

To provoke God, as Israelites at Massah.

To presume on God's care, as Jonah when fleeing to Tarsus.

Satan, being resisted, left Christ. (James iv. 7.)

Lessons. How to meet temptation.

1. In the power of God's Holy Spirit.

2. By the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. (Eph. vi. 16.)

3. By the example and aid of Christ. (Golden Text.)

March 2. Jesus at Nazareth.

To read—St. Luke iv. 16—30. *Golden Text—St. John* i. 11.

Introduction. Ask where Christ was born—and where brought up. Lived at Nazareth till thirty years old—the age at which priests began their work. (Num. iv. 35.) Now, having been baptised and tempted, pays a visit to His old home.

I. Christ Welcomed. (16—22.) Picture the scene in the village.

The day—Sabbath—day of rest and worship.

The place—the village synagogue—house of prayer for all pious Jews.

The congregation—Christ's relations and friends coming in a crowd to see Him.

The cause—fame of His miracles, such as turning water into wine at Cana. (St. John ii. 11.) All these spread abroad.

The service—singing of Psalms, reading of Prophets. (Acts xiii. 27.)

The reader—Christ stands up to read the appointed lessons.

See how the passage wonderfully foretold His own work.

(*a*) God's Spirit had just descended on Him.

(*b*) He had already healed broken-hearted father at Capernaum whose son was sick unto death. (St. John iv. 46.)

(*c*) He was by His preaching causing the blind to see the light of the Gospel.

(*d*) His name, Jesus, showed His mission to save.

(*e*) He, having overcome the devil, could deliver those taken captive by him. (2 Tim. i. 26.)

Notice about this message of salvation. It was—

(*a*) *New*—heard with eager ears.

(*b*) *Gracious*—full of love.

(*c*) *Surprising* from one thought to be only Joseph's son. But it was also (*d*) *True*—from One who is the Truth itself.

II. Christ Rejected. (23—30.) What did they want Him to do?—

Work some miracles here, as He had in other places.

Why did they want this? Two feelings prompted them—

(*a*) *Curiosity*—to see some wonderful works.

(*b*) *Jealousy*—that others should see these things and not they. Christ shows them that God's blessings were not confined to His own special people.

For whom did Elijah work a miracle of mercy? The woman of Sarepta, a city of Zidon, beyond borders of Holy Land. Who was healed by Elisha of his leprosy? Naaman the Syrian.

How were they affected by all this?

They were filled with hatred against Christ.

They rejected Christ from among them—even tried to kill Him—but He escaped from them.

Why did they thus reject Him? Because of their want of faith. They wanted signs and miracles to show He was the Son of God. But His holy life spent amongst them was the best sign—but their eyes were blinded.

Lessons. 1. *Christ's message is the same now.* Glad tidings of deliverance from Satan—liberty, joy, and peace are ours still.

2. *The danger of rejecting Christ.* He never went to Nazareth again. Now is the accepted time.

March 9. The Great Physician.

To read—St. Luke iv. 31—44. *Golden Text—St. Matt. viii.* 16.

Introduction. Nazareth rejected Christ, Capernaum received Him. Nazareth His own city by residence, Capernaum by adoption. Nazareth visited once only, Capernaum frequently.

This seems to be His first visit to Capernaum.

I. Preaching. (31, 32.) Christ's great work that of preaching or teaching—came as God's Son to declare the Father. Where did He preach?

On the hill-side, as the Sermon on the Mount. (St. Matt. v., etc.)

By the sea, as when He gave the seven Parables. (St. Matt. xiii.)

Always on the Sabbath in the synagogues.

What was there to notice about His teaching?—

He spake with power—believed in His own message, as One come from God.

II. Healing. 1. *The unclean spirit.*

What a sad disturbance to the Sabbath worship.

A man with evil spirit possessing him. Notice about the spirit—

(*a*) *He recognised Christ*—"I know Thee who Thou art."

(*b*) *He feared Christ*—"Let us alone," he said.

(*c*) *He obeyed Christ*—coming out of the man.

Are there such evil spirits now? Yes; of same kind, if not of same degree. Envy, pride, lust, hatred, malice, and such-like—all sins of the soul are works of the devil.

How can they be cast out? Only by the power of God.

Christ must be recognised—"Lord, have mercy."

Christ must be obeyed—resist the devil, and he will flee.

2. *Peter's wife's mother.* Synagogue worship over, with its exciting scene. Christ needs food and rest. Where does He go? Notice—

Simon Peter was a disciple and a married man.

He was hospitable, and wished to entertain Christ.

He was in trouble—his mother-in-law suddenly stricken down with fever.

What an inconvenient time for a guest! Was it so? What did Christ at once do?

(*a*) *He saw* the patient—not being afraid of catching the fever.

(*b*) *He healed* her—showing power over diseases.

(*c*) *He strengthened* her. Fever leaves people weak, but she at once resumed her household duties.

3. *Many sick.* No wonder Christ's fame spread. He had given wine at Cana, cast out evil spirits, healed a great fever.

So they brought sick of all kinds in body and mind.

What a blessing Nazareth lost and Capernaum received!

III. RESTING. (42—44.) That Sabbath had brought no rest to Christ.

So He retired into a quiet place for prayer and communion with God.

The people followed Him full of love and gratitude.

But He could not stay always at Capernaum. He must preach in all the different cities.

LESSONS. *The blessings of receiving Christ.* He forgives sin and heals disease. Blesses soul and body. (Ps. ciii. 3.)

Healing art God's gift as much as any other.

Therefore seek Him in all want, trials, sorrows. He will never fail those who trust in Him.

THE HEART OF THOMAS TITT; OR, THE BIG MAN AND THE BIGGER.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER IV.



IT did not suit Tom's master—the chronometer-maker—to have any apprentices living in his house; and so he paid those he had so much a week, and let them find themselves. The chronometer-maker was not a stingy man; and he allowed his apprentices what was reasonable enough. It was from what he had for himself that Mr. Titt determined to provide for Mary Dacres, and this involved a good deal. In the first place, it necessitated a change of residence on Mr. Titt's part; and secondly, a change of diet. For, whereas Mr. Titt had had a good large bedroom on a second floor, he had now, for economy's sake, to get a little nearer the fixed stars, and such comets as might from time to time be out on the spree; in a word, he had to move to an attic, the dimensions of which seemed to be exactly suited to his diminutive size.

Moreover, he had to alter his usual bill of fare. It had never been very extravagant; it now had to become somewhat meagre. In fact, Mr. Titt's diet now dealt largely in porridge, and brown bread (whole-meal) and milk. He found out that these were the most nourishing and the cheapest articles of diet he could get; and as I am always thankful when I see virtue rewarded, I am glad to say Mr. Titt throve upon them. Not but that now and then he had a little something else, but they were always cheap dainties; and I believe that, on more than one occasion, they consisted of some ready-fried fish, which on a Saturday night appealed from a barrow to the dwellers in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road. But even these small economies did not prove sufficient; and after a couple of months' trial, our little friend was at his wits' end as to how he could meet his self-imposed liabilities, and carry out his scheme of completing Mary Dacres' education.

A neighbouring comet (for Mr. Titt might be said almost to go to roost among the stars) helped him to a solution of the difficulty.

In the first place, by keeping him awake. He could just watch its tail as he lay in bed, and watching naturally kept him awake; and a man thinks more practically when he is awake, than when he is asleep.

In the next place the comet helped him by being something strange. That heavenly body put its tail to a use that it had never contemplated. That tail had, no doubt, its own uses in its own sphere; but who would have ever thought of its having anything to do with the plans, perplexities, and contemplations of an attic dwarf?

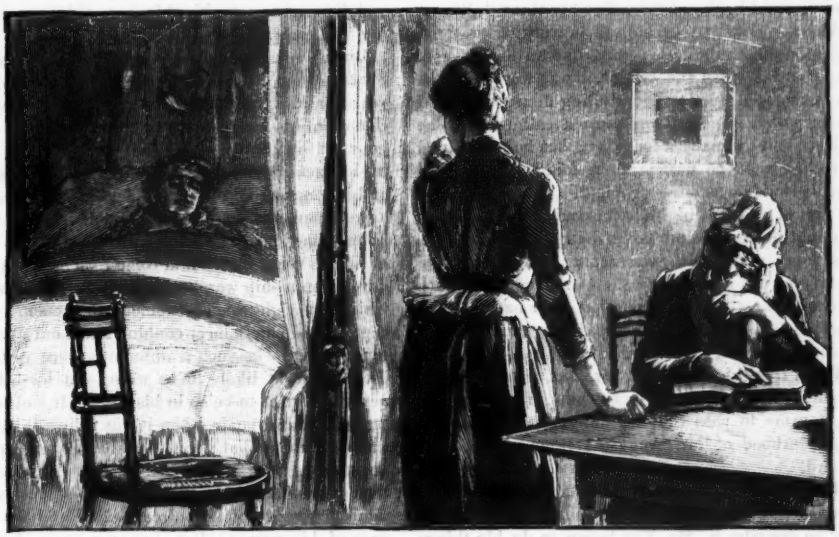
Nevertheless, it had. For, as I say, keeping Tom Titt awake, he was thoughtful; and his thoughts were upon how to carry out his provision for Mary Dacres. He was ready for any amount of self-sacrifice, he would have made mincemeat of himself if he could; but even that would not go far, for he seemed to himself so small that he would have only made a respectable sausage at the most.

The propinquity to strange things often suggests strange thoughts; and I must leave it to your own judgment, good reader, to settle whether the strange comet had anything to do with the strange notion which came into Mr. Titt's mind.

The thought uppermost was how to raise some money—a thought which many people find very perplexing, and incapable of being solved in a satisfactory manner.

Perhaps it came out of the comet; but certainly it came into Mr. Titt's mind that he would put himself into communication on the matter with Mr. Spring, his master. And he would make him a proposition. Mr. Tom Titt could not hide from himself, however modest he might be, that he was the steadiest hand in Mr. Spring's employment, and that his master set much store by his work. "Now," thought Titt, "if I make Mr. Spring an offer to remain with him for three years after my time has expired, provided he will allow me three shillings a week extra until I am out of my time; and if I allow him to deduct this money from mine during the three years I agree to serve him, perhaps he 'll advance it to me. 'T will be something strange for an apprentice to ask, I know; but," said he, cocking his eye at the comet, "that comet 's a strange thing, too; and if there are strange things in the heavens above, why should there not be in the earth beneath?"

In the nature of things, one cannot be astonished at a master's being somewhat surprised at an apprentice's making him such a proposition as that made by Thomas Titt to Mr. Spring. That gentleman could not make out what this extra money could be wanted for; he imagined that his apprentice must have been living too fast, whereas, indeed, he had been living almost, if we may so describe it, a little too slow.



"Together they watched by the bedside."—*p.* 309

Moreover, he was rather inquisitive as to what the money could be wanted for, which put poor Tom almost into a fix. However, the interview ended happily. If anything could have made Tom make a sudden start and shoot up a couple of inches, Mr. Spring's ending of the interview would have done it. "Well, Titt, I respect your silence, as you have given me your word that the money is wanted for a good purpose. My confidence in you has never yet been misplaced; and I feel that it never will be. You shall have the money. There will be no need for any legal paper. I trust your word, and if you remain with me, I hope you will have no reason to repent it." And so Mary Dacres, by a combination of little Titt's self-denial and credit, with the extraneous help of a comet, was provided for until such time as she should be able to do for herself.

And Tom Titt grew bigger and bigger—bigger and bigger as bigness is counted somewhere higher up

than amongst the comets and their tails, Somewhere where some folks would think that things were strange altogether, so unlike are they to things here; they would be all comets, and many-tailed comets, to them.

At last the time of Mary Dacres' education came to an end; and she was installed as assistant teacher to Miss Docens, which latter lady had faithfully kept her promise, and never let the young girl know by whom she was befriended—she only lived in the mystery that she had a friend; it never entered into her mind that the little fellow-weeper at the long past funeral could be thus befriending her through life.

And now, Mr. Titt set himself to work off the debt, which he did to the last penny, like an honest man. And the day when the last of it was worked off, he commemorated the fact by inviting himself to a real dinner. What many people would call a dinner, he had not had for many a long day; but he had a kind of feeling that he wished to feel independent, and that he could do as other people did, if he liked; and the fact of his knowing that he could do it, I have no doubt prevented him from doing it much more. You must remember, good reader, that our little friend was but human, and therefore compassed with infirmity like all of us; and what more natural than that he should feel that he could do as other and bigger people did, if he liked?

Freed from his liabilities, Mr. Titt felt warranted in going to live a little way out of town; and so, it came to pass that he came to reside in the neighbourhood of Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford.

There he established himself, and there on his small means he began to do big things. At first, if I may so describe it, Mr. Titt began to do big things in a small way—at least, small to the human eye.

There was that boy who was the pest of the place, fast going to the mischief, whose father could make nothing of him, nor his mother either, who had actually put out his tongue at his grandmother, though she was expected to leave him something; and who had gone so far as to square out before his uncle and aunt. Tom Titt took him with him to the sea for a week, and then himself took him up to town to his work every day, and called for him and brought him home, and so snatched him from the vice into which he was drifting; and that little man could lead this young wild Will about as though he had a hook in his nose. Yes, Tommy, you were a big man to get that lad to go so quietly with you, when it took two policemen on one occasion to work him along to the station, when he was taken up for window-breaking—as a pastime not recognised by the law.

I think, Tommy, you were big when you went yourself into the "pub," and fetched home your poor neighbour Jones; and went security for the rent for three months, so that he and his should not be turned into the streets; and when he became an altered man—that was *your* triumph, Tommy; it was through *you*, Tommy, that the drink that overcomes so many strong men, was in that case overcome—"honour to whom honour is due." That was a big man who drove discontent and misery, and starvation, and degradation, out of this house; and all that Tom Titt did by taking that drinking man in hand; at least, so it would be thought in that place where, as compared with folks' ideas about things here, all is strange—stranger far than the comets with their tails.

And so you kept on, and on, Mr. Titt, until you were well known up There as a big man; a man who tackled big jobs, and entered on great enterprises, and did mighty acts, big things, as things are counted big up There.

But we must get on with your life, Mr. Titt. Old Spring, your master, had now lived a good many years in the world, and sundry thoughts began to come into his head about going out of it; and before he went out of the world, he meant to go out of his business. Chronometer-making is anxious work, and Mr. Spring began to get nervous. He had had a great name in his day; he had it now; and what if anything should go wrong with any of his instruments? What if it should come to a question, some day, when a ship was in the region of sunken rocks, which was right, his chronometer or the sun? for the captain and chief officer couldn't make out at all how there came to be such a difference since yesterday; the sun wasn't likely to be wrong—at least, he had never known it to be so in his time. It looked a bit queer now and again when it was eclipsed, but folks knew all about that; but there had never been any question as to its keeping its time. All these ideas took possession of Mr. Spring's mind—principally, no doubt, owing to his impaired health, and the weakness of his nerves; but, however groundless, they were real to him; and he acted accordingly.

There was but one man to whom he could entrust his business. There were plenty who would buy it; who just wanted the name of it; and who would most likely make ducks and drakes of that name before long. But Mr. Spring had taken nearly half a century to build up his good name; and he did not mean in perhaps as many weeks to throw it away.

There was one man whom he could trust, and that one was Mr. Titt, his foreman. He should have the business, if they could come to a suitable arrangement. And this they easily did. Mr. Spring was to leave his name in the business, and for three years he was to have half the profits, and for three years a quarter, and then the business was to be wholly Mr. Titt's. And so Mr. Thomas Titt's being "diddled," and "dished," and "done for," meant his being installed as the real owner of the business of John Spring, chronometer-maker to the Admiralty.

It was at this period of his life—at the commencement of his partnership with Mr. Spring—that we find Mr. Titt ensconced in Tittsville, a snug little villa in the immediate neighbourhood of his old abode, and also of Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford, the big man, at least ostensibly, of the place.

XUM

If Tittsville had been built for its owner alone, it would, no doubt, have been a very little house. But it was built for Mr. Titt's heart, and not merely for his body; and for the ideas, and feelings, and affections, which were in Mr. Titt's heart. Mr. Titt looked on to the future. He knew that the business was a good one. By adding first-class watchmaking to it, he believed that he could make it much larger; and he had visions of using his money, and his house, for big purposes, for purposes outside himself and his own little wants. That long diet of porridge and brown bread had made him singularly independent of mere earthly comforts; and so had his long sojourn, I might almost say, amongst the stars.

It was no wonder that the little man had great ideas, for, in truth, he had entered into great relationships, and had got hold of big truths, and found that he could live, and move, and act, in spheres of real greatness. Here he need not be a dwarf, here he need not be weak, here he need not fear being despised, here this avenue and that to greatness—to real greatness—were not shut up to him; he had immensity before him, and wonderfully he enjoyed it, too. His eyes were open to realities, he knew what was shadow and what was substance; what was only opinion, and what was truth; what was the make-believe of honour and position, and what these things were themselves. And all this had its good effect upon him; he grew in confidence and in comfort, and reached out to bigger and bigger things.

All the side of the railroad where our little friend lived might have been called Tittsville, so entirely did this little man's influence pervade it; and so completely did he dwell in, I might almost say, every home.

As to his own house — Tittsville proper — the station-master never knew who would be there during the week, in the way of queer people.

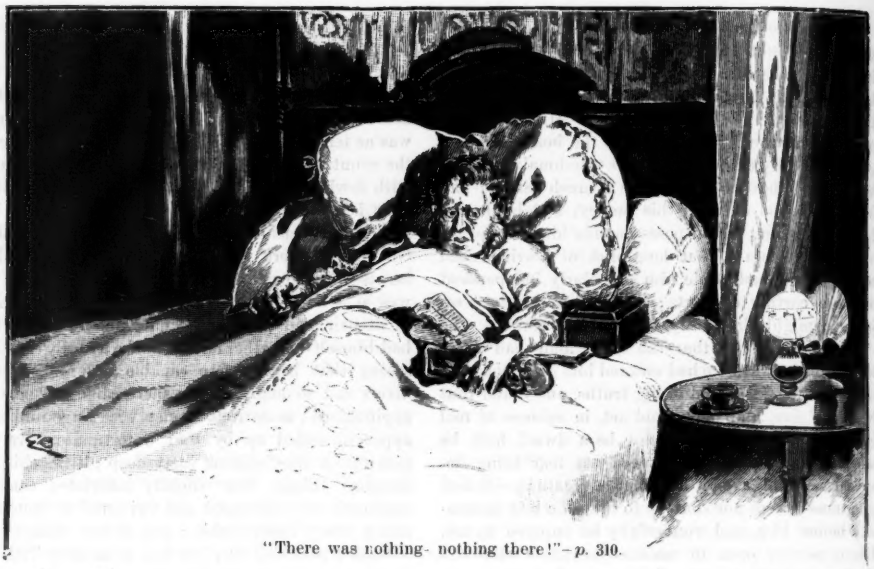
Mr. Titt seemed to have the knack of finding out queer people in London—anyhow, people who were not generally asked down to such a nice house as Tittsville; and who, if they had by any miracle got down to Mr. Swellingford's, would have been pitched out of the grounds with a pitchfork, and out of the house with the tongs. Mr. Titt had a wonderful housekeeper, and she seconded him in all his plans for doing good. When he was in need of such a functionary, he advertised for one, and in his simplicity brought upon himself much trouble, especially as he had incautiously given the address. Determined to get a head of the establishment who would be one with him in entertaining such folk as he chose to give rest for a while for the sole of their foot at Tittsville, he committed the amazing imprudence of advertising for "a lady with a heart, to preside over a bachelor's establishment."

My dear reader, can you imagine what the poor man brought upon himself? Innumerable were the answers he received. They came on coloured paper and plain; they came marked "Private and Confidential," and they came with devices of the real thing, with an arrow stuck through it, as much as to tell Mr. Titt that he had indeed hit the mark, and that the bow drawn at a venture had only too well done its work. There was the lady who had "a heart for any fate," and the one whose consistency was as tender as a spring chicken (this lady lived in the country, and helped to supply Leadenhall market with fowls), and didn't want asparagus to set it off (this lady had no garden, but a neighbour of hers had, and occasionally helped on Covent Garden). Oh dear! There was such a variety of excellent hearts—of nonsuch hearts—that poor Mr. Titt, who was of a humble mind, tapped his own little heart in despair, and wondered what kind of a heart he had himself—whether it must not be awfully deficient, seeing that hearts were capable of excellences so divers and so many. Then there came the personal applications: monstrous women with huge umbrellas appeared, called up by that unfortunate advertisement from the feminine vasty deep; little chirping, hopping things, like slightly inebriated canaries, appeared, who chirruped and twittered to show they had a cheery heart within; and, at last, things came to such a pass that Mr. Titt had to shut up Tittsville for a week, and betake himself to the seaside, where, without any advertising at all, he found what he wanted, in the shape of the middle-aged widow lady at whose house he lodged, and who was about to give up the lodging-house line of life; and who, from having people continually coming and going, was quite ready for any guests whom Mr. Titt might choose to invite.

The siege of Tittsville being raised, that hospitable mansion opened its door to many a poor stricken one, and there did little Titt grasp with a strong hand the poor desponding one, and start him or her afresh again, and rest the poor, weary, and worn, and brain-addled one, and send him or her out again into the battle of life, furnished afresh for the strife which they all must wage.

I wonder what those who dwell high up, above that comet's tail, thought of these proceedings of Mr. Titt? I wonder what opinion they had of himself? I wonder, when they looked upon the grandeur of Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford, aye, and of many a prince and potentate of the world, and compared their might and power with that of Mr. Titt of Tittsville, which they thought the biggest and the strongest man? I believe they thought Titt; there was a sense in which Mr. Swellingford was big, there was another and a higher sense in which Mr. Thomas Titt was bigger.

So time passed on; Her Majesty's ships were kept straight by Mr. Titt's chronometers; and though they and the sun agreed that there should be always some difference between them, on the whole they got on very well together. Business prospered. Titt and the widow benefited mankind; and Titt lived in domestic peace, for the widow was an honourable woman, and took no advantage of her favourable strategic position to capture and bear off as spoil of war the little man whose house she kept.



"There was nothing—nothing there!"—*p.* 310.

Meanwhile, what had become of our friend Mary Dacres? She too was prospering in the world. A widow lady, uncommonly like the one who did the honours at Tittsville, used to take lodgings now and again for the benefit of her health in the village where Mary lived, and this widow formed a great intimacy with the young girl, and got her a place as companion where there was not too much to do, and where the salary was comfortably sufficient; in fact, little Polly Dacres that was, lived the life of a lady; and the good widow was always her friend.

But her old and earliest friend—the friend who wept with her at the funeral of her little brother, mingling his tears with hers—she never saw. He wrote to her now and again, but in person never came. Many a time she wished to see him, but he never seemed to take the hints she gave.

No change came over the outward form of our little friend, as time wore on; only his eyes became more full of human and of heavenly love, and a peace ineffable grew up upon his face. But a great change came over Mary Dacres—the change of development—the change of expansion—the blooming of the bud—the noontide of the dawn. Many wanted to marry her, but none found favour with her; she was not for marriage; and none could tell the reason why.

Ah, reader, though she knew it not, Mary Dacres had given away her heart long, long ago. She gave it to the tears which mingled with her own, and she never took it back. There are seeds which lie long, long in the ground, because circumstances are against their development into fruit and flower, but they are seeds still. In them are all the potentialities of all that after their kind has been, or can be; and let them be freed from the too heavy pressure of the superincumbent earth, and they will throw out both root and shoot, and flower and fruit—such was the love of Mary Dacres; circumstances were against it—it had no chance of development, but there it was; and who can tell where and when such seeds will sprout?

All Mary Dacres' store in the way of love were some letters, which certainly were not love-letters as we should call them—not one of them had a superlative degree—there was no superabundance of adjectives; there were no symbolic but unsatisfying x x x x's to which mystic meanings were attached. In a breach-of-promise case, a lawyer would not have given twopence for the lot. But they were precious to Mary Dacres; and some of them had to be pasted at the back, for they had fallen into ugly cracks from having been read so often.

Letters, like flowers, and human folk, and some say even gems, are male and female; and as Mary Dacres had these few male letters, so had Mr. Thomas Titt some few female ones. He had a treasure-box—the little man was so far like a little child—but, unlike the little child's, the treasure-box had in it great elements of grief.

The letters were such as Mary Dacres felt that she could write him under the circumstances in which she was placed. His had gradually become less and less of the old boy-and-girl letter—less and less even of the grown-up man's letter. They had become designedly short; for, though he had a hard struggle before he could master the thought, and make it his own, he wished her as much as possible to forget him, and to marry, if opportunity occurred, someone in his opinion more suitable to her than he

could ever be—even supposing she could love such as he.

But the letters, such as they were, were precious. Meanwhile, time was passing on, and bringing all sorts of things with it. Amongst the rest, it brought low fever to the side of the railway by which Tittsville was built. And it brought it to Mr. Titt himself.

There he lay, fever strong upon him now and again, but evermore the same sweet peace on his countenance, and the same look of love in his eye. And he was sick nigh unto death, and his life would have passed from him without Mary Dacres ever knowing the mystery of how or why it was that he left her all he had, with the exception of what he left in charities, and the provision he made for the faithful widow, who had been not only harmless, but also faithful and true up to the very end, had it not been that, the fever running high one night, and delirium coming on, the sick man let out the whole secret of his life and soul, in such-wise that the faithful widow sitting by his side took it all in, and, moreover, wrote it all down.

Thus it came out, in various conversations supposed to be held with Miss Docens, how it was he who had arranged all for Mary's caretaking as a child; what privations he had undergone for her sake; and—what the widow well knew, for she had been the agent in it—how Mary was really the mistress, and the one she lived with the companion; and how her large allowance came out of Mr. Titt's pocket. Thus, too, it came out why he had almost dropped correspondence with her when she came to womanhood. Looking at his own physical infirmities, he thought himself unworthy of her; and he dreaded the idea of love growing up between them.

For her sake he had fought with himself; and, big man as he was, conquered himself; and now that he was about to die, it might be said to be in the arms of Victory. The one who conquers himself is the greatest conqueror of all.

I don't excuse the good widow. I think I should not have been inclined to have undertaken the responsibility myself; but women will often do, especially in matters where the heart is concerned, what men would not. The widow sent for Mary Dacres, and together they watched by the bedside for the few short hours which seemed to remain.

And there Mary heard with her own ears all that the widow had heard before; and, looking upon that flushed but peaceful face, saw the only one she had ever loved. The far-off funeral tear was now an ocean that was girdling and beating upon her heart.

The fever never left the sick man, but he had consciousness enough to know that there was a new and beautiful face near him. He knew that a white soft hand held his; he knew that he heard another voice save that of his widowed friend; and in that voice he seemed to find exceeding joy. He was under the impression that the watcher was another-world being, sent to help him in his last hours, and be with him as he parted from all of earth. That voice—ah! he knew that voice. Yes, Mary had died, and he had never heard of it; and now she was come for him, and he smiled upon her another-world smile, and closed his eyes—but not in death, only in a long, long sleep, which seemed like death.

What passed in that sleep, who can tell? but so it was that it did not seem strange to the sick man that his hand should be held by one whose features he knew full well; more amazing still, that his forehead should be kissed by the lips of the one to whom the hands belonged. Perhaps if he had not looked still dazed this might never have happened; and, indeed, he looked dazed enough to warrant Mary Dacres in thinking that he would not know what she had done.

Another long sleep, and the waking this time was to life and the beginnings of health; and a new babyhood indeed of weakness, but also a new manhood—heart-life, home-life, were to be his. The shedding of a sympathetic tear, long years gone by, was to open a fountain of life in his home and in his heart; and the waters, gathered long behind the cold, hard rocks, now overflowed, and they were not to dry up—even with death itself. Mary Dacres and the good widow never left Tittsville again. The first remained there as his wife—the other as an honoured and a helpful friend; and if height were to be measured by happiness, Mr. Titt must have been chopped up into at least six pieces to have brought him down to the ordinary stature of man. If, too, in doing good, Mr. Thomas Titt had been a big man before, he was twice as big now. Out of his own blessedness he blessed others to the full, and when at last he died (as even the biggest of us must do), the shadow of the great church tower, reared by his munificence, fell on the large monument of the little man. Those who loved him so well, hid in death what had been his bodily insignificance in life.

The great church tower, with its peal of bells, was one of the big things that he had done; and the sounds of these bells played around his tomb as though they were glad to make music, even round the stone that covered his remains.

Augustus Roundabut Swellingford, since I wrote the last few lines ending with the death of a little body, but the fresh and new life of a big soul, I have been out in the open air. It is well that I should have been, before I come back to you. It is well that there should have been a break, lest any of the savour of that big soul should by any chance cleave unto you, or its atmosphere might lend you an air of false importance, and make *you* look big. Augustus, shall I tell you what I saw out in the open? A May tree, a crooked little tree with the first of the May out upon it. There were many trees statelier and bigger not far off, but the crooked May tree drew me to it. It was a propheey of all that comes

with spring. Augustus, it spake of little Tom Titt, but it said nothing concerning *you*.

But *I* must say something. The folk who have heard something about your beginning will naturally expect to hear something about your end.

It is not much I have to tell them; but, such as it is, they shall have it.

When first you did life the honour of entering it, you were large, and large you continued, in one sense, up to the very end.

Yes! Mr. Swellingford became a great man upon the Stock Exchange. He was a "bull" and a "bear" up and down for many a year, always or nearly always catching whatever he tossed up; and hugging tight whatever he trampled down, but stooped to pick up again and make his own. He was big almost to his very heart's content, and that is saying a great deal.

Not only did Mr. Swellingford entertain a Lord Mayor at dinner, but he became a Lord Mayor himself, and concentrated in his own person all the glory of robe and badge, and the fur cap, and mace, and sword.

By degrees all his side of the railroad became Mr. Swellingford's; by degrees he got such an interest in certain stocks that he could knock them about as he pleased; people drove down from London in their carriages to his dinner-parties, which really were given for himself, and not for them at all.

Mr. Swellingford's name became great in the City. He was reported to be a millionaire, and he encouraged the report.

But Mr. Swellingford's soul lay a poor weazened, shrunken, narrow, miserable thing within his great body, and in his great house—the husky part of Mr. Swellingford was very big, the kernel part was very small.

The eyes above the comet could see nothing within the big man, nothing but the fact that there was a something there which was shrivelled: they saw a "might have been," and they saw a "was not."

Swellingford filled the circle in which he moved in the City; Swellingford was the biggest man in the parish where he lived; Swellingford was the member for the borough close at hand. But Swellingford had no place in human hearts, and there was a world in which Swellingford did not live or move at all—the world of true humanities; the world of spiritual affinities; the world of feelings and spiritual life—there he was a deformed and miserable dwarf.

There is such a thing as growing smaller and smaller, and shrinking and shrinking, in the life of the soul. So shrank Mr. Augustus Swellingford, until in that world which lies outside "the City," and outside Mr. Swellingford's side of the railway, you would have had to hunt diligently for Mr. Swellingford, ere you could have found him.

And when you had found him, you would have asked yourself the question whether this was what was originally intended to be a man?

And for him, too, there came the inevitable hour. Like the rich man of old, he had to die and be buried.

And he did die; but not such a death as you and I, good reader, would like to die. On his death-bed he felt himself shrinking, shrinking—everything seemed so vast, and he seemed so small; he wanted to catch at something, at somebody—his independence was all gone. No angel had come for him! He was alone!

With his banker's book, and the list of his securities, he tried to comfort himself; but somehow the figures all seemed round O's; there was nothing—nothing there. He even ran his eye over his will; but that only told of what he had to *leave;* and what comfort could there be there?

And now, all the things in which he might have been great came before his eyes. What Tom Titt knew in life, Swellingford came to know in death, but too late; with what was truly the big, the great, he had no part.

In a fit of desperation, he had down his lawyer, and remade the will, leaving every penny he had to charities, hoping in that way he might get a grip of the real, and be somebody in another life; but no one blessed him for this, and his relatives cursed him for it.

Even he himself felt that this could do but little good, and that he was departing into eternity a shrivelled soul.

Mr. Augustus Roundabut Swellingford died—not a jot of his bigness abated here, but with shrivelled miserableness There—the There whither he was going; and *There* was the real measure of things and men. He died knowing that he was going to the infinitely Great, and that he was infinitely small.

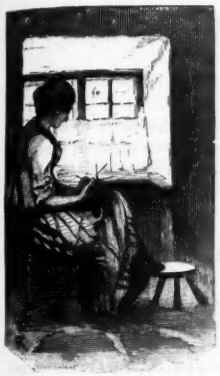
It was the end of one of earth's big men, even as Mr. Thomas Titt's was the death of one of heaven's big ones. Ah, yes! there *are*

THE BIG MAN, AND THE BIGGER!



"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



WE have read of a certain kind of diamond, which, having been exposed for a while to the light of the sun, will emit light when taken away into darkness. So many a life, numbered by the Lord of all among His jewels, has caught the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness, and is shining for Jesus amid circumstances of surrounding gloom. Well-known workers, busy servants of Christ, active and energetic lives, are not the only ones to whom comes the Divine bidding, "Let your light shine;" you also must have place and part in this bright and glorious ministry, even though mists may seem to linger around your lot. Your removal from outside work does not mean that you are to be a cumberer of the ground; you can serve and glorify the Master upon your sick-bed as truly as the brethren work for Him who bear the burden and heat of the day.

The greatest trial of all is to do nothing, to feel oneself useless and existing in vain. If such a feeling has ever come to you, resist it as an evil temptation, as thankless complaining, and utter falsehood. No heart that loves God exists in vain, no life that is hidden within the Rock of Ages can be useless and worthless. And should Satan repeat the whisper, silence the thought by taking the golden prescription—

"Do something for somebody, quick."

"Yes, indeed," you may be inclined to sigh, "how I only wish I *could;* but I am far too infirm to be helpful. I can neither serve God nor my neighbours." Are you too infirm to give to those around you the best and truest wealth—the blessing of *love?* If you outpour to others the sincere and fervent love of your heart, you are helping them more than you understand—you are reflecting to deathless souls that sure and strong love which yearns over them, and which keeps aglow the tenderness in your heart and life.

Invalids have been as helpful before now as many a public standard-bearer. Nobody likes to say "No" to a sufferer; thus many a promise of good has been gained, many an inspiring message dropped by the way, many a Christ-like pleading has obtained response, where from lips less feeble it might have been spoken in vain. We have heard of an invalid teaching a Bible-class from her couch of weakness; of another composing letters and messages to bring home the Gospel to the heart; of another taking charge of a number of birds without, that learned to look upon her as a mindful and tender friend, and relied in their helplessness upon her own. What a gracious ministry may be found in sewing, knitting, mending, for the orphan, and some life yet more needy than ours, and in preparing texts for the Flower Mission, and designs to brighten school-rooms and bare, unsightly walls!

There is always *something* the weakest of us can do for our God and for our brethren. A great mission-worker among the Indians, when laid on a bed of weakness, busied himself in teaching a young learner his letters, and remarked, "I have often prayed to God to make me useful. I can no more preach the Gospel, but He leaves me strength enough to teach this child his alphabet." There is one sick-room where, could we enter, we should see a list of "Requests for Prayer" placed within sight of the invalid. A list is regularly forwarded to her of the requests that have been handed in and offered up at a neighbouring prayer-meeting, and then this sweet, helpful soul takes up the petitions, and echoes them before His mercy-seat Who is the hearer and answerer of prayer. Is this feeble one too infirm to be a fellow-worker with the Infinite Compassion?

Yet you may whisper, "I am too weak to serve, too tired sometimes to pray." Then the Lord, Who knows what you *cannot* do, O yearning heart, as well as what you *can*, has a ministry for you still. *Remember* Him, keep your gaze on Jesus, do and bear His all-loving will—not patiently alone, but thankfully, praisefully, triumphantly. *Rest in the Lord*, and let your restfulness, your faith, your peace, soothe and calm many a troubled heart around you, many a careworn life. Thus may you through the darkness be shining for the Master; the shadow of His wing is sheltering your light, lest the blast of affliction should quench it. Rather let His face behold that the winds of sorrow but fan its radiant glow—let your light shine through pains and tears, till the mists uprise, the day dawn, and the darkness eternally flee away.

M. S. H.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

37. What particulars are given as to the date when St. John the Baptist commenced his ministry in the wilderness?

38. Upon what did the Jews rely so much for their acceptance by God, and against which both our blessed Lord and also St. John the Baptist warned them?

39. In what way did St. John the Baptist prepare the way for the coming of our Lord?

40. What was there in St. John's reception of the Pharisees and Sadducees which showed his distrust of them?

41. What important lesson comes to us from the temptation of our blessed Lord?

42. What is said by St. Luke in reference to our Lord's temptation which shows that He was tempted on more than one occasion?

43. In what way did the Nazarenes manifest their rejection of Christ?

44. How can our Lord's reply to Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," be looked upon as a rejection of the temptation?

45. From what passage should we gather that our blessed Lord, before His public ministry, was looked upon as a great teacher?

46. What was the effect of Christ's preaching in the synagogue at Capernaum?

47. Which of the apostles did Jesus visit at his own home, and what took place there?

48. What remark does St. Luke make showing the manner in which our Lord healed many who were sick?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 233.

25. "Among those who are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." (St. Luke i. 76; vii. 28.)

26. "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is *Christ the Lord*." (St. Luke ii. 11.)

27. The parable of the Good Shepherd, in which is set forth the contrast of the conduct of hired servants and those who like David of old watched over their own sheep. (St. Luke ii. 8; St. John x. 11, 12.)

28. David, who writes, "The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore I shall not want." (Ps. xxiii. 1.)

29. We are told that Simeon was taught to know this by the Holy Spirit. (St. Luke ii. 27.)

30. That it should be as a light to the Gentile world, and not to the Jewish nation only. (St. Luke ii. 32.)

31. Because at that age Jewish boys were called "Sons of the Law," and were allowed to attend the Passover feast. (St. Luke ii. 42.)

32. When speaking to His mother in the Temple, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (St. Luke ii. 49.)

33. Because the Scribes and Doctors of the Law held classes in the rooms of the Temple for instructing young people in the Law. (St. Luke ii. 46.)

34. That she was very poor, otherwise her offering should have been a lamb. (St. Luke ii. 24; Lev. xii. 8.)

35. He was to be found "lying in a manger" (St. Luke ii. 12.)

36. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and *redeemed* His people." (St. Luke i. 68.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

HELPING HANDS FOR SEAMEN.



A SAILOR'S OFFERING.

"OH, Lord, advertise Thy love through us." Such was the prayer we heard recently offered by the leader of a meeting, aglow with earnest zeal; it was a forcible expression, bringing home vividly to the heart the truth that every Christian is to be an "advertisement"—known and read of all men — of the Master's goodness and compassion. Miss Child, of the Sailors' Welcome Home, Ratcliffe Highway, is still holding up the flag of Gospel truth, still extending practical sympathy in the midst of seafaring wanderers; and the free suppers provided in the winter, the gifts of books and warm articles, the letters written to sailors in different ports, combine to help forward Christian work among Englishmen and foreigners alike. A man rushed into this institute one day, wanting to sell his watch and tools for drink. The counsel and prayers of one of the workers so calmed and affected him, that he also was led to pray, and was saved from falling back into the intemperate career which was his besetting temptation. The sailors on their voyages are missionaries themselves, as was evidenced when a stranger entered the Home to ask after a shipmate who had sailed with him two years since, and who had proved a blessing to the ship, his consistent example often preventing evil words. The stranger became himself surrounded



AN INTERNATIONAL TEA-PARTY AT THE "WELCOME HOME."

by the good influences of the Home, thanks to his memory of the Christian sailor whom he had met on board. Mr. R. H. Hunter, of 2, Park Circus, Glasgow, writes to acquaint us with a new work, started on behalf of the orphan children of sailors. Trustees will seek out deserving cases, and personally deal with the funds, assisting the widowed mother to bring up her child, or placing the orphan in a suitable home. If prospered, the "Sailors' Orphan Society" will also care for the needs of fishermen's children. The following cases, among others, have been already aided:—The family of a carpenter who perished with his ship; the little daughter of a man who raised himself from before the mast to be captain, spent his savings to buy instruments, but was lost in a gale; and the children of a chief steward and chief engineer. Help is guaranteed by this Society for twelve months at a time, each case being reviewed when the year expires.

THE HIDDEN BIBLE.

Many who can make but a poor show to our mortal sight have been used by God to prove what great things He can do through the weak and poor of this world. "I have come from the grave of my best friend," said a minister, who had laid to rest all that was mortal of a poor old pensioner. "H. was only a poor man, but he managed to pay the rent of two pews at our place, and these pews he filled with the young and with strangers. In the week he would go about inviting strangers to come in and hear the Gospel, and then he saw they had a seat and a warm welcome. Many a conversion has been wrought by means of that humble old pensioner." Surely for each and all of us there is a heavenly mission, if only we yearn and pray for a place among those who are fellow-workers with the Lord. A colporteur in an Austrian district applied to the Bible Society for employment. He was short, somewhat deformed, feeble-looking, and the work needs health and vigour, so the agent was inclined to think him unsuitable; but he pleaded to be tried for a month, and the arrangement was made. "A Bible brought light to my father and mother," he said; "it was the treasure of our home, and we hid it so securely that the authorities could never find it, though, when my parents no longer went to mass, they suspected we possessed a Bible. They even turned up the garden in their search, but they never succeeded in taking our treasure away. The Bible has done so much for us that I long to spread it far and wide." In a month that colporteur had exceeded the usual rate of sales; his fervour, his devotion were tireless—fitness of soul in him triumphed over unfitness of body. If the parents rejected him, he would read God's Word to the children; in the end, he laid down his life for his brethren, for he persisted in proclaiming Christ to a man sick of an infectious fever, which fastened upon him when the labourer's task was done.

FOR THE STUDY AND THE FIRESIDE.

In view of the fact that the International Sunday-school lessons for this year are taken from the third Gospel, the issue by Messrs. Nisbet of the second and third volumes of the "Biblical Illustrator" on St. Luke is specially interesting to teachers. Conductors of Bible-classes who follow the International Series will find these volumes full of notes particularly suggestive to them. The thoroughness with which the work is done may be estimated by the fact that no fewer than eighty-eight pages are devoted to illustrative references to the parable

of the prodigal son, although the pages are by no means small ones. Preachers who do not already know this series should make a point of procuring the three volumes on St. Luke's Gospel. Dr. Pentecost, too, has been writing on St. Luke, specially on the chapters selected for the International lessons, and teachers may well find in some of his notes help on points of detail, which it is, of course, impossible for us to give in our "Scripture Lessons." Dr. Pentecost's volume is published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, who also send us the annual volume of "The Mother's Friend," admirably edited by that devoted friend of all mothers, Mrs. G. S. Reany. To "Miss Meredith," one of two stories from the same publishers, a pathetic interest is given by the death of the author, Miss Amy Levy, between the writing and the publication of the book. The story is a pretty one, attractive principally in the new setting it gives to a favourite turn of plot, but exhibiting within small compass some very clever character-studies. Its companion volume is "A Snow Flower," by Hester Day, in which the old landlady and the younger of her two girl-lodgers are wonderfully typical characters, the one of matured experience and the other of girlish impulsiveness. Of all explorations the most interesting to the Christian and Bible student must, of course, be that of the land whose soil was trodden by our Lord. Most heartily, then, do we welcome Major Conder's valuable work on Palestine which has just been published by Messrs. G. Philip and Son, as one of a series dealing with "The World's Great Explorers and Explorations." Major Conder's graphic account of the methods adopted by the survey party of which he was leader, and of the results achieved, will be read with great interest by all lovers of the Bible stories. What Major Conder says of his own experience as an explorer is true, though of course only in a smaller degree, for all who carefully follow him in his description of his work and its results. "There is hardly an historic chapter," he says, speaking of the relation between exploration and the study of the Bible, "which I was not able to read with the scene of the events recorded before my eyes; there is not a poetic line in the Old Testament which is not more vividly brought home by a memory of Eastern scenery and life." As a prize or present to an elder Sunday-scholar this work would be most useful. How great the need for, and how wide the scope of, the charitable institutions and agencies of the Metropolis, may be gathered, even at a glance, from the new edition of the "Charities Register and Digest," which has just been published by Messrs. Longmans and the Charity Organisation Society, whose secretary, Mr. C. S. Loch, supplies a valuable introduction to the work. By far the most complete and thoroughly classified work of the kind that we have seen, this is a volume that should find a place in the library of every minister and Christian worker in London.

"THE DEADLIEST HERESY."

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse said once that the deadliest heresy is to be *unloving*. If the boys and girls of the present day grow up heretics in this unkindly sense, it will not be the fault of the many gentle agencies that are circling their young lives with blessing. Surely never did Christian solicitude hearken more earnestly to the cry of the children! Hearts cannot be content that little scholars should lack food and clothes, and that the lambs, on whose young lives rests the "celestial benison," should be oppressed by cares and sorrows that thoughtful sympathy can uplift. We would remind our readers of the Marylebone "Old Clo'" Fund, which helps so many of the poorest of our school children. Every application for garments has to be vouched for as deserving by a teacher, and the committee represents both Board and voluntary schools. The Hon. Sec. of this society, Mr. George Macdonald, 50, Arundel Square, N., informs us that many readers of THE QUIVER have sent parcels, but these could not be individually acknowledged, as addresses were omitted. "Might I ask you," he writes, "to thank them through your columns?" Old clothes and new contributions are still urgently required, and we shall procure more room in our store-cupboards, more warmth within our souls, and more smiles upon little faces, if we turn out the disused garments of our household in favour of the "Old Clo'" committee. The Children's Industrial and Floricultural Society sets hands, and brains, and hearts to work in various helpful ways. The president



THE CHILDREN'S WINDOW.
"Those who raise the best plants are rewarded."—*p.* 315.

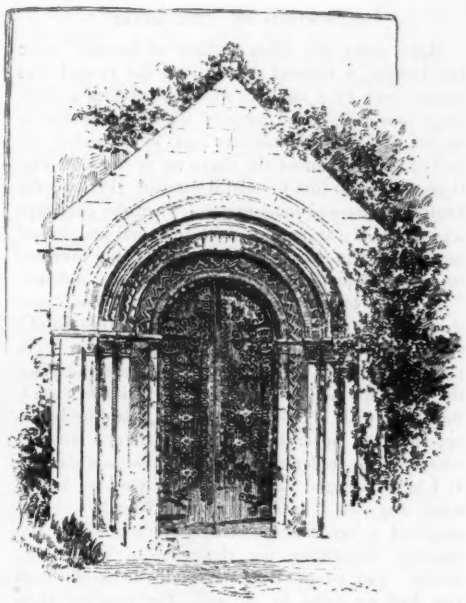
is F. W. Isaacson, Esq., M.P., and particulars may be obtained at 71, Grosvenor Street, Oxford Street, E. Prizes are given from time to time for fretwork, sewing, cookery, maps, models, dolls, etc., and the culture of flowers is specially encouraged. Several bulbs are given to the children, with suitable instructions, and those who raise the best plants are rewarded. The workers give their services from a desire to benefit the young and to brighten their lives. Who shall judge of the influences in poor and struggling homes of spring's sweet blossoms—shining crocuses or hyacinths, or lovely "venturous snowdrops?"

"CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT."

Many of our readers went last summer, no doubt, over some of the wonderful lighthouses that are the pride of their keepers, the hope of those voyaging across the waters, and the salvation of countless lives. What thought and ingenuity have been spent upon the lamps and prisms and machinery, and how clear and careful are the instructions: "Light the lamps every evening at sunset, and keep them constantly burning, bright and clear, till sunrising." So over the darkness of the sea there comes faithfully, regularly, the flashing light, without which so many would make mistakes and be lost and destroyed. We heard of a dear young Christian who, when tenderly asked if she loved Jesus, was moved to tears, for she said in her heart, "What a dim light mine must be if others are not sure that I love Jesus!" The Master's disciples are children of light, walking in eternal sunshine, reflecting the brightness of His face; but they can only mirror His brightness and send it gleaming out to the perplexed and wandering, as their lamps are constantly relit by means of prayer. "Let your light shine" is His abiding word to the humblest soul wherein His own light is kindled. A poor despondent man once said, "I have no more influence than a farthing rushlight," but he was aptly reminded that a farthing rushlight is by no means without influence; badly used, it can set a house on fire, or burn down a haystack—rightly used, it can be helpful in many a needful home-ministry, and it can enable human vision to read a chapter in God's Word.

"ANCIENT CHURCH IRONWORK."

The paper on this subject which we gave on page 104 of our December number did not profess to exhaust the list of examples. To do that would manifestly be impossible in the space at our disposal. There is little room for wonder, then, that some very interesting specimens of church ironwork escaped notice. We are enabled, thanks to the kindness of the Rev. E. Wrenford, to give an illustration this month of one of the most interesting of these omitted examples—the south porch of Sempringham Abbey Church, Lincolnshire. The porch itself is a



SOUTH PORCH, SEMPRINGHAM ABBEY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

wonderful instance of well-preserved Norman work, valuable on that account alone, and built at least eight hundred years ago. The old door within the porch is covered with scrolls of ironwork, said to be of Danish origin. The wonderful preservation of porch and door is no doubt due to the protection afforded by a chamber over the porch, which has now been removed. The historical associations of this curious old fen-country church, into which we cannot now enter, are well worth studying.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

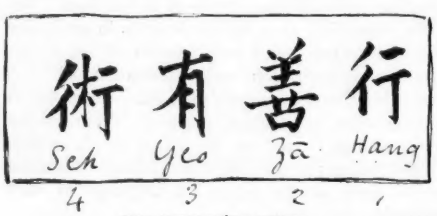
Canon Bright's recent volume of sermons, published under the collective title of "The Incarnation as a Motive Power" (Rivingtons), will be sure to find many appreciative readers. The combined force and grace of style of which Dr. Bright is so thoroughly master, together with that accuracy of definition which leaves no room for mistake as to the Canon's meaning and views, are fully exemplified in this little volume. It is quite possible that many of our readers will be unable, like ourselves, to subscribe to everything contained in this book; but at the same time they will be heartily in sympathy with the general spirit and purpose of these discourses, in exposition and illustration of that great Christian doctrine which in the present day is being assailed in various quarters. We therefore thank Canon Bright for his latest work, which, without being polemical in tone, enforces this great central truth of the Gospel in language at once convincing and devotional.

"THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT."

Many years ago, when "affairs of honour" were the fashion, a faithful preacher of the Gospel was visited once by a stranger who handed him a challenge to a duel. The cause of offence was stated to be the fact that the minister had, in the pulpit, attacked and denounced the character of the man who thus challenged him to mortal combat. Perhaps the visitor experienced some surprise when the challenge was accepted; at any rate, both principal and second must have felt that to gain the advantage over one so unaccustomed to arms would not be difficult. "We leave to you the choice of the weapons," said the visitor, politely. "I shall fight with the sword," was the minister's reply; and arrangements were made accordingly. At the appointed time and place the principals met, one armed with a veritable sword, the other with his Bible. "Friend," said he to his opponent, "I never heard of you before a stranger waited on me to demand satisfaction on your behalf. If I have wronged you, I am heartily sorry; but in what way can I have given you offence?"—"You preached a sermon the other evening," was the answer, "describing my character in every particular; you attacked me personally in public, and you had no right to do so." The minister then remembered he had been trying to describe the state of the transgressor, the soul without God and following the ways of evil. "I only preached what I find in God's Word," he told his opponent, and, turning to his Bible, he read aloud text after text concerning the condition of the sinner and those who oppose themselves to God. These passages personally convicted the heart that a little while since had so hotly resented Scriptural truth. This singular interview was the means that led to that soul's salvation, and thus did the sword of the Spirit win another glorious conflict, and triumph over passion, iniquity, and pride.

A PRESENT FROM NAN-KING.

The Viceroy of Nan-King, Tseng-kuo-chüan, uncle to the well-known Marquis Tseng, has lately addressed a letter of cordial gratitude to the Shanghai Famine Relief Committee for their efforts on behalf of his sorely distressed countrymen. He has also presented to each member of the Committee a wall-tablet, bearing a complimentary inscription. There is one in my view as I write, a board forty-five by eighteen inches, richly faced with gilding, from which stand out very handsomely four Chinese characters which express, "Full of schemes of benevolence." At first sight this may seem an insignificant token of appreciation; but in consideration of the long-standing anti-foreign prejudices of the Chinese, we hail the Viceroy's action with sincere satisfaction. Its importance is, we think, illustrated by the remonstrances addressed to him by co-officials concerning a deed of "such unprecedented condescension."



THE VICEROY'S TABLET.

A PROTESTANT ORPHANAGE AT FLORENCE.

This institution exists at 2, Via del Gignolo, fuori Porta alle Croce, to provide a refuge for orphans of Protestant Italians, and to educate on moderate terms the daughters of colporteurs and missionaries. Some of the girls are fitted for domestic service, while others are teaching in schools and families, thus doubtless influencing others by their own Scriptural training. The Home was originally founded by Signor Ferretti, who contrasted the position of women in England with that of the women of his native country, and longed to see Italian girls brought up under improved and enlightened conditions. American friends have greatly helped the enterprise, which depends on the gifts of friends and the support of individual pupils by sympathisers. Many helped by this institution are the children of pastors who have given their all to Christ's service, amid difficulties and obstacles. "The children of such parents," say the Committee, "are in a peculiar manner entitled to the help and sympathy of all Protestant Christians." Travellers through the beauties of smiling Italy would be interested to inspect the Orphanage, which may be visited any week-day; applications for admission are numerous, but the means are very limited, and increased contributions would encourage the Executive Committee to widen their influence. The Secretary of the Home in England is Miss Reynett, 3, Cranley Place, Onslow Square.

AN OLD BOOK FOR YOUNG READERS, AND NEW BOOKS FOR OLDER READERS.

One of the most interesting of recently published books, at least from an historical point of view, is Mr. Elliot Stock's fac-simile reprint of the—as it was supposed—lost first edition of John Bunyan's "Book for Boys and Girls; or, Country Rhymes for Children." But we confess that, from any other point of view, there seems little enough justification for the republication of these "verses" in an age more critical than Bunyan's own, but with a greater and more general respect for his writings. If the republication was to take place, then nothing could be better than this reproduction of the very paper, type, and binding of the original edition; but we very much doubt the wisdom of thus resuscitating a work so far inferior in value to the great dreamer's

other writings. From the allegorical verses by Bunyan to the second volume of Mr. Spurgeon's "Salt Cellars" (Passmore and Alabaster) is an easy transition. This concludes the collection of "proverbs, together with homely notes thereon," to which we made reference when the first volume was published. Now that the work is completed, we can even more heartily commend it to all public speakers and writers. Another work by Mr. Spurgeon is before us in "Around the Wicket-Gate" (same publishers). Its sub-title admirably describes the little volume as "Friendly Talks with Seekers concerning Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," and there is little need for us to say more concerning it than that it is written in the earnest, homely style that ever characterises Mr. Spurgeon's writings. All who remember Professor Blaikie's papers in our own pages, entitled, "In Perils Oft," know something of the trials and the heroism of the pioneer missionaries in the South Seas, among whom John Williams stands foremost as the "martyr of Erromanga." Now they may learn something more of the strong interest that all Christians must feel in the biography of this individual worker from the biography by the Rev. J. J. Ellis, just issued under the title, "John Williams, the Martyr Missionary of Polynesia" (S. W. Partridge and Co.), in which the author has well brought out the telling points in this most striking life. The little volume before us entitled "Horatius Bonar, D.D. : a Memorial" (J. Nisbet and Co.), is obviously more a memorial of the tributes of friends at the time of his death, than actually a "memorial" in the ordinary acceptance of the word, of the great hymn-writer whose loss all mourn. Still, it is not without value, especially to those who knew him, or who heard any one of the discourses printed in the book, which is accompanied, we must not forget to note, by an excellent portrait of the author of "I heard the voice of Jesus say." "The Hammer" (Seeley and Co.) is the title of a story of the Maccabean times, by Professor Alfred Church and Mr. Richmond Seeley, of which, as we gather from the preface, the outline of the tale is Mr. Seeley's, while the filling out is the work of Professor Church. How this story is told, no reader of "To the Lions" needs informing. The period illustrated by this tale is one comparatively unknown to the general reader, but perhaps Professor Church's work may serve the purpose not only of interesting all his readers, but also of stimulating the zeal of some to fresh study of this little-known time. "Under Salisbury Spire" (same publishers) is a pretty story by Mrs. Marshall, of the time of George Herbert, in which the poet himself plays no inconsiderable part. "Lion-Hearted," which is also issued by Messrs. Seeley, is the story of Bishop Hannington's Life, specially re-written for boys and girls, by the Rev. E. C. Dawson. All three of these works of Messrs. Seeley's are admirably adapted from their get-up for popular use in a Sunday-school or similar library.



"He sold her a Testament"—*p* 318.

"THAT TESTAMENT DID IT ALL!"

One who labours in connection with the Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association tells that a man in Poole asked him if he remembered, six years ago, asking the driver of a ginger-beer van for a lift? "I drove that van," he said, "and you gave me a New Testament. I was a drunkard and swearer. In the stable that night I read the Testament a little, and sometimes I resolved to throw it away, but I could not destroy it. I kept on reading, and at last I cried to God for mercy. Now I have belonged to a Christian society five years, and have been made the means of conversion of others. I am in a good position; my wife is happy; my home is comfortable. That Testament did it all." Unhealthy literature is answerable for much that is evil and deplorable alike in town and country; colportage opposes such literature by that which is pure and wholesome. Bibles and helpful books and magazines are widely sold, and tracts are distributed; also, as opportunities occur, the colporteurs visit the sick, and hold religious services. Those who work this association, of which Mr. Spurgeon is president, describe the operations as being wholly unsectarian, "doing work for the friends of a full and free Gospel anywhere and

everywhere." About eighty colporteurs are now at work, with much blessing resting on their labours. In this corner of the vineyard, however, as in all others, there is yet room for more. We note that in one year more than 13,000 copies of THE QUIVER were distributed by means of these visitors from door to door. A worker who presides at a stall near a London station tells of a man who came and stood beside him offering a publication for sale, and calling out, "Salvation for the body! never mind the soul; we know nothing about that!" but the colporteur spoke of his Testaments as telling of salvation *both* for soul and body, and he sold out all he had. "What music have you got there?" asked a lady who mistook a colporteur for a travelling player. He sold her a Testament, telling her that if she read and believed what he brought, she would have "music in her heart."

A MARKET MINISTRY.

A speaker, pleading for the needy and neglected, told of a small child whose face was pressed to the window one dull, rainy day, and who suddenly requested his mother to empty his money-box, and let him have the contents, as he wanted to purchase umbrellas for "the people that go by's." He could not watch with indifference their cold, dripping, uncared-for state. "There spoke the God within the child," said she who told the incident, and it is in proportion as our hearts care about "the people who go by's," that the spirit of our Master is revealed within us. He who has love towards God will have love for his brothers likewise. Market *employés* are not always the most attractive, gentle, prepossessing people to deal with, but great and glorious results have followed the work of the Christian Mission in Billingsgate, which has now extended its labours of love by a new building, comprising a coffee tavern, hall for services, library and reading-room. About ten thousand people assemble at the market daily, and some of these would be prevented by the hours of business from sharing in the benefits of similar missions. It is wise and right that Billingsgate should have a Christian mission of its own, caring not only for the *employés*, but for poor waifs and loiterers and hangers-on. By advice and succour, food and shelter, Christian love and Gospel invitations, our friends at Billingsgate are carrying on prayerful struggles against the unbelief of which nowadays some think and speak so lightly, but which brought tears of unspeakable compassion into the eyes of our Divine Redeemer.



THE BILLINGSGATE MISSION.

"BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE."

There is too much evil about for any of us to rest upon our oars, or be content with the record of the past. "So-and-so used to be so helpful; he must be a great blessing to the neighbourhood," is a remark to which silence is often the best answer. The helpful worker has grown weary or discouraged in well-doing, and the places of former influence for good know him no more. There may be grand and glorious work for God going on, of which outsiders little dream, but, as a rule, if a heart and life be on the Lord's side, outsiders *know* it, and they know too when the workers drop away and relax the efforts once so earnest and so brave. We have not to do with a stern and relentless taskmaster, who exacts work from us when really unfit for the strain; we are serving under a Lord of love, and His love constrains us not to desert our post so long as we can help forward His Kingdom of mercy and peace. The Roman sentinel amid the ruins of Pompeii stood at his post, grasping his war-weapon, though the earth shook beneath him, and was found after centuries just where his duty had called him. Shall *we* lay down our weapons because we do not get on comfortably with certain fellow-workers, because we are not sufficiently appreciated, or because we have "worked enough in the past"? God can win the fight without us, but are we willing to desert our Captain's side?

WHILE THE NIGHTS ARE LONG.

While the nights are long is the time to study the stars, as well as the books which shall guide us in that study. So we welcome just now "Star-Land" (Cassell), in which are reprinted Sir Robert S. Ball's "talks with young people about the wonders of the heavens," so simple that all can understand them, yet so learned that there are few who may not gather something from a perusal of them. "Come, ye Children" (same publishers) is described by its author, the Rev. B. Waugh, as a series of "Heart Stories for the Young." The addresses of which it consists are plain and practical—such as children

can easily appreciate—and might well serve, in many ways, as models for teachers. We have received a copy of the second edition of Mr. Gregory Smith's poems collected under the title "Fra Angelico" (Longmans), in which those who do not already know them will meet with some charming verses, notably "To J. K." and "The Good Shepherd." Miss Mason, of the House of Rest at Kilburn, edits a monthly record, called *Rest and Reaping*, of which she has sent us the bound volume for 1889. It is full of matter which cannot fail to be of interest and assistance to all Christian workers. "How to Study the Bible" is the expressive title of a little volume just issued by Messrs. Nisbet, and consisting of contributions on this most important subject by a number of eminent Christian teachers, among whom we notice the lamented Professor Elmslie. This would be an admirable work to give to a young reader. From the same publishers we have received "Friends and Friendship," by Mrs. Alexander Russell Simpson, a series of very thoughtful and suggestive chapters whose scope is well shown by their title. Another new edition before us is "Consolatio: or, Comfort for the Afflicted" (Rivingtons), a cheaper issue of a helpful and interesting compilation by the late C. E. Kennaway, and provided when it was first issued with a preface by Bishop Wilberforce of Winchester. "Seed, Flower, Fruit," is the title of a series of capital "Sunday Chats with Little Folks," written by that friend of the little ones, Maggie Symington, and published in very attractive form by Messrs. Skeffington. "Little Prince Frisco" (McCorquodale and Co.) is a pleasant little fairy tale, written and illustrated by Mrs. Fred Reynolds, which we wish had reached us a month earlier, in time for mention when our friends were buying Christmas presents for young readers. In "Laugh and Learn" (Blackie and Son) we have a decidedly original method of combining instruction with entertainment for very little readers. Indeed the book, which is by Jennett Humphreys, and is profusely illustrated, is intended even to teach children to read, as well as to provide them with easy steps towards further lessons. We heartily commend it to all parents.

"ALL BRIGHT ABOVE!"

These were the words of one lying in weakness and pain, just before his release, and they may well be our cheer when winter seems to get within as well as without, and the chill winds seem to have swept life's blossoms and foliage away. Depression seizes sometimes upon the child of God, upon the faithful worker; we are not always on the mountain-top, but we can always be sure of this, "It is bright above, all bright above!" What changes the passing year has brought to many, what changes lie hidden in the months to come! But the sunlight of God's love will enfold us, and will be lamp, and star, and glory through every track He has ordained. A Christian worker, in circumstances of loneliness, perplexity, uncertainty, was comforted by a verse a friend happened to repeat in her hearing, and which fixed itself in her memory just at the time she needed the reminder—

> "My bark is wafted to the strand
> By breath Divine,
> And on the helm there rests a hand
> Other than mine."

What entire trust we place in him who steers our course when we are out upon the waters, believing him to be experienced, and knowing just how to get us to our desired haven! Shall we not trust that Hand which guides our life-bark, that Heart which knows the end from the beginning, and which makes no mistakes? Whatever circumstances *seem*, God *is* love, and we may calmly trust the present hour and the future to His ever-mindful care. Mark Guy Pearse tells of a man who complained of the pitiless east wind, and who received from an angel the key of all the winds; he felt sure all would go well under *his* control, but he grew frightened, for the more he considered the more he realised that he knew nothing of earth's wants, and he prayed that God would send His angel to take back the key of the winds. Then the Lord Himself drew near, and put it back against the wound-prints in His own sacred hand. There, too, hung the keys of His servant's life, and He whispered tenderly, "My Kingdom ruleth over all." The vision taught the murmurer how unwise, how unsafe it is to imagine *we* could choose better than the Master; even the east wind has its work to do—a blessed work—bringing the land into right condition after long-continued rain, sweeping infection, disease, aside by its sharp, keen breath. And the dreamer came to this decision of abiding truth—"Our only safety is, in everything to love and trust and praise."

"THE QUIVER" ORDER OF HONOURABLE SERVICE.

Two additional "distinguished members" have been enrolled since the publication of our last list, and up to December 6th, 1889:—

Name.	Address.	Years in Situation.
Ball, Nancy	Sidcot	66
Peddie, Mary	Perth	51

This Distinguished Members' class, which consists of those servants who have held their present situations not less than fifty years, is the only class of the Order now opened. All communications regarding enrolment must be addressed to the Editor of The Quiver.

We give an engraving from a recent photographic portrait of Nancy Ball, who is now, we think, "Queen" of the Order.

AN ADULT SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN PARIS.

A large audience of both sexes in Manchester, assembled for Bible study, suggested to a Christian worker the thought, "If only we could reproduce this

in Paris!" On returning across the Channel he found a class for young women had actually been started, and by degrees the Sunday-school for adults was developed and increased till it grew into several classes, most of which are taught by ladies. About one hundred and twenty scholars are gathered together, studying the Bible where it is so little known, and where the Lord's Day is so little regarded. "Here is the hope of France," truly remarked a visitor who looked in at the earnest groups. These adult classes are connected with the McAll Mission. Amid the gay, bewildering varieties of the fair city of Paris, not a few may like to be made aware of the adult school flourishing in the Salle Rivoli, 104, Rue St. Antoine.



NANCY PALL, QUEEN OF "THE QUIVER" ORDER OF HONOURABLE SERVICE. (*See p.* 319.)

(From a Photograph by Messrs. W. & A. H. Fry, Brighton.)

PUNCTUALITY AT WORSHIP.

Many a Sunday-school teacher knows the disturbance and interruption caused to a lesson by the late entrance of scholars, and how difficult it seems to secure once more the attention that has passed from the lesson to the new-comer. "I invariably notice," said a minister once, "that I lose my hold on the congregation when the man who lights the gas comes softly round." There seems an irresistible influence in the furtive steps up the aisle that triumphs over the most carefully prepared discourse. Lighting the gas during service is a necessity that arises but seldom. There is an interruption of a different character which is much more familiar, namely, the creaking sound of the late-comer's boots, the rustling of the apparel of unpunctual representatives of the gentler sex. Sometimes the late-comers decline to content themselves with seats in the rear, and sail up to front pews, the observed of all observers, interrupting devotion to a lamentable degree. It must happen to everyone at times to be legitimately constrained to arrive at the service late. But those detained by duty till after the hour should be careful to enter during singing, and, if possible, to sit at the back: let them not *desert* God's courts because of enforced unpunctuality. It may bring cheer and encouragement to the preacher's heart to notice their resolute attendance despite obstacles, and will afford suggestive thoughts to others. The Lord of All knows those of His worshippers who cannot arrive early, and He likewise knows those who can. A little forethought and management might often prevent the habit of "running the gauntlet" of a congregation engaged in worship. Apart from the selfishness connected with habitual unpunctuality, there is the solemn thought that it is irreverent to Him in whose name we meet. A considerate reply was given by a worthy woman who was asked how it was she could always manage to be early in her place at the service. "It is part of my religion," she said, "not to disturb the religion of others."

THE "QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from November 19th up to and including December 19th, 1889. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month.

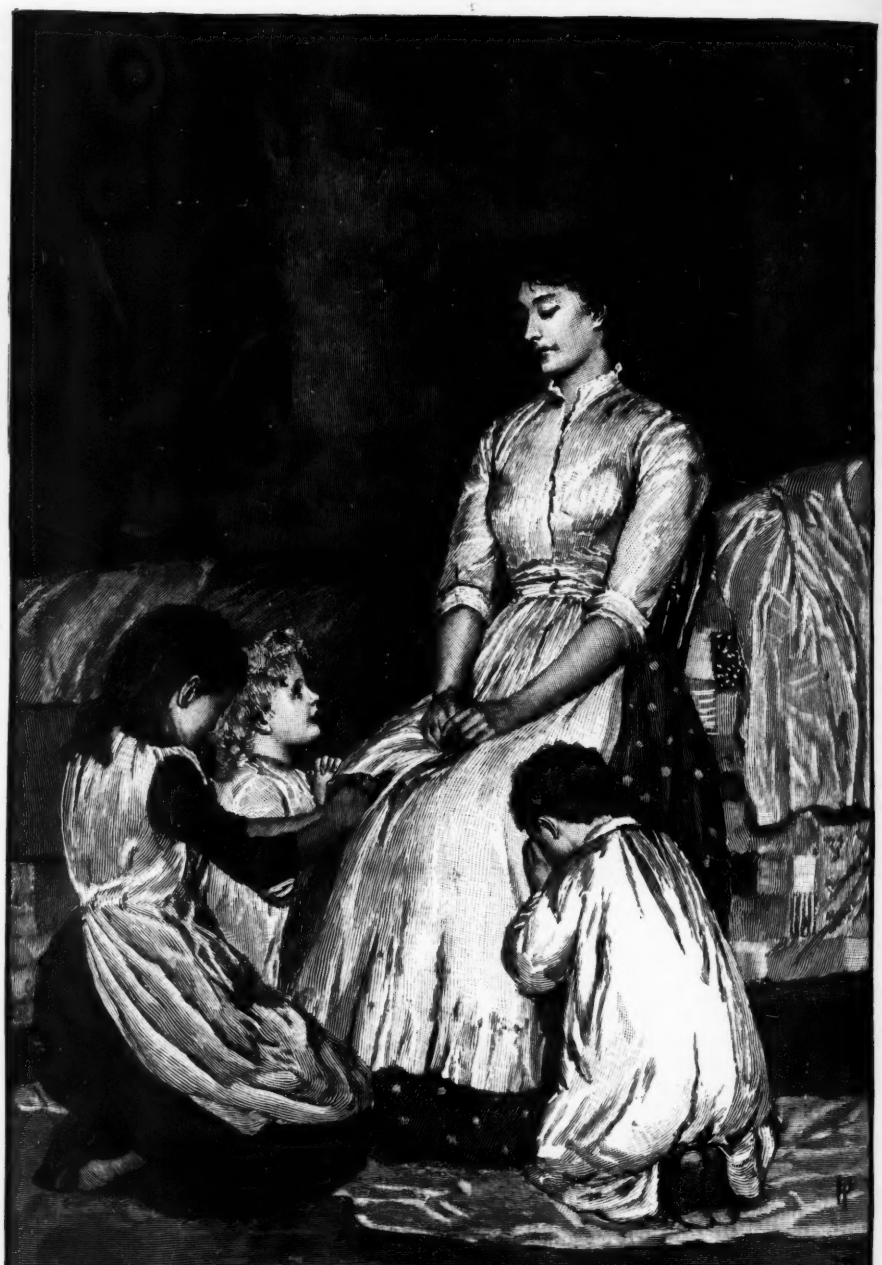
Rosebud, Bristol, 5s.; J. J. E., Govan (25th donation), 5s.; M. E., Stockwell, 5s.; E. B. Harris, Neyland, 10s.; Miss Foster, Cambridge, 10s.; J. J. E., Govan (26th donation), 5s.; Reader of THE QUIVER, Leeds, 5s.; J. W., Camden Town, 7s. 6d.; E. S., Derby, 5s.; Hope, Warwick, 15s.; For Christ's Sake, Auchterarder, 2s.; A Poor Wife, Glasgow, 1s.

THE "QUIVER" FREE GRANTS FUND.

We have received the following donations from November 19th, up to and including December 19th, 1889:—

W. Tilke, Loughborough, 1s.; A Well-wisher, Almouth, 1s.; Rabbom, Hull, 5s.



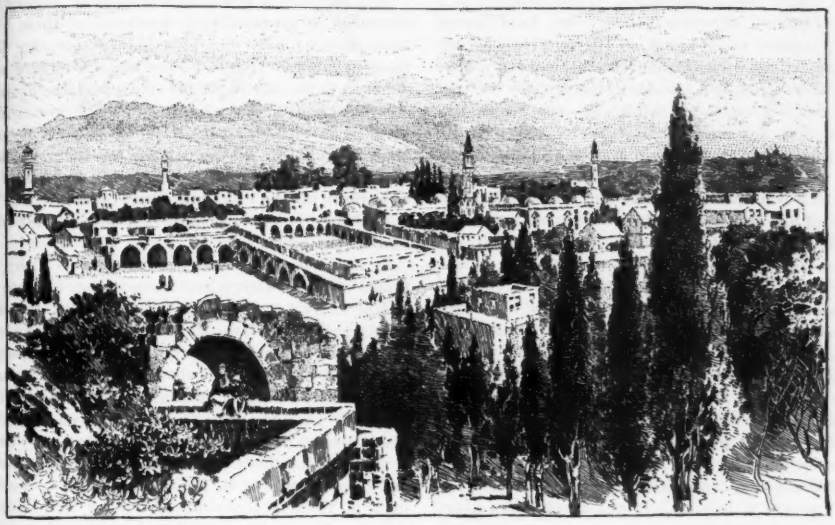


THE CHILDREN'S PRAYERS.

(See p. 343.)

THE BOYHOOD OF ST. PAUL.

BY THE REV. J. TELFORD, B.A.



TARSUS (AS IT IS NOW).

ABOUT twenty years after the Crucifixion of our Lord, the name of a great preacher began to be heard in the cities of that pagan world in which he lived. His path was beset with perils and privations, which made his life a scene of daily martyrdom. Old customs, venerable superstitions, vested interests, all the pride and prejudice of the human heart, banded their resources to bar the progress of this fearless soldier of the Cross, who seemed as though he would never rest till he had won the world for his Master.

The story of St. Paul's missionary labours is one of the most precious possessions of the Church of Christ. A comrade, who shared some of his joys and sorrows, has described not a few of its most striking incidents in the Acts of the Apostles; but the busy worker himself found time, in the heat of the battle or the quiet of the prison-house, to send words of cheer or words of counsel to soldiers whom he had enlisted in the glorious cause. Sharers of his toil and trouble, they became also sharers of his hopes when that trumpet voice roused them for the good fight of faith.

Every page in St. Paul's life is laden with interest. We seem to be at school again, learning how to bear our crosses, learning how to witness for Christ, learning how to win the careless and the opposer for our Master. Each incident seems to echo his own words—"Be ye therefore imitators of me, as I also am of Christ." But no page of his biography is more suggestive than that which tells of the boyhood at Tarsus.

Here also "the child is father of the man." Influences surround us in our early days which put their stamp on all following years. We carry with us to the grave the impressions made on us in the cradle. Parents, teachers, companions are all at work. What suggestion, what warning, there is in such a thought! There is indeed, as John Ruskin says, no excuse for a thoughtless youth. The death-bed is the only place where a man may rightly be thoughtless. "No thinking should ever be left to be done there." In view of such possibilities, we may well pray that God would make the influences around us holy, and help us to escape those which would leave a taint on character.

What lessons, too, for those who are parents and teachers! Alexander the Great had a tutor, or undergovernor, who fanned his boyish passion for glory by stories from the "Iliad." The blood of Achilles was said to flow in the veins of Alexander, and Lysimachus seized on this tradition to give weight to those memorable lessons in ambition which soon bore life-long fruit in the boy, who became the conqueror of the world. Be careful what you do. Bad companions may perhaps be pleasant, but they will lower your standard of duty, and may spoil your life. Have good friends, good books—for books are sometimes the most pleasant, most helpful friends. Then, with God's grace, you will have a blessing as long as you live.

I.—THE HOME OF ST. PAUL.

"But Paul said, I am a Jew of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and, I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people."—ACTS xxi. 39.

FEW things help us so much to understand the early life of the world's great workers as a picture of their homes. St. Paul never ceased to be proud of Tarsus. He was not like some villager who has never wandered more than a few miles from the humble cottage where he was born. Such a one may think that spot more important than any other, because he has not seen the great world which lies beyond the circle of his native hills. But when St. Paul spoke of Tarsus as "no mean city," he was a traveller whose feet had trodden the streets of the world's proudest centres of trade and culture. He had not yet seen Rome, but Antioch was familiar ground; Ephesus had been the centre of the three most memorable and fruitful years of his itinerancy; Corinth, where the glories of Greek civilisation still lingered in a kind of Martinmas summer, had also been his head-quarters in his European mission. Few men of his time knew the great cities of the East and West so intimately as did St. Paul. Yet here in Jerusalem, the great centre of the religious life of his nation, he speaks of Tarsus as "no mean city."

He did not exaggerate its importance. It bore the proud name of metropolis. It was a university town, more illustrious for philosophy and general education than even Athens or Alexandria. The city was associated with some of the most stirring scenes of history. Four hundred years before St. Paul was born in Tarsus, Cyrus reached the city on his way to attack his brother, the King of Persia. The hereditary prince of the province furnished him with money and troops for the disastrous expedition which ended in the death of Cyrus and the retreat of the Ten Thousand.

Seventy years later Alexander the Great entered Tarsus. Heated with a rapid march across the plains of Cilicia, he bathed in the cold waters of its river Cydnus. The fever which ensued nearly cost him his life. His physician prepared a remedy, but as Alexander was about to drink it he received a letter which asserted that the doctor had been bribed by the Persian king to poison him. The young king, with perfect trust in his well-tried servant, handed him the letter whilst he drank the medicine. He lingered awhile at Tarsus till his strength was restored, then he set out again on his career of conquest.

The air of Tarsus was laden with memories such as these; but another soldiers' story was still fresh in the minds of the old men of Tarsus. Fifty years before St. Paul's birth, Mark Antony, the Roman general, arrived in the city. He had summoned Cleopatra to join him there. The Egyptian Queen came, nothing loath. The galley which bore her up the Cydnus was the most gorgeous that had ever floated on its waters. Its sails were purple, its oars of burnished silver, its raised poop shone with gold. There, on a splendid couch, with spangled canopy, lay the queen, attired as Venus. Around her were troops of waiting ladies. Seductive music and clouds of sweet incense completed the allurements of the scene. All Tarsus flocked to gaze and wonder. Mark Antony himself followed. From that day he was her willing slave. His former greatness was soon buried in sensual sloth: the world was lost to gratify unholy passion.

St. Paul was too profound a student of history and character to overlook such incidents as these. His boyhood must have caught a halo of romance from these memorable pages of local history. There is no doubt that the boy loved his city. Nor can his name ever have been without interest to his fellow-citizens. With what enthusiasm the members of the Synagogue must have hailed his fierce zeal for the religion of their fathers; with what deep joy in later days the Christians of the city must have thanked God for his labours before Barnabas appeared to introduce him to the wider field of service at Antioch!

St. Paul's boyhood, then, was spent in a wealthy, far-famed, cultured city, whose name was woven into the web of many a thrilling story, in whose streets walked scholars whom its fame had drawn from far and wide across the blue waters of the Great Sea. The Apostle of Jesus Christ never forgot the claims of Tarsus upon him. He who rejoiced to count himself debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians had a warm place in his heart for his native city. His first real mission work was done there. After his flight from Damascus and from Jerusalem, he found himself free to visit his home at Tarsus. It was impossible for such a man to be idle. The "Odyssey of Woes" which is given in the eleventh chapter of 2 Corinthians has many stories of hair-breadth escapes, of privation and of suffering, which seem to belong to these days in Tarsus. Readers of St. Chrysostom may derive not a few illustrations of St. Paul's mission work in and around his native city from the narrative of the great Archbishop's exile in Cilicia. More than three hundred and fifty years after the Apostle set out with Barnabas for Antioch, that wonderful preacher, John of the Golden Mouth, whose marvellous sermons had swayed all hearts in Antioch and Constantinople, wandered among the mountains north of Tarsus. Read the story of his midnight wanderings, when the bearers extinguished their torches lest the bandits who infested the region should pounce upon them; remember how, worn out with pain and weariness, they stumbled in the darkness over the rough rocks; think of the little preacher broken down with the strain of his good fight against empress and courtiers, as he lay shivering on his bed, with the great pile of blankets heaped upon him to save him from the bitter cold of the Cilician hills. Then, with these touching incidents fresh in your mind, read again the story of a greater even than Chrysostom, who climbed those same Cilician hills, that he might tell the story of Jesus to the people of his own province. "In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils on the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." *

* 2 Corinthians xi. 26, 27.

II.—THE ROMAN CITIZENSHIP.

"And the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am *a Roman* born."—ACTS xxii. 27, 28.

BUT St. Paul's boyhood was not merely coloured by the associations of his native city. A mightier influence than that of Tarsus surrounded the Jewish lad from the cradle to the grave. Who can tell how much the world and the Church owe to the fact that the future Apostle was a Roman citizen? In his native place and in Jerusalem he was known as Saul, but as he passed out into the stirring scenes of missionary life, his other name, Paul, which had probably belonged to him all his life as a citizen of Rome, became more prominent. That was the name by which he was soon known throughout the Gentile world.

It is not easy to tell what an honour that birthright was to Paul. He saw the great officers of Rome walk the streets of Tarsus; he listened to the story of victories won by her soldiers in all the earth. He too was a Roman. Wherever he went that proud city would cast her mantle about him to protect from injury and wrong. Yet, whatever the boy may have dreamt of the future, how little he could foresee what a priceless boon his Roman citizenship would prove itself. Great indeed was the protection and honour it gained for him in later days. It made the magistrates of Philippi come in terror to beseech the prisoner to leave his prison; it saved him from the scourging at Jerusalem, and won him the ear of the chief captain; it snatched him from the hands of unjust governors at Cæsarea; it won him a hearing before the Emperor himself in Rome. "My bonds," he wrote to his friends at Philippi, "became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorian guard, and to all the rest." Still later, he summed up the providential purpose which had shaped all his course at Rome: "That through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear."

Nor must we forget those exquisite passages of the letter to the Philippians, in which the Apostle, who was himself a Roman citizen, wrote to those who counted that privilege the crowning glory of their city: "Our citizenship is in heaven"; and again, "Only let your course of life as citizens be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ." Thus his Roman citizenship, which coloured St. Paul's life, also suggested some of the happiest thoughts of his Epistles. Think of the boy growing up in Tarsus with that proud honour. Little did he know in what sorrows it was to comfort him, what strength it was to lend him for his life-work. One may well linger over this phase of the boyhood. Prize well every privilege; who can tell how much his advantages of culture or birthright may be the means of helping on the cause of truth and of God on earth?

III.—A HEBREW OF THE HEBREWS.

"If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless."—PHILIPPIANS iii. 4—6.

DEARER far than all else to St. Paul, even in his boyhood, was the fact that he belonged to the chosen people of God. The innermost circle of privilege was his by right. Trained in a home like his, he soon learned to prize every distinction of his race. There is a glow of the old self-satisfaction lingering in the particulars piled together in this Epistle. One after another he had nailed them to the Cross. His early consecration, his illustrious descent, his tribal history, his family religion, his own flaming zeal—all are here, but all are crucified with Christ.

In the young Benjamite we find all the tribal characteristics. "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." So Jacob summed up the spirit of the tribe in his dying prophecy: that is a type of Saul the persecutor. Moses must give us the epitome of his life as Paul the Apostle: "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders."

How fragrant these tribal memories were is seen from the fact that he bore the name of the first king of Israel—the greatest man, till the second Saul was born at Tarsus, of all the tribe of Benjamin. The infant child was on the eighth day dedicated to the service of God in the synagogue of Tarsus. Nor is it less noticeable that he grew up in a circle where no hostile influence was allowed to penetrate. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Yet more: his father was a Pharisee. It is no exaggeration to say that Pharisaism coloured St. Paul's life from its earliest hour right on to the end. The Pharisees of the provincial towns probably escaped those influences which smothered almost all better feeling in the Pharisees of Jerusalem. The idea of the party was in itself a noble one. They were Jewish patriots, who awaited the coming of their Messiah in a fever of desire. They were not blind to the evils which threatened to eat out all noble aspirations from the national character. It seemed as though everything might be lost before His Kingdom came. We speak with bated breath of the perils which scepticism brings. Sometimes we almost regard them as peculiar to our own age. But there were perils as great in the boyhood of St. Paul. Some of the leading spirits of Judaism—priests and high-priests of the very Temple—sapped the foundation of all worship, and denied the authority of the Word of God by their doctrine that there was "no resurrection, neither angel nor Spirit." Great was the sin of the Pharisee, greater far was the sin of the Sadducee.

The father of St. Paul was a Pharisee. He took care that when his boy left home to finish his education in the Holy City he should enter the school of the noblest Pharisee of the day, Gamaliel. The result may be seen in the whole after-course of St. Paul. The flaming zeal of the persecutor showed that he had caught an unbounded enthusiasm for his race. He bore with him

into the service of Christ the same ardour. In the dispute between dead scepticism and fiery zeal he was always ready to take his old side—a champion of the hopes to which the Pharisee clung: "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question." In this sense St. Paul was true to his party to the end. A Pharisee, a persecuting Pharisee, then a Christian Pharisee, always and to the last a true, God-fearing Pharisee.

Such influences already moulded his character even as a boy at Tarsus. Whoever forsook the Synagogue, his father was there. He often spoke to his little son of the nation's hopes, of the bright dawn that should soon come with the Messiah's Advent. Thus reverence for God, fidelity to His service, the joys of a good conscience—all these were Saul's as a boy at Tarsus.

His own picture of Timothy's Bible studies in childhood was drawn from memory of days in his own home. To him then, and always, it was the glory of the Jews that to them "were committed the oracles of God." Every page revealed the love which God bore his race. Think of that boy bending over the Book of God. He saw Jacob's head lying on his stony pillow whilst his strange dream brought heaven so near in his loneliness. For a Sadducee such a dream meant nothing. For the little Pharisee it was laden with truths as to the nearness of God, and the grace which made him share Jacob's wanderings. The angels were ministering spirits sent forth on messages of love. Every page of his Old Testament opened Saul's eyes to the infinite mercy of our Father in heaven.

Which of us loves his Bible as that boy of Tarsus loved his? Your Bible and mine is richer far than the book he prized so well. It tells of Jesus, who lived and died for us: of St. Paul and all the Apostles, who spread the fame of Jesus throughout the earth. Let us prize and love that precious Book which is able to make us wise unto salvation.

IV.—TAUGHT A TRADE.

"For by their trade they were tentmakers."—ACTS xviii. 3.
"Ye yourselves know, that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me."—ACTS xx. 34.

OUR picture of the boyhood will be complete if we remember that St. Paul was taught a trade. There is little doubt that his father's position was one of comfort, but it was a national custom that every boy should be taught some trade on which he might fall back if other resources failed. St. Paul's master, Gamaliel, said, "He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a garden that is fenced." Not to teach your boy a trade was considered almost like teaching him to be a thief.

Life has many ups and downs. The boy at Tarsus little thought, whilst he learned to weave the goat's hair for which his province was noted, into tent-cloth for the shepherds and travellers of the East, what independence, what comfort, his homely art would bring. In Corinth it won him that precious friendship with Aquila and Priscilla; at Ephesus and Thessalonica it made his life a pattern of diligence, and helped him to preserve that manly independence which all generations have learnt to admire. Nor was this all: the Apostle's skill gave bread to those companions who, like himself, had suffered the loss of all things.

Not least precious is this last fact of the boyhood. Diligence in early life will make you self-reliant. You will know that if other props are removed your own hands can minister to your necessities.

This, then, is the picture of St. Paul's boyhood at Tarsus. There he grew up in the love of God and the love of man. The foundations of that noble character which all ages reverence were laid there in the home, the Synagogue, the school. In after years he fought against the new religion, the fiercest of its foes, breathing out threatenings and slaughter. A few more years, and he was fighting for Christianity with the same fiery zeal. Saul the persecutor and Paul the Apostle: what a contrast is there! yet both are one in love of God, in undying enthusiasm for the Jewish race, and in whole-souled consecration to religion. The boy learned as a boy that he had a work to do for God, and that he must do it with all his heart. He lived in God's world, he enjoyed God's love, he had been dedicated as a child to God's service, he had been trained for his life-work by ten thousand ministries. Therefore he laid all his rare gifts on the altar. The question which broke from his lips on the way to Damascus was the keynote, the watchword of his whole course: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

You too have many gifts, and God wants them all. In the fight against sin you must be His soldier; in the saving of the world you must be His witness. Set your heart on serving Him. Speak for Jesus, and live for Him. Let no appeal for help in God's service be made in vain. What sacrifice St. Paul made to serve that new-found Master! what infinite recompense was his! "Howbeit, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." A little later, and he is saying, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." If St. Paul's Master be ours, St. Paul's blessedness will not be denied us, for the crown is for "all them also that love His appearing."



WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DALRYMPLE CASE.

"Every crime
Has, in the moment of its preparation,
Its own avenging angel."—COLERIDGE.



"I WAS the judge who tried him," said Lord Blackstone, and Hilda's face flushed and her eyes glittered.

"You!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Lord Blackstone, do tell us about it, please! What was it he did, and how was it found out?"

The old peer smiled. He was as willing as any other old man to relate his experiences, and there was something decidedly flattering in the way Miss Jackson hung upon his words. The two officers were not interested; they moved away to the piano, where Lady Rosalie and Miss Hallam had just begun a duet, while Avice stood by them and turned the pages of the music. Very stately and beautiful Miss Meredith looked, with the rosy light falling softly on the fair, pale cheek, and tinting the rounded ivory of the hand and arm; but as Hilda looked at her she smiled a faint bitter smile. Would she look as proud, Miss Jackson wondered, if she knew the subject of her conversation with Lord Blackstone, if she knew of *whom* they were really speaking?

"It was a sad case," he was saying now, "and I remember it as if it was yesterday. The court was crammed, for the people concerned were all pretty well known, and a great deal of interest was felt. There was quite a sensation when the prisoner was brought in—such a fine, handsome fellow he was, and he looked round the court and pleaded 'Not guilty!' in a way that might have made anyone think he really wasn't."

"And was he?"

"Unfortunately, there couldn't be any doubt. He looked the ideal of a soldier and a gentleman, but a man never knows what he will do till he is tempted. Drink and debt are the two great feeders of our law-courts and our gaols, and whether Dalrymple drank or not, he was proved to be over head and ears in debt. He had made a runaway match a few years before with the daughter of a great London banker——"

"Not Fazackerley?" ejaculated Hilda.

"Yes—but how did you know?"

"I didn't know. It was only a lucky guess," she stammered. "Go on, please! It is as good as a story, only so much more interesting. He had run away, you said? It's getting quite romantic!"

"I'm afraid the romance was over, and the inevitable prose had come. Old Fazackerley had disinherited his daughter, and as Dalrymple had only his pay, they could not have been well off. Any way, he got into debt, and forged the endorsement of a bill."

"What is that?" Hilda asked, with her most youthful air.

"Well, it was shown that Dalrymple had been to money-lenders to try and raise five hundred pounds on his own acceptance, and the men had refused. Dalrymple then promised to get a better name than his own, and came back the next day with the endorsement of a well-known man of property. With this he got the money, but when the bill became due he could not meet it, and the endorsement turned out to be a forgery. Dalrymple then pretended that he had raised the money not for himself, but for his brother-in-law, who, he said, had procured the endorsement. But the brother swore that he had never seen the bill before, and knew nothing whatever of the transaction. He was quite a lad, an innocent, blue-eyed boy, who was at college still, and it seemed to me that the trying to lay the blame on him was the worst part of the affair."

"What was the brother's name?"

"It was a brother-in-law, Frank Fazackerley, the banker's youngest son. There was a peculiar baseness in putting it on to him, as he was Mrs. Dalrymple's favourite brother, and the only member of her family who would have anything to say to her husband."

"I wonder what the wife thought?"

"Poor thing, I never heard of her again. Our courts are like the Greek stage: the real tragedies are enacted out of sight. The true sufferers are not the guilty sinners who stand in the dock; they are the mothers who bore them, the wives whose hearts break for them, the children whose lives are shadowed by their shame."

Miss Jackson did not answer. She was thinking too deeply to be able to attend to the old man's moralisings.

"Do you know what his Christian name was?" she asked earnestly.

"His Christian name? Why, yes," said the old lord, his voice softening curiously. "It is not a thing one often remembers, but I do in this case, as it happens. I had just lost a dear little son of mine, and had come back from his funeral only the day before. It gave me quite a shock, I remember, to find that the name of the first prisoner I had to try was the same as my poor little boy's."

Some women would have asked no more, but Hilda prided herself on not being sentimental.

"What was it?" she asked bluntly.

"It was *Hugh*," Lord Blackstone said, with a tender intonation. "Poor little fellow, he wasn't quite two, and I think his mother never got over it. She died the next year."

But Hilda was not thinking of little Hugh Hallam. She was thinking of Hugh Dalrymple, who had stood

in the dock before the dead boy's father, whose name was written in the book that belonged to Daisy Meredith's mother. That the name should be Hugh was only what she had expected, but it seemed a shock to hear it. The confirmation of her suspicions was so complete, the evidence seemed so overwhelming. The girl who was walking in the garden with Philip was not Daisy Meredith: she was Daisy Dalrymple, the forger's daughter, and the secret of her parentage was in the hands of the woman whom Philip had scorned for her sake. She got up, for sitting still seemed impossible to her, with this secret burning in her breast.

"How beautiful it is outside," she said, looking across the glimmering flower-beds to the walk where Daisy's white figure and Philip's black one were dimly visible side by side; and if any promptings of pity had stirred in her heart before, they died down at the sight.

She passed through the open window with a smile upon her lips; but it was a smile that on a woman's face is more dangerous than a frown.

The garden at Avonmead was not large, but it was redeemed from commonplace by the river that glided by it, and the beautiful towers that reared themselves in the moonlight a quarter of a mile away. The moon was nearly at the full, and the night was soft and warm. The glaring tints of the geraniums and calceolarias were toned to neutral greys, the house gleamed softly white, the river, dark on either hand, showed a long trail of silvery light, the grey old castle stood out clear against the sky.

"'The splendour falls on castle walls,'"

quoted Philip, and though Daisy told him that there were no snowy summits, and that bugles never sounded at this time of night, he persisted that no quotation could be more appropriate.

"For, listen!" the young man cried—

"'O love, they die in yon rich sky——'"

"It is not a rich sky," said perverse little Daisy. "It is a cold moonlight sky, and your quotation is all wrong, Captain Hallam."

"The first line, the first *words* are not," said the audacious captain. "Let me tell you them again—

"'*O love*, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.'

Daisy, dearest Daisy——"

"Quoting Tennyson, Captain Hallam?" said Hilda Jackson's voice, and the pair who had been standing so close together started guiltily apart, as two other shadows mingled with their own.

Lord Blackstone had followed Hilda into the cool sweetness of the moonlit night, and Daisy turned to him as to her natural protector.

"He *would* come," she whispered to this kindest of old men.

"Of course he would, my dear!" said the old lord cheerfully. "But he has had his innings, and now it is my turn. Has Phil shown you the bank where you can see both the castle and the church at once? No? Then come with me. It is the prettiest view we have, and you ought to see it, especially by this light. What could Phil be thinking of, I wonder?"

Daisy ventured no suggestions on this point, but she went willingly enough with Lord Blackstone to see the famous view; and Philip Hallam and Hilda Jackson were left alone together.

"Stay!" she cried imperiously, as he seemed inclined to move in the direction of the others. "Stay! I have something to say to you."

Captain Hallam was a soldier, and a brave one too, but he looked decidedly alarmed. Conscience makes cowards of the bravest, and his was by no means void of offence as regarded the woman by his side. It might be true that the initiative had been on her part, but no man can flirt with a woman as he had flirted with Hilda without giving her a certain power over him. After a flirtation like that, the possibility of "peace with honour" is not always the simple thing it seems.

He wondered what she was going to say, what line she was going to take. Of course she was furious at finding him with Daisy, and he felt uncomfortably conscious that he had given her the right to be angry, the right to reproach him, and even to call him to account. Was she going to do so? he wondered. He had heard from other men that the fair Hilda could be dangerous, and it was with quite a sensation of relief that her opening words fell upon his ear.

"Do you know who it was you were talking to just now?" she asked gently, and—absurd as it seemed—she looked at him as if she expected a reply.

"Of course I know. Do not you? Did you not see it was the youngest Miss Meredith?" he answered sulkily.

Hilda laughed softly.

"I saw that it was the young lady who goes by that name."

"Well?"

"Well! It is not hers—that is all."

Philip stepped back, and looked at her curiously. If it was a jest, it was a poor one, he thought; but the face that confronted him in the moonlight forbade the idea of jesting.

"What do you mean?" he asked uneasily. "Do you—— But no! it cannot be—you do not mean that she is *married?*"

"Be easy on that score," she said, with a mocking smile. "Married? Oh, no! I should think that is the last thing she is likely to be. Men are not very particular where a pretty girl is concerned, but I fancy most men would think twice before they married a *forger's daughter*."

She spoke with cold distinctness, but her bosom rose and fell with suppressed feeling. Philip looked at her with widening eyes, in which wrath was gathering fast.

"Do you know what you are saying?" he exclaimed. "How dare you utter such a slander—and to *me?*"

And then, as they stood together on the white moonlit path, with the night wind rustling and sighing in the bulrushes by the river and fluttering the leaves of the poplars, whose shadows mingled with their own, she told him all she knew.

He heard her to the end without a word, but with a close attention that never flagged. She felt that if there had been any loophole for unbelief, he would have seized it—that his silence was the surest proof that she had not told her tale in vain—and a throb of triumph darted through her heart.

She ceased at last, and he stood before her silent, dumb with grief and pain.

"Well?" she cried impatiently, "have you nothing to say? Will you not thank me for showing you the precipice on which you stood?"

"Why did you tell me?" he asked. "If it was revenge——"

"Revenge? Oh, Philip!"

She half put out her hand, but he did not take it, and even in the moonlight he could see her cheeks burn.



"All she thought was how to spare her further pain."—*p.* 331.

"How you misjudge me!" she cried reproachfully. "Revenge? that was the last thing in my thoughts. I told you to warn you, to save you, to prevent your life from being wrecked by a designing girl——"

"Silence!" he said sternly. "If you must speak of Miss Meredith——"

"Miss Dalrymple," she corrected.

"Meredith or Dalrymple, it does not matter: whoever speaks of her to me must do so with respect."

"Respect—for the forger's daughter!" she said, with a laugh that stung like a whip. And then, with a quick look at his agitated face, "But perhaps my warning came too late? Is it so? Am I to *congratulate* you, Captain Hallam?"

There was pain enough in her own voice now, but the mockery that had rung in it a moment ago made him hard.

"I cannot tell you," he said quietly. "It is for *her* to decide. I can only tell you that what I have heard to-night will not deter me from asking her."

"You will ask her now you know who she is?"

"Certainly," he said, with a grave little bow. "Did you think that I should not? If that was why you told me, Miss Jackson, you might have spared yourself the trouble!"

CHAPTER XVII.

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER.

"I know not how to tell thee.
Shame rises in my face, and interrupts
The story of my tongue."—OTWAY.

"MAMMA," said Daisy, coming into the little room where Mrs. Meredith was supposed to keep her accounts and write her letters, "I want to speak to you. I have had a letter that I think I ought to show you."

Letters were by no means frequent at the Hermitage. With the exception of the lawyer, who forwarded her dividends as the various quarter-days came round, Mrs. Meredith had no correspondents, and her children were too much used to the fact to regard it with suspicion, or even with surprise. Hilda Jackson would have found in it another link in the chain of evidence that went to prove that Mrs. Meredith was not an ordinary widow, with ordinary friends and relatives, who, if they did not visit her, at least kept up a natural intercourse through the medium of the penny post. But Avice and Daisy had no such thoughts. They accepted the absence of correspondence with the half-unconscious loyalty with which children accept whatever is unusual in their parents' lives, and did not trouble themselves to seek for an explanation. It is the unfamiliar, not the unusual, that provokes comment, and the Merediths were too accustomed to blank posts to be at all surprised at them. Mamma did not like writing letters, they said sometimes, and were more than satisfied by the meagre explanation.

They had few correspondents themselves. Their old school-fellows wrote to them occasionally in faint German characters on the thinnest paper; and sometimes Avice had an application from a would-be pupil, or Daisy a note from one of the friends to whom Lady Rosalie had introduced her *protégées;* but of the voluminous correspondence most girls indulge in they knew nothing.

It was a surprise to them both to come down, two days after the dinner at Lord Blackstone's, and find a letter laid by each of their plates. Daisy's was an oblong blue envelope that suggested a circular or a bill; but Avice's was a thick square missive, with the Vereker crest and the Buddington postmark, and Mrs. Meredith could not help glancing anxiously at her elder daughter as she unfolded and perused the closely written sheets. She had a shrewd guess as to the nature of their contents, and as she watched Avice's expressive face, she sighed.

Mrs. Meredith was not a worldly woman, but the mother of two portionless girls could hardly see what she believed to be an offer of marriage from a man like Sir Raymond Vereker and not wish him success, and she knew, as she looked at Avice, that the wish was vain.

"She does not love him," thought the mother, who knew her daughter's face so well; and she felt quite sure of it when Avice handed her the letter.

They were alone then, for Daisy, after a glance at her own little note, had flushed scarlet, and, putting it in her pocket, had hastily finished her breakfast and hurried away to read it. Both mother and sister had been too much occupied with the more important document to notice her, but now that she was gone they were not sorry to be alone.

"Well, my dear?" Mrs. Meredith said, rather wistfully; and Avice understood the dawning regret in her mother's voice and eyes.

"I am afraid you will not think it well," said Avice. "I am very sorry for him, and for you too, mamma. I would have done it, indeed, if—if I could."

"You are sure, then, it cannot be?"

"*Quite* sure, mamma."

It was all they said, these two who needed so little speech. There was a little pause, and in the silence Mrs. Meredith's eyes were very tender, and Avice's cheeks burnt red, but neither spoke a word.

"It is a good and honest letter," Mrs. Meredith said, as she gave it back at last, "and I am sure it comes from a good and honest man. Answer it at once, as plainly and as kindly as you can."

It was all the comment she made. She left Avice to write her letter, and went to the little morning-room that was called her own, but she did not settle to her usual avocations. She stood for a minute gazing out of the window, and then she sat down with idle hands and musing eyes.

"I wonder *who it is?*" she said. "I wonder who it is?"

She knew so little of her daughters' friends—the friends who were theirs and Lady Rosalie's, but not hers. She had no personal knowledge of any of them, and though there had been no intentional concealment, it happened that Lancelot Vereker's name had hardly been mentioned to her. He was always overshadowed by his cousin's more imposing personality, and she had come to think of him, when she thought of him at all, as of a figure in the background, with little individuality of interest. And indeed, this was how Mr. Vereker appeared on the canvas of Daisy's artless narrations, the chief source of Mrs. Meredith's information. Daisy liked Lancelot, but she was rather afraid of him, and felt none of the romantic admiration she entertained for his picturesque cousin. He was only a nebulous sketch in the graphic descriptions, in which the figures of Sir Raymond, of Lord Blackstone, and Captain Hallam stood out in full relief, glowing with colour and

vivid with life. The name of Lancelot Vereker never even occurred to Mrs. Meredith as the possible key-word in the problem she was considering as she leant back in her chair, and wondered for whose sake Sir Raymond was refused.

Her thoughts were so full of Avice that she scarcely remembered Daisy or Daisy's unpretending-looking letter, until Daisy herself stood before her with the letter in her hand, and the whole little figure instinct with excitement and indignation.

"I thought I ought to show it you," Daisy said, holding out the sheet of blue paper much as she might have held some loathsome reptile. "I thought I ought to show it you; but oh! mamma, mamma! don't fancy I *believe* it. I know it is not, it *cannot* be true; but I thought you ought to know what wicked things it says."

She knelt down by her mother, and Mrs. Meredith looked at her with a terrible fear whitening her face. Women who have a secret are so easily alarmed, and this woman had gone through so much to keep her secret from her daughters' ears. She bit her lips to bring the colour to them, but it fled again as her eyes fell on the opening words. The letter was written on coarse blue paper, in a hand that was evidently feigned, and began thus:—

"Miss Daisy Dalrymple——"

"It was Meredith on the envelope," Daisy explained; "but read on, and you will see."

"Miss Daisy Dalrymple,—You call yourself Meredith, but the name you bear is not your own. Your name is Dalrymple, and you are the daughter of Dalrymple the forger, who was for five years a convict at Dartmoor. If you doubt my word, ask your mother, or, if you prefer it, ask Lord Blackstone. He tried your father when he was Mr. Justice Hallam, and can give you full particulars.

"*One who knows.*"

This was all the signature, but it is doubtful if Mrs. Meredith got as far as that. The letter fell from her trembling hands, and she bent her head upon them, rocking herself to and fro like one in stress of sharp physical pain. She did not speak, but there was something in her silent anguish that made Daisy's heart stand still.

"Mamma!" she whispered, shuddering with a sickening, nameless dread. And then her voice rose sharply in the silence, as her fears took shape and grew. "Mamma! oh, mamma! what is it? Won't you speak? Won't you say it isn't true? Only that, mother!—only that—just a word——"

The fear-sharpened voice broke, and dropped into sudden silence. Daisy understood that the word she asked for could not be spoken—that the hideous charge was true.

She understood quite clearly, but she was too horror-stricken to feel much yet. Reflection would bring with it sorrow and shame enough, bitter comprehension of all the truth implied, keen perception of its effect on others, sharp realisation of all it meant for themselves; but just now it seemed as if heart and brain were paralysed, and refused to act. All she knew was that her mother was silent because she could not deny the charge; all she thought was how to spare her further pain. She took the shame-bowed head and held it gently to her breast.

"Don't tell me anything, mother. Don't tell me anything, for I know!"

But Mrs. Meredith was not a woman to be soothed by caresses, nor was her trouble of a nature to yield to such ineffectual consolations. She drew herself from Daisy's grasp, and sat up, looking ghastly in the sunshine that streamed into the room; and when she spoke, her voice was hard and her face cold and almost stern in its pain.

"I knew it must come," she said. "I have fought against it all these years, but I knew it must come. The sins of the fathers *shall* be visited on the children—why should I think that mine should escape?" And then she burst out passionately, "But I *did* think it! I hoped, I believed that the curse had passed us by. My little fair, innocent babies! I brought you here, and I thought you would be safe. I thought you *were* safe. I thought the curse had passed us by, and it has come upon us, after all!"

She bowed her head again, and broke into hard tearless sobs, that frightened Daisy almost more than the storm of tears that followed.

"Oh, mamma, *don't!*" she cried piteously from time to time. She had found Lady Rosalie's tears infectious, but she was not crying now. She was awed and bewildered by the violence of her mother's grief. She had seen nothing like it in her bright young life, and she did not know how to deal with it, or what to do or say. "Can I get you anything?" she asked helplessly. "Shall I call Avice?"

But her mother clutched her arm almost fiercely.

"No, no!" she gasped. "Not Avice; not Avice—it would kill her!"

The thought seemed to give her strength to calm herself, and by degrees the long-drawn choking sobs ceased. But she still held her daughter's arm, as if she was afraid to let her go.

"Avice must not know," she said, in faint, exhausted tones, looking imploringly into Daisy's agitated face. "We must not tell her anything about it."

"How can we help it?" Daisy said sadly.

"*I* can help it—do you think I have not learnt silence in all these years? And you will learn it, if you try. We *will* help it, Daisy; we *must!* Oh, my dear! surely one of you may be happy still. No one knows it but ourselves, and if we are strong and brave, Avice need never know."

"Someone knows it," Daisy said, taking up the letter. "They must, or they could not have sent this. Oh! I wonder who it is?"

"It is someone who wants me to bribe him to silence, I suppose," said Mrs. Meredith, with a flash of scorn. "He has over-reached himself in sending the letter to you, for it was for your sakes that I cared for silence."

And then, as they sat together in the sunny little room, she told Daisy the story of her father's life, of the honours he had won in his country's service, of their brief wedded happiness, and of his terrible fall.

"And where is he now?" Daisy asked eagerly, moved by a wonderful compassion for the father who had sinned so deeply, and suffered so sorely for his sin. But there was no sympathy in her mother's tones.

"I do not know," she said coldly. "I have not seen him since the day he tried to swear away an innocent boy's honour to cover his own guilt."

The luncheon-bell broke in upon their talk, and Daisy marvelled to see how resolutely her mother subdued her emotion at the sound.

"Come with me, and bathe your eyes," she ordered; "Avice must guess nothing—Avice must not know."

"No," assented Daisy meekly. But, though she did her best, it was perhaps well that Avice was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to notice her sister's manner.

The burden of her terrible secret lay heavy on Daisy's heart. It was dreadful to know that their father was a felon, but it was all the more dreadful because she could not tell Avice, and rest in the sympathy that had never failed her yet.

As for that other sympathy that she had come to think of as still more intimate and deep and true, Daisy dared not even think of it till she said her prayers that night. What had the forger's daughter to do with Lord Blackstone's—with Mr. Justice Hallam's—son? What, indeed? It seemed her only consolation that she could pray for him still, and Philip Hallam's name went up to heaven that night with tears that would have wrung his heart.

When Daisy rose from her knees at last, she went to her little bookshelf and took down the birthday book. It had learnt by this time to open at the 20th of June, and as the poor child saw the little faded flower, the blue eyes filled again. She pressed her lips to the page where her withered treasure lay.

"Good-bye," she said softly. "Philip, *dear* Philip, good-bye."

CHAPTER XVIII.

LADY VEREKER'S MESSAGE.

"I had a message to send her,
To her whom my soul loves best."
ADELAIDE PROCTER.

AVICE'S refusal of Sir Raymond's offer was a surprise to everyone at Verecroft, especially to Lady Vereker. That any girl should refuse her incomparable son would have seemed inexplicable to Sir Raymond Vereker's mother, but that Avice Meredith should have done so was all but incredible. But Sir Raymond had shown her the letter, and it was impossible to deny that the refusal was as decided as words could make it. It was amazing, intolerable, incredible; but it was true, and Lady Vereker was too indignant to be able to rejoice that her son was free from the "entanglement" she had once deplored. All that long struggle with herself had been unnecessary. The girl she had been so unwilling to receive as a daughter had shown herself equally unwilling to accept that honour. But Lady Vereker found no consolation in the thought, or if she did, it took nothing from her indignation at the fact of her son's rejection.

"It will break Ray's heart," she said to Lancelot; and Lancelot did not contradict her. He had seen Sir Raymond as he read the fatal letter, and the white, drawn face had haunted him ever since. For a moment there had been in Lancelot's breast a fierce, sharp thrill of overmastering joy, but it had died down speedily. Whether Avice married his cousin or not, she could never now be his. How could he woo the girl Raymond loved? He could not do it, he knew, any more than he could find words of sympathy now that would not savour of hypocrisy, at least to his own sensitive ear.

"Ray will break his heart," Lady Vereker said; "he loves her so deeply, unworthy as she is."

"Unworthy!" Lancelot roused himself at the obnoxious word. "No, Lady Vereker, she is not that! If—if you knew her better, you would know and understand that she is worthy of all the love and honour Ray can give her."

"If she were worthy of his love she would return it," the mother said quickly, and looking at Lancelot with some surprise. Were all the men bewitched about this girl? she wondered. Even Lancelot, who so rarely showed an interest in any woman, was moved, and unlike himself.

"Believe me," he said earnestly, "Miss Meredith is all Raymond thinks her, and more. If she has refused him, it is from no unworthy motive. How could it be?"

How indeed? Any girl might be glad and proud to be Lady Vereker of Verecroft, and to decline to be so for the reason Avice had given was scarcely a proof of unworthiness. "I cannot accept your flattering proposal, because I do not love you," Avice had written; and though Lady Vereker's wrath had risen high at the frank avowal, she owned that at least it argued a disinterested purpose. Only it seemed so incredible that it could be true!

"Who could help loving Ray?" she asked her unfailing counsellor, to whom it seemed so much easier to talk of Raymond's refusal than it was to discuss it with Raymond himself. And, indeed, Sir Raymond had utterly refused to discuss it. He had told his mother of his rejection, and had shown her the letter, but he would hear no word to Avice's disparagement.

"Do you not understand that I *love* her?" he said. And then he went and shut himself up in his own room, from whence he issued only to seat himself at the organ in the hall, where from his boyhood he had poured out his soul in moments of unusual emotion.

Mrs. Kenyon's sharp words had sent him to it many a time in almost ungovernable passion, and by degrees he had soothed himself, through stormy march and restless fugue, to the calm of German *Lieder*, of ballad or of song.

They had called the beautiful organ the "David" of this fiery young Saul in those old days, and as Lady Vereker listened to the sweet mournful sounds that came to them from the hall, she recalled the old name with glistening eyes.

"'David' will do him more good than we can, Lance. But oh! my boy, my boy, it is hard, it is hard! He was so happy; and though he is not vain, how was it

possible for him not to expect success? And I had fought it out with myself, and conquered all my prejudices. I was willing—I was more than willing to receive her, if only she could have loved my Ray."

Lancelot looked down at her with a smile that was curiously sweet.

"Perhaps she will yet," he said. "She does not know him as you and I do, but she will learn in time. Oh yes! he is so good, so handsome, so honest and brave and true, she cannot help it when she knows our Ray as he really is."

And indeed Lady Vereker thought so too, if only this better knowledge could be gained.

"I wish Ray had not been quite so precipitate," she sighed. "We could have had her here, could we not, Lance? She could have seen him at home—at his best. But now—I do not know—perhaps she would not come?"

"I don't see how you could ask her now," said Lancelot, with a thrill of involuntary relief.

It was possible—he persuaded himself that it was even easy—to wish for his cousin's happiness, but to witness it would be quite another matter. He could talk of it and plan for it with Lady Vereker, away from the glamour of Avice's eyes and the sweet fascinations of her presence, but to live in her daily companionship while Raymond wooed her heart away would be more than he could bear.

"I don't see how you could ask her here," he repeated; and it seemed that Lady Vereker agreed.

"I could go to her, perhaps?" she said doubtfully. "I could go and assure her how glad I should be to welcome her. Perhaps Raymond did not make that clear. Perhaps she does love him, and is too proud to own it, not being sure of her welcome. That seems more likely, doesn't it, Lance?—a great deal more likely than that she could know Ray and not care for him, don't you think?"

"Yes," agreed Lancelot, "it is much more likely; only you saw what she said."

"Oh yes! but I think nothing of that—nothing at all. Girls will say anything to save their pride."

"Some girls, perhaps. I do not know about that," said Mr. Vereker simply; "but I feel sure that anything Miss Meredith said would be true."

"But you said yourself she might come to feel differently in time. I will go to her, Lance; I will go and plead for my boy; I will tell her how he loves her, how much we all wish it. Do you remember when we went to ask Lady Rosalie about her?"

Did he remember? Would he ever forget? He saw it all before him now: the pretty rose-coloured drawing-room, Lady Vereker sitting by the window, Lady Rosalie playing a low rippling accompaniment, and Avice singing as surely no other woman had ever sung before.

"I remember," he said shortly.

"How curious, and doubtful, and anxious we were! But it is not like that now. We know her, and we know how sweet and beautiful and ladylike she is, and we believe that she is good; and Raymond loves her—my dear boy loves her, Lance."

Lady Vereker stopped, and looked at him with eyes that shone through tears.

"I will go to her," she said again; "and if a mother's prayers can move her, I will bring her back to Ray. What is the name of Mrs. Meredith's house? The Hermitage, isn't it? But it is next to Lady Rosalie's, I know."

Lancelot did not know if he were glad or sorry to remember that Mrs. Meredith did not receive.

"It would be of no use," he said; "Mrs. Meredith does not see anyone, I know. She is quite an invalid, I believe."

It was not the case, but it had suited Lady Rosalie to hint as much, and so afford a natural explanation of her friend's inexplicable behaviour, and Lancelot repeated the excuse in all good faith. Lady Vereker looked much disappointed.

"What a pity!" she cried. "One can say so much more by word of mouth than by letter. And now that I am not going out, I am not likely to meet her anywhere."

She paused a moment, considering with herself, and then she looked up at Lancelot with the smile he never knew how to resist.

"*You* could see her, could you not, Lance? You meet her now and then; you could tell her all I want to say. After all, I do not know that Ray would like me to go to her; he might think it undignified. But you could speak for me—yes, indeed!"—as Lancelot drew back with unmistakable disinclination for the task—"why should you dislike it? It might make all the difference if she knew just how I feel about it."

"You could write, could you not?"

"I *could*, of course, but it would not be the same thing. I would much rather you spoke to her."

"Surely it would have much more effect if Ray spoke himself."

"Ray would not have the courage, poor fellow, and he would certainly lose his head. He loves her so much, he would not be able to understand, as you or any indifferent person might, how much was real disinclination, and how much was pride. No, Lance, I see you do not like it, but I think you will not refuse to do it when I ask you for Ray's sake, and for mine!"

It was a plea that had never failed before, and it did not fail now, though his consent was given with a pain she did not dream of. She only thought that Lancelot was more ungracious than she had ever known him before. For a moment he did not speak, and when he forced himself to answer, his voice sounded cold and hard.

"Very well," he said shortly; "I will give your message. I cannot do more than that."

He went away and left her wondering at his manner, but she knew that the promise so briefly given would be kept, as well as Lancelot knew that the keeping of it would be the hardest thing he had ever done in his life.

He was anxious to get it over, now that he had passed his word, but it was some days before he saw Avice, and in the interval he had worked himself into a fever of painful apprehension. How was he to

advocate Sir Raymond's cause—he who loved her so well himself—so well that the thought of her drove sleep from his pillow, and the sight of her when at last he descried her approaching made his heart leap madly in his breast?

He was walking into Leamington, hot summer day as it was, for hard physical exercise seemed the only relief from the constant oppression of painful thoughts; and as he left the high road, and turned into the path leading to the lonely upland meadows known as the Guy's Cliff Fields, he saw a figure descending the soft green slope, a field's length away, that could be only Avice's. His first impulse was flight, and then he pulled himself together as a man might have done to face a yawning battery or the glitter of cold steel, and sat down on the seat under the trees before the mill, to collect his thoughts and await her coming.

He could not have chosen a fairer or more peaceful resting-place, though he was thinking little enough of the beauty, and feeling nothing of the peace. Before him lay the pool, large as many a mountain tarn, with the castellated mansion of the Percys reflected in its dark cool depths; behind him was the pretty, rustic mill, with the great black wheel scattering its silver spray from its moss-grown steps. But Mr. Vereker did not see anything of the beauty before him. His eyes were dazzled still with the sight of the white-clad figure coming down the hill, and his heart was beating so loud that it drowned the hum of the mill. He could not see Avice from where he sat, but he knew she would soon be there.

And indeed she was drawing near, though she paused now and then to pluck a flower or admire the beauty of the view. There were two little girls with her, the children of the curate's ailing wife, whom Avice had volunteered to take for a country walk; but they were not intimate enough with the stately Miss Meredith to be quite at their ease, and gladly availed themselves of her suggestion that they should try and find some flowers to take back to their mother. She could see them gathering meadow-sweet by the hedge as she stood looking round her and drinking in the beauty of the scene. The sky was so blue above her; the furrows that rose and fell like the waves of the sea, were green as only Warwickshire pastures can be; great clumps of trees cast broad cool shadows, in which cattle were peacefully lying; a little square church-tower showed greyly to her right, and before her the fields sloped down to the mill, whose drip and murmur she already heard.

But though she heard the mill, she could not see it, or guess who was waiting there for her, and she went on to her fate, thinking more of others than of herself. The children came back laden with flowers and eager to display them, but Avice had not much attention to bestow on the creamy, scented plumes. She was wondering what fresh trouble was clouding her mother's eyes, and why Daisy was looking so sad and unlike her usual joyous self. That the cause could be the same never entered her head. Avice had heard nothing of the anonymous letter, and could not conceive it possible that her mother and sister could have a mutual trouble in which she did not share. But Daisy was changed—that was undeniable; and Avice was secretly inclined to lay the alteration to Captain Hallam's charge, and to be very indignant with that defender of his country. "Is he flirting, after all?" she wondered, knitting her brows. It needed all her faith in Mr. Vereker's judgment to acquit his friend of trifling as she thought of Daisy's altered looks.

And then suddenly Captain Hallam, and Daisy too, vanished from her thoughts. She had helped the children over the little rustic bridge, but as they made for the seat under the trees they could see that it was already tenanted.

The next moment Lancelot had risen, and the children hoped the gentleman was going to offer them his seat. He did not do so. He only flushed all over his face, and shook hands with Miss Meredith as if he did not quite know what he was doing.

She was more surprised than he was, but decidedly more self-possessed.

"How is Lady Vereker?" she asked; and then, avoiding the awkwardness of Sir Raymond's name, she began to talk of the beauty of the mill—to wonder how deep the pool was—and to tell him that Lady Rosalie had not gone to the sea yet, though she was always talking of doing so—till he felt that something desperate must be done.

They had re-crossed the bridge, the little girls demurely following, when Lancelot suddenly stopped.

"Let those children go on first," he said; "I want to speak to you."

The words were imperative, and Avice hesitated a moment. Then she obeyed.

"Run on, dears," she said. "I like you to keep in front, and then I know you are all right."

Somehow, when Lancelot spoke like that, and looked at her with such masterful eyes, she could not but do his will; but at least she could find some presentable reason for the facile obedience of which she was half ashamed, and it was quite true that her impromptu guardianship would be more efficient if her charges were in front.

"Wait for me at the stile," she said, as they sped away, nothing loth; and then she looked at Lancelot, and dropped her eyes, she did not know why.

Lancelot was not looking at her. He was staring straight before him, and when he spoke his voice was quite unlike his own.

"I have something to tell you," he said: "a message to give you, if I may."

"A message?" she echoed in surprise. For a moment she wondered if it was from Sir Raymond, and a fine scorn darted from her eyes. Surely he cannot have answered the letter she made so decisive by a message?

"It is from Lady Vereker," Lancelot explained. "She thought—she feared that perhaps you did not quite understand."

"Understand what?" she asked curtly. If he had been looking at her, he would have known that there was a dawning offence in her face; but he blundered doggedly on.

"You must forgive me if I speak of what you may

consider a private matter. You have had a letter from my cousin, I believe?"

"Well?"

"It is about that. Lady Vereker is afraid——"

"Lady Vereker need not be alarmed," she flashed out quickly. "I have already refused her son."

How proud the voice was, and how sharply edged with pain. He began to wonder if Lady Vereker's theory could be true.

"You do not understand," he said. "Lady Vereker was afraid you might not do so: that Sir Raymond had not made it plain how entirely she approves his choice."

He stopped for a moment, for his lips were parched and dry, and Avice looked at him with a very curious expression. She did not help him by so much as a word, and he went on rather breathlessly—

"She desired me to tell you that if you entertained any doubt of her consent, you may at once dismiss it from your mind. She does more than consent: she cordially approves, and she trusts that if any doubts on that point influenced your decision, you—you will reconsider it," ended Lancelot.

He had not looked at her once as he went through his task, and he did not look at her now. If he had, he would have seen what might have altered both their lives. For just a moment Avice's proud face wore the look a child's face wears when it meets rebuff where it expected a caress. There was a pathetic surprise in it—surprise blended with mortification and pain, pride stung to the quick, love wounded to death. The next moment pride gave her calmness and courage and strength.

"It is very good of Lady Vereker to send me so kind a message. What answer do you think I ought to send?"

"I!" he exclaimed. "How can I tell you? I have done my part. It is for you to decide."

"I should like to know if you agree with Lady Vereker—if you wish it, too?" she faltered, with burning cheeks. But if any secret hope of his dissent prompted the words, it died there and then.

"I have only one wish," he said gravely, "and that is that Raymond should be happy. If you can make him so, Miss Meredith, you will make me so also."

"Very well," said Avice quietly. "I will try."

She put out her hand, and as he took it their eyes met. But his were full of the exaltation of self-renunciation, and hers were blind with pride.

"Good-bye," she said. "We are only taking you out of your way, and the children are waiting for me."

He had meant to go into Leamington, but he accepted the dismissal.

"Good-bye, Miss Meredith. I will tell them what you say. Lady Vereker and my cousin will be overjoyed, and I—I thank you for them both."

He lifted his hat and turned away, and Avice went on to the stile where the little girls were waiting.

"Where is the gentleman?" they asked, as she came up alone. "We thought he was coming with us."

"No," said Avice, in an odd, stifled voice. "I—I thought so too—but it was all a mistake!"

CHAPTER XIX.

UNEXPECTED GUESTS.

"I do remember an apothecary."—Shakespeare.

Avice walked home like one in a dream. The children, whose spirits had risen with their run in the fields, chirped, and chattered, and skipped along beside her, but she answered their questions mechanically, and the walk ended as formally as it had begun. They soon left the fields behind them, and passed into wide boulevard-like roads, bordered with trees, with villas showing above the well-trimmed hedges, and soft stretches of turf for equestrians lying between the carriage-road and the high footpath beyond. More than one rider turned to look at the two pretty children and the tall handsome girl who carried herself so proudly but whose face was so pale, and whose eyes took so little note of outward things that she might have been walking in her sleep; but Avice saw and noticed nothing. Her only conscious thought was the wish to be alone, to escape from the glare of the sunshine and the sound of the high childish voices.

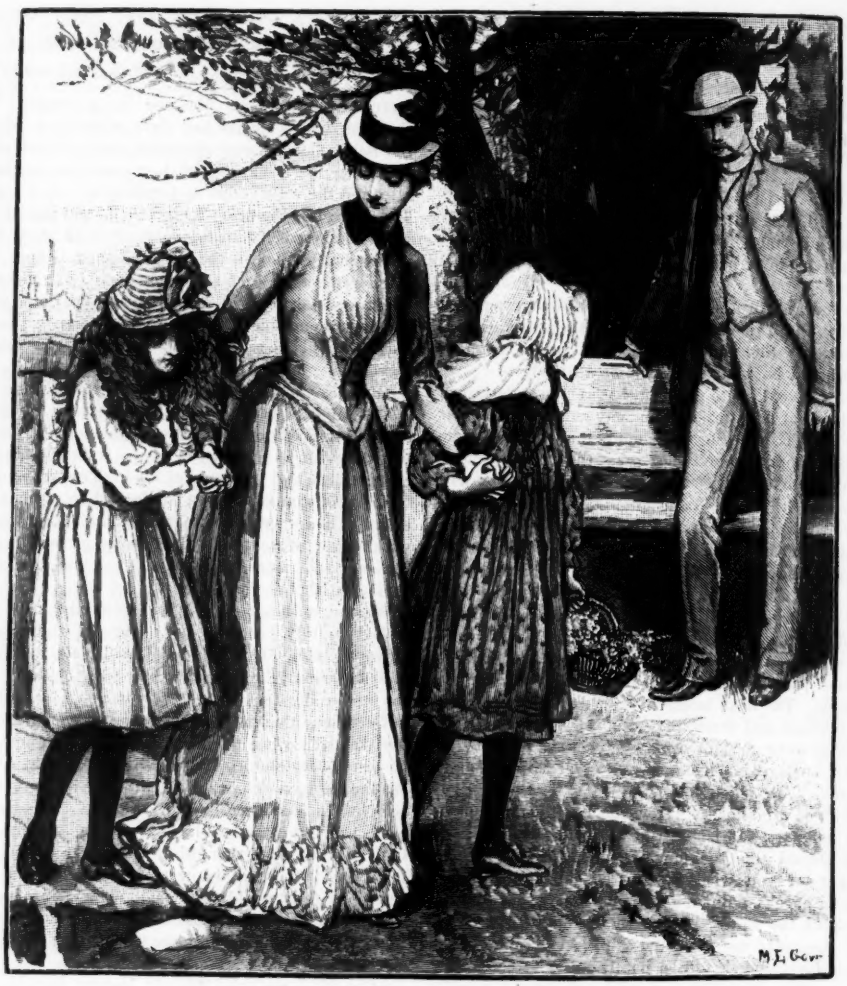
She was thankful when at last they reached the curate's house, and Grace and Emmie disappeared within it, with shy thanks for "such a pleasant walk." She was still more thankful to get home, and creep unnoticed to her room.

When she reached it she locked the door, and looked wildly round her with a long-drawn quivering sigh. How blind and foolish she had been! She understood it all now, but why, oh, why had she not understood it before? It was so simple, so self-evident, that a child might have understood. She blamed no one but herself, for indeed there was no one else to blame. It was so natural that Lancelot should have felt a special interest in the girl he believed to be his cousin's future bride. This was all he had felt, this was all he had shown, and she, fool that she was, had thought it meant so much more than this. But she knew now that only her own egregious folly could have magnified it into more.

Her cheeks burnt at the thought, all alone as she was. She threw herself on the floor with a despairing cry, and buried her face in her arms.

"Grovel!" she cried fiercely, lashing herself with her own words. "grovel, as you ought! Idiot that you are, could a man not be civil to you but you must fancy he loved you? Was *he* a man to care for a pretty face? and what else—what else—have *you* that is worthy of him? See what your conceit and folly have brought you to, and weep—ay, weep tears of blood!"

But she did not weep; she only lay and writhed in silent humiliation. Did he know, did he suspect? she asked herself in an agony of shame. Was that what his change of manner meant? Was that why he had charged himself with Lady Vereker's message? But at least her answer to it must have shown him his mistake. It had been given on the impulse of the moment, but she was glad and thankful that pride had nerved her so to speak. Whatever happened, she would not go back from her word. She liked and respected Sir Raymond—she was even fond of the handsome, impulsive boy, and people said



"The next moment Lancelot had risen."—*p.* 331.

such feelings quickly turned to love. They would in her case, no doubt—and any way, when she was engaged to his cousin, Lancelot Vereker could no longer think she had ever cared for *him*.

She got up, strong in the thought, and ashamed of her shame. Why should she so abase herself for any man? She would at least so carry herself that if he had ever guessed her miserable secret, he should own himself mistaken. When she was Sir Raymond's wife——

She shivered a little, and the face her glass gave back was so white and wan she could not restrain her pity.

"You poor thing!" she said aloud. "Where is your spirit, your pride, your decent self-respect? Cheer up! You may have a lover before the sun goes down; and is this the sort of face to greet him with, I should like to know?"

So she mocked herself in very bitterness; but there was truth in her words, she knew. Sir Raymond would lose no time in coming, she felt sure, and there were her mother and Daisy to prepare for his visit, and for her change of views as to the answer she would give him when he came. She dashed cold water in her face to bring back its colour, and then she dressed her hair with unusual care, and put on her freshest muslin, and went down to the room where her mother and Daisy were sitting, humming a fragment of her latest song.

"You have come back, then?" said Daisy. "I did not hear you come in. Did you have a nice walk, Avice, or were the children too unendurable?"

"They were not unendurable at all—they were very good indeed," said Avice, wondering how her tale would get itself told. If her voice would only be a little steadier, and if it were not so impossible to pronounce Lancelot Vereker's name! It was a relief to hear the luncheon-bell, and to know that nothing could be said till after that.

But when they were in the drawing-room again she knew that further delay was impossible. She went across to the window, steadying herself against the frame, and making a pretence of looking out, in hopes that her face might not be seen.

"I have had a message from Lady Vereker," she said abruptly; "and, mamma, I think perhaps Sir Raymond will be coming here to-day."

"Did you not write to him?" asked Mrs. Meredith. "Surely there can be no need to see him after that?"

"I wrote," said Avice slowly, "but—but I know some things now that I did not know then. I should like to see him, if I may?"

"You shall do as you like. But, my dear, it seems to me a needless pain——"

"No, mamma, you must not think that. It will not be a pain, I believe," said Avice gravely; and her mother looked at her in unconcealed surprise. For once she did not understand her child.

"What do you mean?" she asked uneasily; but Daisy sprang up with a flash of unselfish joy.

"Oh, mamma, don't you see?" she cried. "She means—she means that she has changed her mind!"

"As a woman may," said Avice lightly, kissing her sister that she might not catch her mother's eye. She knew only too well how inexplicable her conduct must seem to the mother who knew her so well, but there was some consolation in Daisy's unsuspicious delight.

"It is as you said, mamma: one of us will be happy," Daisy whispered eagerly. "And oh! mamma, look, there he is!"

Sir Raymond was coming up the garden walk, the dark face all aglow with happiness, and Mrs. Meredith looked curiously at the man of whom she had heard so much, whom once—little as he knew it—she had rocked in her arms to sleep. The bright Alpine hotel, with its mirth hushed to sudden mourning, the stricken widow, the helpless babe, all came back to her as she watched the young man's eager steps.

"He was such a fair, fragile little thing," she thought; "who could have thought he would have grown up like this?"

How far it was to look back and to remember! how strange it seemed that the child of whose life they had all despaired, for whose impending fate she had herself shed so many tears, should meet her again, alive and well, a suitor for her daughter's hand! It was impossible to deny herself to a visitor like this, but she stood up to receive him with an agitation for which her long seclusion seemed scarcely an adequate excuse. It was indeed impossible to see the son of the man who had been snatched by death from her husband's side, and not remember the husband for whose safety she had thanked God upon her knees. Would she have given thanks if she had known? she thought bitterly now, and with the thought came an overpowering conviction that she ought to reveal her daughter's parentage to the man who sought her for his wife. Conscience told her in no uncertain tones that she had no right to let the forger's daughter wed this scion of an unblemished line, at least without letting him know what he was doing. She knew that she ought, but she could not. Conscience bade her speak, but shame and dread of wrecking Avice's happiness held her dumb. Another time, perhaps.

So she heard the story of his love, and looked at Avice, and held her peace. Surely, she thought, as she drew Daisy from the room, and left the newbetrothed together, surely one victim was enough.

And meanwhile Lancelot Vereker was tasting the full bitterness of his self-renunciation. The inevitable reaction had come, and if he did not regret the sacrifice he had made, he felt that it had cost him even more than he knew. He withdrew to his own room on some pretence of business, but the papers on the table lay untouched beside him, and his thoughts dwelt with maddening iteration on Avice and his cousin. He knew just how she would look, how she would blush and smile, how——

He got up with some wild desire of undoing his own work, of wresting her from Sir Raymond, and claiming her for himself, when the door opened, and the footman handed him some cards on a silver waiter.

"The gentlemen asked for Sir Raymond, and said they had come on business. Will you see them, sir, or shall I tell my lady?"

"Where are they?" Lancelot asked.

"I didn't know Sir Raymond was out, sir, so I showed them to his room."

"Very well," said Lancelot; "I will see them there."

He looked at the cards as he went along. One was inscribed—

"Le Pasteur Martel, Chamounix."

The other bore the words—

"Dr. Fletcher, Savile Row, London."

(To be continued.)



THE HYMNS OF HEAVEN.

II. THE HYMN OF THE BOOK.

(Rev. v. 9.)

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

THE hymns of heaven are songs not of sentiment but of adoration. They have a subjective or personal element, but their chief thoughts are external existences rather than internal or individual experience. Our later hymns are the development of a later civilisation, when the mind and heart are crushed back upon themselves—crowded round in big cities with men and women who are struggling to live, and to whom religion is not a natural and necessary development of life, but a fresh accretion of anxiety, and a new and inconvenient burden. It is something, therefore, to such minds that they may turn back to the days when the world was freer and wider, and when their eye, like Abraham's, can look up to the stars, and discover in them the pledge of Providence and the symbol of plenty.

It is the burden of life that lies unexpressed but understood beneath this vision of the Roll, whether it be the life of nations or the life of individual men. All is wrapped in clouds of impenetrable uncertainty and doubt. In England, said Edmund Burke, we always stand upon the verge of some great mutation. Kings and Empires become age after age subject to sudden and vital changes. The great man falls at a single stroke of adversity; the mean man is always battling against the flood. The morrow of life for States and for men is equally unknown.

But what is true of the future of life is almost more true of its meaning and its duties. Nothing is so mysterious as existence. The fallen man who cries out in despair against God's act of creation only utters a breath of that long, low "Why?" which questions perpetually why life was and what it is. Let us leap the gulf. But even there darkness becomes more dark; for somehow we cannot rid ourselves of the thought that we shall exist when all the present environment of life has passed. And when we turn in happier mood and nobler ambition to seek and to perform the duties of life, to grasp its right beliefs and accomplish its right tasks, we find no guide nor talisman, for conscience is perverted or fearful, and knowledge is scant and imperfect. "No man in heaven or earth or under the earth was able to open the book." It lay sealed upon the hand of God.

This is the point to which the hymn brings us. The mighty angel issues the challenge, and in the silence which ensues only one voice is heard—the voice of a man who weeps because of the mystery of life. But Heaven made us not for tears, nor for weak despair. There is a leonine boldness and power beside the Throne of God, source and offspring* of a race of kings: His power has been tested otherwhere. He overcame then, and He is able to open the book now.

Let us turn, with St. John, and look at—

I. *The Book.* I have said that it is the *Book of Existence*—of human life in all its variety. It is described as written on both sides of the Roll, so that no space is left; for the story of the world, when all is told, will be a perfect tale, and, in the Eye of Omniscience, every deed is already done, and every thought conceived.

And while it lies in the hand of the Supreme, man seeks an interpreter. It was not in old times merely that our fathers sought the horoscope of a life. Not alone did Saul go in the night of distress to his Endor, nor the Greek to his oracle at Delphi. The necromancy of the world is not dead—it has only changed its aspect. And we seek of the stars of chance and fortune, we apply at the oracles of history, we call up the Samuels of the dead that they may instruct or advise us in our need. But none can help.

Happy is failure if it lead to a better success, and bright the hour of tears if it beget years of rejoicing. It is the mission of the elders—that is, of the Church of Christ—to show the way, and to bid the heart be glad. "Weep not," it says to the despairing world. "Life and duty and suffering are great mysteries, but there is One who can unfold them all."

II. *Look at the Champion of Life.*

1. The past is here united with the present. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; for no age lives by itself nor dies by itself. Insignificant monarchies and princedoms have sprung up over the world, and, after a fitful existence, have disappeared. But none has departed without leaving a heritage that affected its successor for many a year, and maybe affects it to the present hour. Bethlehem may be the least amongst the princes of Judah, but great enough to beget the Ruler of Man. Judah itself disappears not, though Jerusalem be assailed and her Temple consumed. History all the world over is developing the future, and is the child of the past. A man—small and mean and narrow though his lot may be—bears yet in his hand some portion of power and responsibility which is big with issues for those that come after him. The ancestry of the nineteenth century is an unviolated line up to the origin and source of our race.

2. He is the Eternal Sacrifice. It has been perhaps the chief *intellectual* contribution of Christianity that it has taught us the inherent power of sacrifice. Other systems regarded it as a necessary adjunct of life, springing from sin and its results. But its one use, they thought, was to render possible an escape from the wrath of offended deities. Christ has

* Rev. xxii. 16.

changed alike the conception, tone, and essence of all that. He not only made full and perfect Atonement for the sins of the world, but taught us by His example that sacrifice is happiness and power—that it is the one sure road to light and peace, the one royal road to success and joy. And the Christian idea of sacrifice is not alone self-abasement, an effort at the cost of ourselves to accomplish something more important than we are. If it ends with ourselves, we become self-conscious, morbid, narrow—the very opposite of Christ. Sacrifice, in other words, must have an object distinct and apart from itself.

3. He is the dauntless Conqueror. His very going out is conquest (*νικῶν*): his determination is to conquer still (*ἵνα νικήσῃ*). This is the Interpreter that cheers and encourages man. His own task was the heaviest that Earth ever witnessed. When the Tartar hordes first left their Eastern home and spread westward in a broad stream over Asia, few could have foreseen the fall of mighty peoples and of ancient tribes before their swoop. When Mahomet—exile and refugee—first conceived his own greatness, and communicated his vision to his friends, not a soul dreamt that he would be the conqueror of Asia and Africa. But the work of Jesus was infinitely huger than these. Physical force stands lowest in the scale of power, moral force is great, but greatest of all is the force of the Spirit. This was Christ's weapon, and it is as keen to-day as when it was wielded by the Apostles in Asia or at Rome.

III. *See how the poetry of Heaven turns life into brightness and song.*

This again is the song sung by the Church and by Creation. Life sings of life resolved; the Church sings of life redeemed. Both united sing to Him who has made the darkness clear and the way distinct. What then is the view they take of life?

1. It is a consecrated thing: priests we are unto the Eternal—the way not our own act or choice, but the calling of God as He called Aaron, and the act of Jesus when He died. It was a decisive act—done then, and done definitely, and done for all time (*ἠγόρασας*). A voice breathed and spoke above us when we heard it not. In Palestine the Moslems have covered over a famous abode of the illustrious dead. Their mosque stands above the cave of Machpelah; and so sacred is the spot where the bodies of the patriarchs were laid that none has been ever known to enter the chamber of death. Is this not a rebuke to us that we count ourselves trivial things—only to be amused and pleased for a few years; to leave no mark of good men behind, and to pass into an uncertain fate when we are compelled to go hence? Is it not a loud rebuke to those who defile their lives with sin and vice, and forget that God has made them His dwelling-place? Is it not an appeal to the living to live not unto themselves, but for that higher purpose of devotion to the right and true and holy—in one word, to Him that loved them and gave Himself for them?

2. It is a united and consolidated power. The true reading is not *kings*, but a kingdom. This is the cry which St. John heard before, while he did the daily work by the lake of Galilee, and Jesus came near, proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. It is the truth which the Church of Christ has endeavoured through many centuries to understand and to realise, that we should be one—united outwardly and inspired inwardly—in Christ. It is a dream that will one day come true: a vision, seen it may be with only a poet's eye, and expressed only in song; but the vision is the Apostle's, and the song is a song of Heaven. That is our constitution—"Thou madest us:" the past has registered it; the present prays for it; the future will rejoice in it.

3. It is a reigning power. "They are reigning," said the elders. It seemed a wonderful statement to make just then, when St. John was in Patmos; for the home and birthplace of Christians and of that Kingdom of Christ was already menaced with armies that did not know defeat. Already persecution was awaking from its brutish sleep and showing its hideous countenance. Tolerance that had long marked the government of Rome was growing impatient. The Church was in danger and dread. And yet, they say in heaven that the redeemed are conquering. Let the centuries since then declare whether they were right, and although fortress after fortress of the Church, and of the sacred, awful heritage it guards, has been assailed in every age, let history suggest and philosophy decide what is the greatest power upon earth now. Only the Christian man is a living, deathless force. Let him go forth like his Master into the world that is round and near him, amongst his companions and friends, amongst strangers if God gives him grace, and he will have his testimony to add that Christ and Christianity and life, interpreted and inspired by them, is reigning and must reign upon the earth.

MISTRESS ANNE BRADSTREET, POETESS.

A CERTAIN corner in our American Old Cambridge—that "Old Cambridge" which seems so new compared with its English forbear—I seldom pass without meeting a quaint figure which I am sure no one sees but myself.

It is not an imposing figure. It is a girl-woman of twenty, with a slight limp, and pale features seamed with small-pox. Her raiment is soberly rich, of English make. A prim little hood is tied under her chin, forming a close border about her high-bred face. As her full cloak blows aside I can see that her nun-like wimple is plain and pointed, without lace, but of the finest texture; that she is well busked and buckramed in her full-gathered gown, and that her "bib" is of duchess-like quality, although plain to austerity. Her head droops and her complexion lacks the bloom of English youth. The whole character of the figure is gentle and thoughtful: without weakness, yet with

more of mental activity than of intellectual force, more of spiritual resignation than spiritual fire. She gazes dreamily at the crowded Harvard University buildings. Her eyes are full of vague amaze at the ceaseless procession of street cars where she knew only a faint waggon-trail over greensward, and at rows of shops covering her own garden.

I feel no pride at my own fulness of life compared with her shadowiness. I realise that I am here only for my little day and hour, upon ground where she dwells in poetic history yet, though dead more than two hundred years.

It cannot be for love of this spot that Mistress Anne Bradstreet in my fancy frequents it. Fresh from an English castle and all the graces and elegancies of aristocratic life, such as they were in Charles the First's reign, it is probable that she never loved this wilderness home, where wild beasts ravaged her borders, and tomahawk and war-whoop haunted her dreams. She indeed wrote, later in life, "When I came to this country I found a new world and new manner at which my heart rose, but I soon submitted."

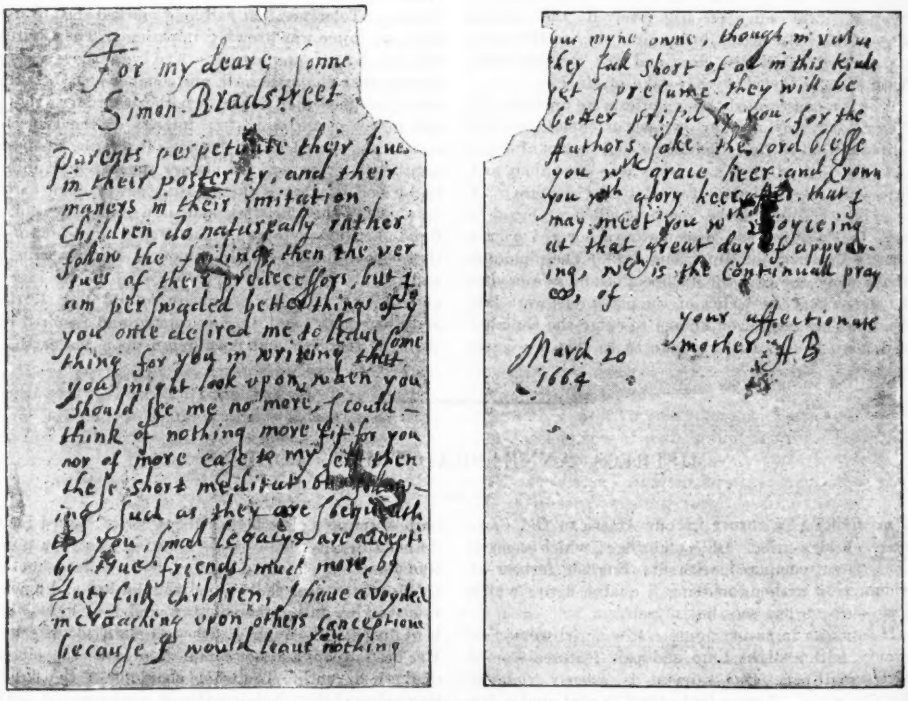
Anne Bradstreet was the daughter of Thomas Dudley, deputy governor of Massachusetts, and wife of Simon Bradstreet, a later governor of the same. She is distinguished particularly as the first poet who wrote on these savage shores. That Pierian spring first spouted in Old Cambridge, precisely at that corner where in spirit I daily meet her. Fortunately for American literary history, that first American poem was dated, and entitled "Upon a Fit of Sickness, Anno 1632."

When it was written its author was not yet twenty years old, and the "poem" is really more like a childish sob than a woman's plaint. Young women of our time are given to writing of their own early doom and picturesque tomb in the midst of their bloom, but we have no reason to suspect Mistress Anne thus inclined. Her affectations were manifold, but they are conceits of literary form, not of personal feeling.

The only real interest of the poem is as a literary curiosity. It shows what weak stuff could be called poetry in this New World when the Stuarts were kings, even though Raleigh, Spenser, and Marlowe, and a man named Shakespeare, had already tried their hands at it in the Fatherland. There is no flux of sentiment in it; no maundering in any of her poetry of dead Junes and wasted kisses; yet we cannot but be touched by the English schoolgirl rhyme:

"Twice ten years, not fully told,
Since Nature gave me breath,
My race is run, my thread is spun,
Lo! here is fatal Death.
All men must die, and so must I;
This cannot be revoked;
For Adam's sake, this word God spake
When he so high provoked."

This was Mistress Anne's youthful poetry. It would be manifestly unfair to give it as a specimen of her


For my deare Sonne
Simon Bradstreet

Parents perpetuate their sins
in their posterity, and their
manners in their imitation.
Children do naturally rather
follow the failings then the ver
tues of their predecessors, but I
am perswaded better things of
you onte desired me to leave some
thing for you in writing that
you might look upon when you
should see me no more, I could
think of nothing more fit for you
nor of more ease to my self then
these short meditations following
ing such as they are (being with
you, small legacys are accepti
by true friends much more by
duty full children, I have avoyded
incroaching upon others conceptions
because I would leave nothing

our myne owne, though in value
they fall short of all in this kinde
yet I presume they will be
better prized by you, for the
Authors sake. the Lord blesse
you with grace heer and crown
you with glory heereafter, that I
may meet you with joyeing
at that great day of apperea-
ing, which is the Continuall pray
er, of
your affectionate
mother A B
March 20
1664

FAC SIMILE OF A LETTER FROM ANNE BRADSTREET TO HER SON.



BRADSTREET HOUSE, NORTH ANDOVER, MASS.

muse, considering that she never gave it publicity herself, but for one very sufficient reason—that it is no worse than pages of verse that she did give to the world, and that the world—at least the New World—was vociferously grateful for.

This conventional verse was looked upon with awe and wonder where the forests were primeval. Mistress Anne was hailed as the new western star, risen to cast a lustre of poetry upon an almost unknown continent equal to any radiance that gleamed upon the old. In time Mistress Anne came to be known as the "Tenth, or American Muse." America claimed her, America boasted of her. She has gone into American literary history as the first of American poets. For all this, there was absolutely nothing American about her, nor yet about her poetry. She was English in every drop of her blood, every instinct of her temperament. She was distinctively English in her piety, and in all her reading; her housekeeping was English, and her later home imitative of an English manor-house; her furniture was sent from England, all her guests were English, and English to her last day was every item of her dress. She looked from her English sitting-room through English window-panes, and only the wild landscape reminded of her exile.

Anne's father, a gentleman by birth, was brought up as a page in the family of William, Lord Compton, afterwards Earl of Northampton. Later he became steward to the Earl of Lincoln. Before entering the Earl's service he had become a Nonconformist, married "a gentlewoman whose extract and estate were considerable," and had become the father of little Anne. The future "Tenth Muse" was born 1612–13, four years later than John Milton, and probably at Northampton. Not much is known of her childhood, save that she was brought up in Puritan strictness, and that she was always a delicate child. All we know of that period is what she herself told in after years, at a period of life in which she found all emptiness and folly that was not godliness, even the gaiety of childhood. She wrote then:—

"In my young days, about six or seven, I began to make conscience of my wayes, and what I knew was sinfull, such as lying, disobedience to parents, &c., and avoided it. I also found much comfort in reading the Scriptures, especially those places I thought most concerned my condition; and as I grew to have more understanding, so the more solace I took in them.

"In a long fitt of sickness which I had on my bed I often communed with my heart and made my supplication to the Most High, who set me free from that affliction.

"But as I grew up to bee about fourteen or fifteen I found my heart more carnall and loose from God, vanity and the folleyes of youth take hold of me. About sixteen the Lord layd His hand sore upon me and smott mee with the small-pox. When I was in

my affliction I besought the Lord and confessed my pride and vanity, and He was entreated of mee, and again restored mee. But I remembered Him not according to ye benefit received.

"After a short time I changed my condition, and was marry'd, and came unto this country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it, and joined the Church at Boston."

Poor little English bride! She even did not come to this "new world and new manners" of her own wish and will. She was not seeking freedom to worship God in her own manner, for she could do that in her chamber. Doubtless she was not in sympathy with the worldly ambitions of her father and husband, who, despite their high religious zeal, certainly emigrated to the New World full of schemes for a new and powerful political establishment. Though in sore affliction she confessed her pride and vanity to the Lord, the natural girlishness was still sufficiently present to make her hunger for the delicacies and daintinesses of her life in Europe. She could not forget, amid the shrieking of wild cats and howling of wolves, the brightness of an English home. In one of her poems she is mildly reminiscent of "glittering plate and jewells," "the hatts and fans, the plumes, and ladies' tires" that made her wish "some part at least of that brave wealth" was hers. There is ground for suspicion, too, that at heart, Puritan in habits and faith though she was, Mistress Anne was more than half a Royalist. Certain changes in her poetry, according as the Commonwealth or the Stuart dynasty was in power, betray this feminine weakness for a gay "cavaleer."

Anne was only sixteen when married to Simon Bradstreet, aged twenty-five, son of a Nonconformist minister of Suffolk, and at the time of his marriage steward to the Countess of Warwick.

In her writings is continual evidence of a devoted love for her lord—a seemly and decorous love, craving his moral support and the spiritual influence of his presence, but as far from clutchings and pantings as her poetry is from the wild ravings of a certain school of the present day.

Directly after the marriage, both the families, Dudley and Bradstreet, sailed for America, where they were soon after established at Newtown, now Cambridge, and the meditative Anne began to solace her homesickness by writing "poetry."

We have seen what manner of verse it began by being. Later in her life it became more forced and unnatural, full of artificial conceits, distorted analogies, and figures dragged in by the nape of the neck. It was strictly imitative work; not a breath of spontaneity was in it; the work of one seeing life and nature only by their feeble reflection in books. She even thus could have chosen better models than she did, for all the great Elizabethans were open to her. But those gay playwrights and poets and their Jacobean successors were naturally distasteful to one spiritually nurtured as she was. "Paradise Lost" was not yet written, and Anne preferred to model her style upon a Puritan rather than upon a Cavalier. Even in copying Quarles and Wither, she imitated them not at their best; for Wither was a true lover of Nature, and one of her chosen poets, when he did not turn his back upon her to write conventional rubbish. As he turned his back upon Nature, so Anne turned hers. So completely did she turn it that one almost doubts if Nature even existed for her. A poetic soul was the same sensitive instrument then that it is now, and ought to have been responsive to the imaginative influence of boundless solitudes, the mystery of unknown space, the voices of sea and forest, even of the mysterious red man, then as much a part of wild nature as sea-gulls and wild heron screaming over the marshes. Nothing whatever of any influence of the kind appeared in her work. Even her few descriptions of Nature were the commonplaces of her school, and all the imagination she had was devoted to the concocting of pedantic classicism and fantastic imagery.

The two families, father's and daughter's, lived near each other; their gardens almost joined.

We may imagine in what luxury her poetry was composed at that day, when we regard the picture drawn by her father, the richest man in the colony:—"I write but rudely, having yet no table, nor any other room to write it than by the fireside, upon my knee, in this sharp winter; to which my family must have leave to resort, though they break good manners, and make me many times forget what I would say, and say what I would not."

As we realise all this pioneer discomfort, loneliness, and anxiety, during the Cambridge residence in 1630 and after, perhaps it is not surprising that the young woman's poetry bore such titles as "Deliverance from a Fever," "Deliverance from a Fit of Sickness," "Deliverance from a Fit of Fainting," "After much Sickness," "After Sickness and Weakness," "Submission to Chastisement from God," "Thankfulness for Health," "On the Restoration of my Husband from an Ague," "Upon the Restoration of my Daughter, Hannah Wiggins, from a Fever," "Upon some Distemper of Body," and Epitaphs, Lamentations, and Elegies, upon all her dead relatives, and "The Vanity of all Worldly Things." It is a curious list, and one that contrasts curiously with the character of women's poetry to-day. Most of that of to-day is in the form of dainty whimpers and whines at fate; of sniffles not vivid enough to be sobs, and dampness not vital enough to be tears—that passion has been blighted, and everything comes to dust and ashes at last. The poetical pendulum has swung to the other extreme, and women nowadays chant, in public, sensations and emotions that our Tenth Muse would have prayed to be delivered from as from a "distemper."

Our poetess did not die until 1672, seven years before the Great Plague. Long before then she had become the pride and glory of the New World. Many of her years were spent in Andover, Massachusetts, where she died; and to that remote settlement all the intellects and literary taste of the colony looked as to its guiding poetic star. To have written a book was a mighty thing in those days. For a woman to have written one made her the eighth wonder of the world. Cotton Mather, in his eulogy upon Governor

Dudley, called her her father's Crown of Glory, and compared her to Hypatia, the literary Empress Eudocia, and "the three Corinnaes," *not* to the advantage of those highly respectable ladies. Her poems were extravagantly praised by the Puritan divines of her time and after it, and a worthy head of Harvard College, President Rogers, declared that a third reading of her volume of poems left him "weltering in delight."

Still our muse apparently had not all the colonial world at her feet. It seems that her richness of costume displeased some of her neighbours, and she was thought to send too often to England to refresh her magnificence. So, too, her devotion to literary pursuits and indifference to household affairs called some criticism down upon her head. Her consciousness of this was allowed to appear in her poetry, and she wrote :—

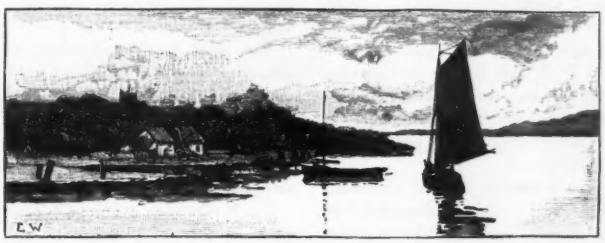
"I am obnoxious to each carping tongue,
Who says my hand a needle better fits,
A poet's pen all scorn I thus should wrong,
For such despite they cast on female wits;
If what I do prove well, it won't advance,
They'll say 't is stolen, or else it was by chance."

Mistress Anne herself was not without the current prejudice against clever women, or else she threw a sop to Cerberus in affecting to have it! In the "poem" of "The Four Elements," where she argues that the "Antique Greeks were more mild" than her contemporaries in their opinion of women, else they would not have made the Muses Nine of that sex, and Poetry itself, Calliope's own child, she discreetly modulates down to—

"Men have precedency and still excel,
Men do best, and women know it well;
Pre-eminence in all and each is yours,
Yet grant some small acknowledgment to ours."

Mistress Anne died in North Andover. She must have lived a secluded life there, even though her husband was a prominent magistrate. The house in which most of her children were born was burned to the ground in 1666, the very year of the Great Fire in London. The house built upon the same site a few years after is still standing, but utterly devoid, because of alterations, of all impressiveness of age or colonial dignity. No proof exists that Mistress Anne ever lived in the house, though efforts have always been made to associate her name with it.

MARGARET BERTHA WRIGHT.



THE CHILDREN'S PRAYERS.

THE tender twilight falls:
And, bent beside my knee,
While shadows climb the walls,
The clustered heads I see!
And, free awhile from household cares,
I sit and hear the children's prayers.

O pure young souls and white,
For grace they sweetly pray!
And, precious in His sight,
He will not say them "Nay."
Who gently in His bosom bears
These lambs, and listens to their prayers!

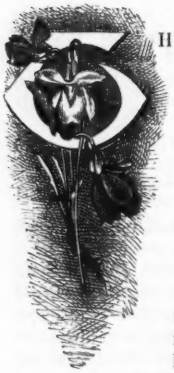
It is His joy to hear
Their fond petitions rise!
In love that casts out fear,
Beneath His holy eyes,
They kneel, unvexed by hurtful snares
Of faithless thoughts that mar our prayers!

Lord, that we may become
Trustful as children are!
Our lips have long been dumb,
Our steps have wandered far,
Forgetful of the golden stairs
Of faith and love, the children's prayers!

J. R. E.

BILLY'S WINDOW GARDEN.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.



THIS first visit of little Rosebud was only the forerunner of many such, and, though perhaps unconsciously alike to father and son, it was evident a new life-interest had taken possession of the old room. Indeed, it soon came to be a matter of surprise to Billy if, returning in winter afternoons, he heard no sound of childish talk and laughter, or, looking up the court in the spring evenings, caught no glimpse of a little head craned up close to the window garden. Will, at all events, always managed to be on the outlook about the time his son usually made his appearance at the end of the next street. Billy, on catching sight of the bent familiar figure, was wont to remark to himself, "It seems like a welcome 'ome. As soon as I can see the flowers I can see dad, and I know 'e's a-looking out for me. It gives yer a kinder warmish feelin', even w'en there ain't no sun."

Between Rosie and Will, the flowers lost nothing by Billy's absence; indeed, they seemed now to belong to a sort of joint-stock company, and many a pot of forget-me-nots or red daisies found their way in early summer to the opposite house.

Rosie's mother was not long in making acquaintance with her darling's new friends. Now and then were tempting bits of food prepared by her deft hands to coax the invalid's failing appetite, and many a womanly office of patching or darning was fulfilled, with an unobtrusive kindness at which even Will could take no offence. Then, by-and-bye, it became an established arrangement that every Saturday the widow and her little daughter should come across and give their neighbours' room what they called "a reddup for Sunday."

At first, Will was somewhat inclined to resent this as a less warrantable intrusion, but the time soon came when he began to view it with equanimity and approval—indeed, to look forward to the clatter of Rosie's dust-pan and broom upon the stair: yet more to the unaccustomed sense of Sabbath rest and completeness which came to him with the unwonted surroundings of neatness and order. Very often in the afternoon of Sunday, when Billy had gone to his Bible-class, Rosebud would come dancing in, in her clean white pinafore and blue frock, reserved for festivals, and perching herself beside her friend, or ensconcing herself on his knee, with one arm round his neck, would prattle to him of her simple thoughts and doings, or retail the Bible story her mother had told that morning, or sing him hymns in her clear piping treble, little knowing what answering chords she set vibrating to the old melodies. Sometimes Mrs. Staddon would drop in to tea, with a few scones or a cake to add to the frugal meal, and a cosy party would gather round the table. After tea came what was to Rosie one of the most important events of the day—what she called "my Sunday t'eat;" for then alone did Billy, as the extreme of condescension, allow her, with her own dimpled fingers, to gather flowers from his window garden. But it is only part of the pleasure to gather the spoil; to divide it is quite as great; and, dearly as she loved them, Rosie would never think of keeping all the pretty blossoms to herself.

Old Will always had the first choice, and as he stooped to kiss the little giver he invariably said the same words: "She 's the sweetest flower of all!" Rosie made one discovery, however, about Will and the flowers, and that was that whenever there chanced to be any spray of mignonette amongst the treasures, his hand was sure to be stretched out for it, though somehow it trembled a little, and his voice shook as he made his usual little speech.

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Two years have sped quietly away as we have just described, and the opposite neighbours have now become established friends. It is summer-time once more—hot London summer-time, with its stifling, simmering air—when we find the same party again gathered in the old room. Not, this time, on a Sunday, but a Wednesday evening in the end of June.

"*A* Wednesday evening!" That is far too commonplace a way of putting it. Mind you, it was no ordinary evening this, but *the* day of the season to which Billy (not to speak of his three companions) had been looking forward with eager expectation for well-nigh a month. For was he not that night invited by good Mr. Johnson to the great "Floral Tea?" and did not his admission-card, with its border of roses and lilies, stand on the mantel-piece, to the admiration of all beholders? More than that—is he not to compete for a prize to be given for the best bouquet grown on a window-sill? and, though there are twelve competitors, have not Rosie and he some wild hopes and visions of certain success? How they have watched every blossom that came and went in the little garden; how they have discussed this arrangement and that; how many secret and apparently unpremeditated excursions have they made to the corner whence Tim Pray's casement can be seen, with comparison of garden produce! Would the solitary rosebud blow out too full? Would the mignonette go to seed? Would the fern they had tried to shade so cunningly dry up in this furnace of brick and mortar?

And now the day is come, and Rosie and her mother have just mounted the stairs, and are watching and superintending with much interest the

concluding portions of Billy's toilet. Mrs. Staddon has put a patch on his jacket and furbished up the old garment, so that Will, with pardonable exaggeration, declares it to be "better than new." She has washed and starched his only collar till it absolutely shines. More than this, from Rosie's pocket appears a parcel at which she will at first only allow Billy to peep, and the contents of which finally develop into a brilliant red tie. This, as the finishing touch, Rosie, mounted on a chair, puts round his neck, and Billy, consulting the old cracked glass that hangs on the wall, and which has had more use this afternoon than in the whole course of its existence, pronounces it to be "a stunner."

Rosie capers round him with admiring eyes, marvelling mentally at the transformation that can be effected by a white collar and a red tie, and feeling something like Andersen's Princess when her swineherd developed into the Prince in disguise. Will, too, nods approval from time to time, and ejaculates at intervals—"Sure enough, fine feathers makes fine birds!" "Yer are a reg'lar swell!" "Well, if that there prize was fur neckerchers, yer'd get it, and no mistake!"



"Clasping the nosegay in his feeble grasp."—*p.* 347.

The old man had become weaker since the summer had set in, and, dry and warm as the weather was, did not seem to have the power to dismiss the cough that shook his frame. Lately he had taken to lying most of the time in bed, not caring to rouse himself except when Rosie's light step would be heard on the stairs; or, perched beside him, Rosie's voice would chatter away on dolls and flowers, repeating the text she had learnt that morning, or singing her favourite hymns of the "Sweet story of old," or the "Better Land" above. But even this often tired him now, and he would lie back and shut his eyes while

his companion sat patient and quiet, with her little hand in his.

That very day, wearied out with her constant prattle of bouquets and prizes, he had lapsed into one of these long silences. Rosie thought he must be asleep, and gently drew the old curtains so as to shade his eyes from the light. But, raising himself more actively than usual upon his pillows, he turned to her with a sudden question—

"Rosie, does any of your hymns or textes say anything about there bein' flowers in 'eaven? Them jewels and pearls ye were singin' of is all werry fine, but they ain't nat'rl, like, to me. I'd like mainly to know about the flowers."

"I don't rightly know," said Rosie. "There's fruit trees! *beautiful—beautiful* fruit trees, as grows beside the water. It's a river, but mother says it's much prettier nor our Thames; not mucky at all, but just like as clear as our mirror when we've given it the Saturday clean. But flowers! I dunno, I'm sure. I'd like there was, wouldn't you, old Will?"

"Aye, would I," answered the sick man. "But if there's fruits I reckon there must be blossoms, and they're flowers, ain't they? My! if there is, won't I 'ave a winder-garden ready for Billy if I ever gets there! It wouldn't be like 'ome without it! Yes, and then 'e'll be sure to know which 'ouse it is!"

Rosie looked at the old man with a surprised, half-inquiring gaze, for he spoke rapidly and eagerly, and unlike his usual weak tones; and still, as she got down from her post and prepared to leave him, she could hear him muttering to himself as she closed the door—"Yes, know which 'ouse it is—know which 'ouse it is!"

And, now that evening has come, he seems wonderfully to have revived, and makes his little jokes and tells old tales, and recalls long-forgotten scenes of when he "wor a young 'un." The old man had not talked so much for months, and, leaning on his pillows, sat up in bed, his eyes bright with excitement, and a tint of golden colour showing in his poor pale cheeks.

The toilet is at length finished, and still some little time must elapse before Billy need set off. There are, however, other preparations to complete which must not be hurried. The celebrated bouquet has been made up for an hour at least. We may say, in passing, that the creamy rose had delayed its opening till that very day, and formed the centre of a mass of scarlet geranium, encircled by mignonette. But its crowning adornment has been left to the last, for Billy fears lest the delicate fronds of maiden-hair should fade ere they reach their destination. Now, as spray after spray softens the brilliant scarlet, and shows up the delicate tint of the rose, exclamations of delight burst from Rosie and her mother; while Will shouted, with all his feeble strength, "Hurrah!"

Another moment, and a different and more feeble sound from the bed caused Mrs. Staddon to look up from the bouquet and spring to the side of the invalid; while Billy, following her movements with his eyes, observed a sudden tremulousness on his father's lips. He fell back on his pillows, and fainted away.

Though it was not long before Mrs. Staddon's restoratives brought back the old man to consciousness, it was only too manifest that he was seriously ill, though at the time they were unaware that the unlooked-for change was owing to the rupture of a small blood-vessel in a vital part. He seemed dazed and bewildered, and spoke in tones so feeble that they could hardly catch the accents. A warm cordial, prepared by his kind neighbour, seemed so far to revive him that colour and animation returned to his features. To all Mrs. Staddon's pleadings that Billy should send a doctor when he went out, the invalid returned a decided negative.

"You let Rose sit aside me," he said, "while Bill's gone; and she'll do me more good nor all your doctors."

"I ain't a-goin'," broke in Bill, who, during all the proceedings, had up to this point maintained a most unusual silence. "I ain't a-goin' nowheres, dad, so yer can just make up yer mind to it! *No, I ain't!*" he concluded, with an emphasis apparently addressed rather to his wavering determination than to those around him.

In vain Mrs. Staddon promised that on the slightest symptom of increased illness a messenger should be sent to recall him. In vain old Will urged that he was all right, and should lack for nothing. Billy was inexorable, and, with a very firm expression about his mouth, stood proof against all arguments, only showing any sign of weakness by steadfastly avoiding even a glance at the neglected bouquet which an hour before had been the pride of his heart.

At length, manifestly it was vain to press him more, and Will could only say, with a tear in his eye that had not been seen for many a year, "Well, ye're a good lad, Billy; I don't desarve to have such a good 'un. I'm main sorry you should lose yer spree, but as ye're set for to stay with yer old father, I will say it do him a power of good to see yer."

So after they had had a quiet cup of tea together, and the widow had given Billy a few needful directions, she left with Rosie for her own abode, thinking rest and quiet would be the best of remedies after the excitement of the day.

The father and son were left together. For a while the sick man seemed restless and uneasy, but ere long he began to drowse occasionally, or, half waking, half sleeping, to mutter unconnected sentences, among which Billy could catch floating reminiscences of the day. "A regular swell!" "Yer must go, Billy; I'm h'all right." "Ah! a good lad, a good lad!" But everything mingled with words which recurred again and again—"I'll have a winder-garden;" "He'll know which 'ouse it is;" "A real beauty I'll have for him;" "Yes! yes!"

But at length the murmurings ceased, and, greatly

to Billy's delight, his father fell into quiet slumber, though now he noted more clearly how wan and white the face had become which lay on the pillow near him. So the evening wore on, and still Will slept peacefully, with only an occasional sigh or moan as he moved his position.

How long the time seems to Billy! As the streets become less noisy and silence settles on the court, he can more clearly hear the clocks striking the hours and half-hours, and each that passes appears longer than the last. At length, when half-past twelve has sounded, he begins to think he may himself go to rest if he leaves the candle burning, and puts everything he supposes may be needed by the bedside. As he commences to carry this into execution, his eye falls for almost the first time on his neglected bouquet. He takes it up, looks at and smells it, with just a little swelling at the heart; for ah! has it not taken part in the dreams of months? and are not dreams almost as hard to part with as realities?

Never mind, Bill. You have lost your evening of pleasure and forfeited your prize. But your self-sacrifice is better than all prizes. You will not go unrewarded at last by Him whose eye loves to mark unselfish deeds, and whose lips have said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But lifting his eyes from inhaling the mignonette, which formed a setting for the gayer blossoms, he saw that his father had once more opened his eyes, and that they were fixed upon him with a bright wide-open gaze that seemed filled with some happy thought. Before, however, he could speak, old Will raised himself on his pillows, and stretching out his thin hand, said in clear, soft tones, "Give father the mignonette; he's coming home;" and then, as his son wonderingly complied, c'a.sping the nosegay in his feeble grasp, he lay down once more and closed his eyes.

He seemed to be comfortably resting, so Billy, rolling up his jacket as a bolster, settled himself on the floor. He had been over-excited by the events of the day, and it was long before he could get to sleep; and still, whenever he began to drop off, it seemed to him as if his father's words were sounding in his ears and awaking him. But, as is the wont in the land of dreams, it was not always his father's voice that spoke them, but gentler accents echoing from his childhood's days: "We'll go and meet father; he's coming home—he's coming home."

At length, weariness prevailed, and Billy did not wake till the day had brightened, and through some crack in the blind a sunbeam stole in, wavered on the wall, shimmered on the coverlet, then lingered with warm soft touch on the pale hand which still held the bright flowers.

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Then, and only then, did he know that *father had "gone Home."*

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The years are gliding by, onward and onward, since that June night, and Billy is fast growing into manhood. He still lives in the old house, and still keeps the old barrow of former days, just as he keeps the bright black eyes and ready speech of yore. "If the barrer was good enough for his father, surely it was good enough for him. As for the h'attic, it was more like home to him than any other wheres, for it wor the only place he could, as you may say, see his old dad."

Yes, this was true—that the familiar presence lingered still in many a tender thought which those who knew Bill best would hardly have expected to find beneath his sprightly exterior. Never does the scent of mignonette greet him as he enters his room but it recalls that June evening in years gone by.

* * * * * *

Still more years have passed like milestones on life's highway. But these, and other engrossing thoughts time has nurtured, have not suffered Billy to neglect his flower-garden. On the contrary, he gave it rather extra attention; though his taste this season seemed to have undergone a pronounced transformation, for instead of the brilliant scarlets and blues which had formerly been his pride, the window exhibited little else but white blossoms, all the rest of his stock being stowed in less favourable positions in his living-room. He had coaxed a rose-tree to venture its delicate blooms in Crocket Court, and taught some white pinks to make their home on his window-sill. A myrtle, too, is being tended with care, though it cannot be said with any return of gratitude.

There is one other feature of Billy's present life which must be named. Is it a curious illustration of the law of heredity that he has recently taken up that custom of his father's of looking out every night at what used to be called "*the haunted house*," and sending signals to it across his flowers as the morning breaks? Our readers will, by this time, too plainly guess (they don't require to be taken into confidence) that it is a "haunted house" still. Yes! haunted, not by the dreary shades of a dead past, but by bright-winged spirits of hope and love and future joy.

* * * * * *

It is morning—just such a morning as that on which, long years ago, we saw Billy planting his flower-seeds. His is the only blind up in the court, and his friends the sparrows are the only inhabitants who have begun their work before him. Even they are astonished at his unexpected apparition. He has a pair of scissors in his hand, and soon blossom after blossom—pale roses, sweet pinks, dark myrtle—are lying on the table. One would have thought he would have regretted such wholesale spoliation; but no, a smile is on his face and a sparkle in his eye. What can have taken the lad? It is Billy's wedding-day! He is making a bouquet for his bride, of which each spray of rose and myrtle and each cluster of mignonette is a love-token. Glances are taken and returned at and from the window opposite his own, he returning to his work with a self-satisfied air and a muttered, "All safe! Right you are!"

One very seasonable, albeit quite unexpected,

interruption occurs alone to his labours. Hearing the rumble of what he concluded to be a barrow, on looking out of the window he observed, with no small wonder, a coster with donkey and cart. A rather cumbrous square box occupied the entire cart, and the whole was explained as he saw Pat and Jim, of the Flower Society, turning the corner, and in a few minutes helping the coster up the narrow stairs with a substantial chest of drawers of polished mahogany, with bright brass rings. In as short a time as I have been in telling it, the same occupied the place of honour opposite the fireplace. Pat and Jim, having performed their mission, retreated without giving opportunity either for explanation or thanks. But when Billy had time to recover from his bewilderment and utter amazement, his eye soon fell on a white ivory plate, neatly inserted above the key-hole of the centre drawer—

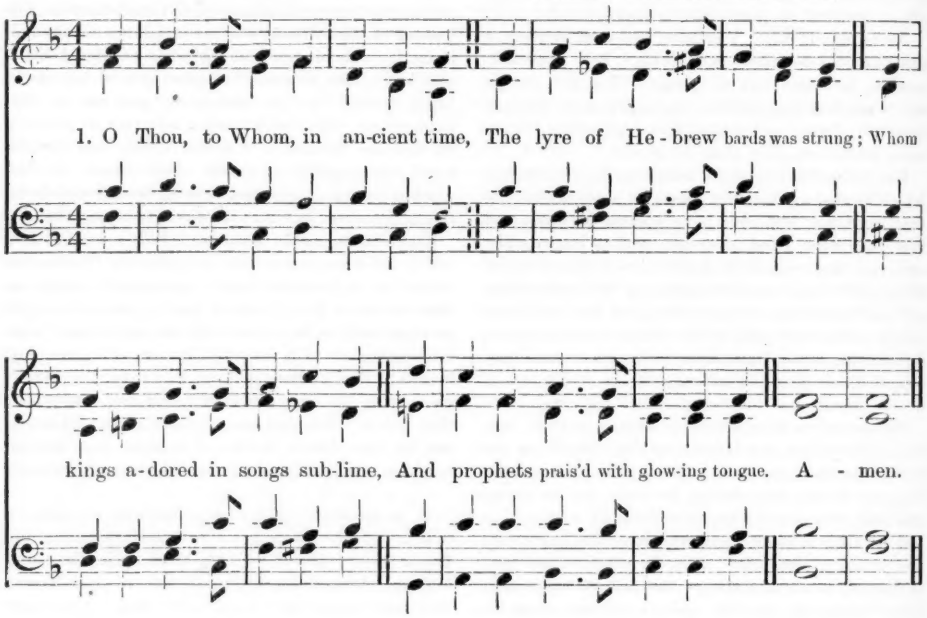
"WILLIAM BLACKLEY AND HIS WIFE,
WITH GOOD WISHES, FROM MR. JOHNSON
AND ALL THE FLORAL SOCIETY."

A. S. MACDUFF.

O Thou, to Whom, in ancient time.

Words by JOHN PIERPOINT, 1824.

Music by CHARLES H. LLOYD, M.A., Mus.B.
(Organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.)



2.

Not now on Zion's height alone
The favoured worshipper may dwell,
Nor where at sultry noon Thy Son
Sat weary by the patriarch's well.

3.

From every place below the skies
The grateful song, the fervent prayer,
The incense of the heart, may rise
To heaven, and find acceptance there.

4.

To Thee shall age, with snowy hair,
And strength, and beauty, bend the knee;
And childhood lisp, with reverent air,
Its praises and its prayers to Thee.

5.

O Thou, to Whom, in ancient time,
The lyre of prophet bards was strung;
To Thee, at last, in every clime,
Shall temples rise, and praise be sung!

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST."

BY THE REV. A. BOYD CARPENTER, M.A., RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

"This do in remembrance of me."—St. Luke xxii. 20.

MAN holds within himself the secret of his power. True, he is surrounded in the vast world which encompasses him by forces greater than himself. But great as these are, they are of little practical avail as far as his wishes are concerned, until he puts forth power of his own to enlist and act upon these, and adapt them to his service.

But when once man develops inward power, he begins to act upon the outward world. As he grows in mental vigour and mental discrimination, as he acquires knowledge and understanding, and gains an insight into the secret workings of the physical world, so does he gain a power for utilising the great forces of the world. And when in addition to mental power he shows moral force as well—the strength of resolution, and patience, and persevering energy—he is well on the high road to become the master of that world which at the time threatened to crush him as an altogether feeble thing.

Now, what is true thus generally respecting man and his relation to the world at large, is also true in the special sphere of moral and spiritual life—the secret of moral and spiritual life is within. Men have too often imagined that it lies principally, if not wholly, without. "Give us," they have said, "rules to follow, laws to obey, authority to guide us, and then men will live, and speak, and act aright." But of what avail are rules, and laws, and authorities, if they find not a recognition, an appreciation, an acceptance within the man himself? The law must be obeyed, the system received, the authority respected. And no law, or system, or authority can be efficient unless it wins to itself the devotion of the consciences and hearts of those to whom it appeals. Man himself is the ultimate factor deciding in the depth of his heart the reality of his allegiance to law: for there can be no truly moral obedience which is not the willing and cheerful yielding of the spirit to what it conceives to be good, and beautiful, and true.

Hence the great problem in morals, the great practical problem, has been not only to erect a good system of moral obligations, but also to touch the springs of the heart, to make men love what is right, to clothe authority and law with the pure affections of the heart. There has, as a fact, been a twofold need—on the one hand, to show men what is right, and on the other hand, to make them love and respect it; in other words, to make an appeal to man's enlightened conscience, and also to his affectionate loyalty. And wherever this has been done, there has a great moral power been called into existence within the man himself. The man has realised a Kingdom of God within himself which defies the flight of time, or the temptations of material advantage, or those fashionable opinions of the world which are never for long the same. He is a law and life unto himself—which yet binds him in ardent sympathy and devoted spirit to the lives, and interests, and destinies of his fellow-men.

Now this is just what Christ has done, and that as no other teacher, reformer, or influence has accomplished. He has quickened the conscience, touched the heart, and inspired the life of men in a way which has never been approached either in depth or completeness.

"This do in remembrance of me," says Christ, referring in the first instance to the Lord's Supper. But in this He affords an illustration of His method in dealing with men, whereby He reaches the very heart of man, and using what is best there, re-creates the man into His own likeness, and makes him at the same time His active disciple.

"This do" refers to active, practical life, lived out under the recognition of Christ's authority to command obedience.

"In remembrance of me" suggests the duties of life as set forth in that noble example which Christ has presented to the world, together with a pathetic, ennobling appeal to the best and purest and most grateful and generous feelings of the human heart. And these form an inward power, a spring of personal, moral, and spiritual force, that has shown its ability in resistless might to accomplish great and noble things. Here, then, is an inward power of a threefold kind—a power of love, a power of conviction, and a power of activity.

Let us briefly look at these: and in doing so let us consider—

I. This method of Christ in contrast with other methods which He might have adopted.

1. Christ might have merely commanded, offering no reason; without an appeal to affection, or gratitude, or some sense of duty, He might have taken his stand on pure authority, and from that lofty height have issued His command for unhesitating and absolute obedience. This no doubt would have had its effect. Then those who recognised His moral greatness would have yielded obedience. But it would have been the obedience of law, and as such it would have failed to touch the heart or inner springs of emotion or conscience. Love would not have mingled with the sacrifice or inspired the obedience. No great moral influence would have been wrought in the soul; and the law would have lacked the support and inspiration to be found only in a personal and affectionate allegiance of the heart. Duty would

have been mechanical, obedience forced, and discipleship would have lacked that joy, that freedom, that personal co-operation which love alone can inspire.

2. Christ might have threatened. This no doubt would also have had its effect with some. The more timid would have yielded; and, out of fear of inconvenient consequences, many might have been induced to avoid evil ways. A wholesome fear and clear apprehension that sin does work out misery for the transgressor, are useful and indeed healthy factors in all ethical teaching. But they do not form the whole nor indeed the highest and most efficient motive for right conduct. At best, fear acts as a deterrent, and exercises a kind of negative influence on the life and conduct. But it has no power to awaken a love of what is true and good, and a free and joyful following after the higher duties of existence. It has no power to create an inner life of goodness that shall be the abundant and unfailing source of a corresponding manner of living. If obedience to bare command is mechanical, that to fear is servile. And Christ sought not to awaken fear as the great factor of the soul, but that love which, when made perfect, casteth out fear.

3. Christ might have worked by offering rewards. He might, as men have been wont so often to do, have held out the enticements of personal gain, and the profits to be derived from obedience to Him. And if only He could have made these prospective rewards dazzling enough, and well calculated to meet the selfish cravings of men, many would have flocked to His standard and made loud and ardent profession of discipleship. Only show men where gain—such as they regard gain in the worldly and self-gratifying competitions of life—awaits them, and there will be a mighty leverage for moving them to listen and to follow.

But of what character will men be who are thus moved simply by hope of reward? Do not self and the system of "pay" play quite prominent enough a part, without Christ's having driven the poisonous influence deeper into the human soul? "Will it pay us to be good? Is it worth our while to follow Christ?" How base, ignoble, and corrupting a motive like that! If that be the inducement, then all moral distinctions between right and wrong vanish. Right becomes only another name for profit, and wrong another name for loss. Such was not, could not have been the method of Him who said, "He that seeks to save himself shall lose himself, and he that loseth himself for my sake, the same shall find himself."

II. *Christ's method.*

Christ adopted a nobler, profounder, and far more efficient method—

1. He appealed to the natural affections of the human heart, to that love which He believed capable of being drawn out, and that once drawn out would become the grandest weapon in all the armoury of the human soul.

And in doing this He showed—dared to show—a great and sublime faith in man, and did not hesitate thereby to put honour upon human nature. He believed that these simple fishermen could and would love Him—that they were capable of responsive influences of love in answer to His own, and that theirs was a love that could live after He had been taken from amongst them. He believed that they had a power of affection that could hold its own against the terrors, the seductions, the oppositions of a world hostile to the teaching and spirit of their Master. He appealed to their friendship, their gratitude, their tender recollections; for it brought before them all the love, the goodness, the services, the patience, the self-denial, the sorrow, the sufferings, the faith and hope and joy of Him who thus addressed them, and in so doing became tender and expressive, pathetic and winning beyond the power of words to describe.

2. But look at the object towards which Christ thus directs their love and remembrance. Not only would He awaken love, but He would fain awaken love of the highest and best; would stir up within their hearts and minds that which shall purify thought, elevate desire, and quicken conscience. For it is no blind love, no fanatical passion that Christ desires to be the working force within the souls of men. It has well been said that there is no real love that is not made up of two factors—love and admiration. The love which is fascinated by what is poor and mean, ignoble and unworthy, is no true love, and can never act as an elevator and purifier of the soul. As its object, so is its effect—to drag down or to uplift. It is just in accordance with this law of human love that Christ acts when He puts Himself forward as the object of His disciples' affectionate and obedient remembrance—"This do in remembrance of me." There is at once love the tenderest and most winning, and a life and character beyond all comparison the sublimest and purest that the world has ever seen. The deepest love and highest admiration are thus called forth by the object which Christ thus offers for the love of His followers. For there was an object not only supremely worthy of their most worshipful affection, but one that was calculated more than any other so to act upon their love as to stir it into the most elevating and heroic passion. To love Christ, to keep Him in undying and deepest remembrance, what was that but to raise the mind to a conception and realisation of the noblest ideal, and to inspire the secret recesses of the heart with the presence of that love and wisdom and purity of which Christ was at once the perfect pattern and unfailing source? It was just this which made Christ's appeal to love so efficient, as it is just this which distinguishes Christianity from all other faiths—that it can and does place before mankind an actual life—bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—lived out in the great practical walks of the world, which was the perfect realisation of those sublime teachings which it enunciated for the guidance and observance of man.

XUM

Here, therefore, we have love—warm, intense, personal—that attaches itself not to a mere law or system or abstract principle; but as it was personal to those who felt it, so was it personal in its object. That Person was the highest and the best representative of the true life of every man. And so we see at once the ideal, and the great inward spiritual power for the realisation of that ideal, in all who lived by faith and love.

3. Christ's method was practical.

"This *do* in remembrance of me."

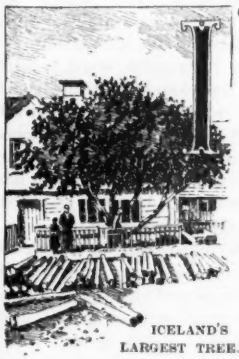
(*a*) Here is love in action. The discipleship of Christ is not to spend itself in mere contemplation, nor in its inner world of emotion, however tender and deep these may be. Life is too real, the call of duty too imperious, the needs of the world are too pressing for the follower of the Christ to sit with idle hands! That life of the Christ Himself was too crowded with the busy activities of work for anyone to suppose that idleness could have any part in His Kingdom. We need not, therefore, feel surprise that here, coupled with the most tender appeal to affectionate remembrance of His disciples, is the injunction to act.

(*b*) But this is more than a mere command. We saw above how the bare command was not the weapon employed by Christ. The injunction is inwrought with the appeal, "In remembrance of me." There lies the motive of action. "Translate your love for me, your recollections of me, your grateful remembrance of me, into action; and let that action be the outward and visible service which before the world you are tendering to me. Act out of love, and gratitude, and loyalty to me." Thus the practical side of life became the result—the natural, eager, earnest result—of the inner life of love, gratitude, and devotion to Christ. Naturally, spontaneously, irresistibly came active service, by the very necessity of love yearning to give expression to the devotion which had captured the heart.

(*c*) But not only do these words contain the motive to action—they likewise suggest the manner:—To act in remembrance of Christ is to act even as He acted; to observe His life and conduct, and to carry these as the pattern into all the duties which devolve upon us—in a word, to act as He acted; in all diligence and faith, with purity and love, and loyalty and zeal—in a word, to be practical Christians, whose lives are shaped upon the model of the Master, and whose souls are filled with the holy fire of His love.

Such was Christ's method, a method calculated to touch the innermost spirit with the most powerful and sublime motive, to lead men forward to the very highest ideal ever placed before their minds, and to translate this great and noble, this purifying and elevating power into a life of corresponding power and beauty and reality. That method constitutes the most comprehensive appeal that can be made to man. It appeals to his appreciation of what is best and noblest in all the world's history. It appeals to his sense of gratitude as awakened by all that Christ has done for the elevation and progress of the world. It appeals to his own better nature, for it is the voice of man's true self which comes speaking out of the life of the perfect Son of Man. And he who listens to this, he who answers by love and obedience, he who opens wide his heart to the inrush of Divine love which waits to bless him, shall find that secret of inward strength that shall make him strong to be, and strong to bear, and strong to do—which is indeed the power of God unto salvation.

NORTHWARD HO!

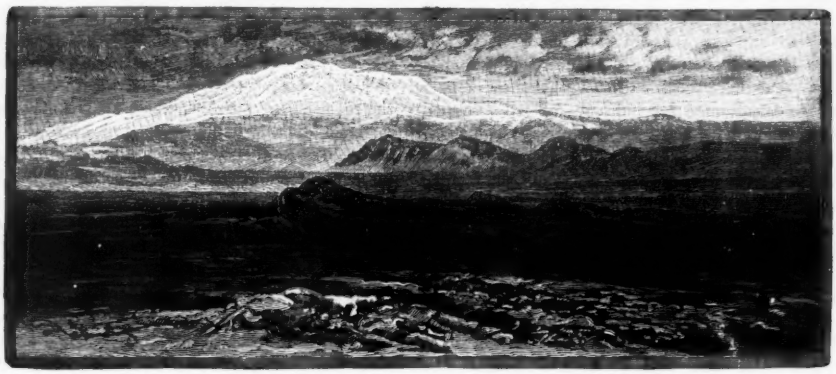


ICELAND'S LARGEST TREE.

ICELAND! There is a shiver in the very name! Nor is there wanting a suggestion of the Polar Sea—white bear and reindeer, the long Arctic winter, aurora borealis, frozen ears and nose, and diet of whale-blubber and train-oil. Iceland! It might as appropriately be named Fireland, for the fearful lava-stream flows through all its history, and its inhabitants date their records from volcanic eruptions, awful in their suddenness, widespread in their desolation. Encircled with a romance dating from one's schooldays, and out of the beaten track of the tourist, Ultima Thule presents a newer field of exploration to the holiday-maker. Thus it was that some few years ago I booked as passenger by a "first-class steamer, containing first-rate saloon accommodation," bound from Leith for Reykjavik.

When I boarded that "first-class passenger steamer" my resolution almost wavered. She was a small cattle steamer, dirty and objectionable. The beasts had evidently invaded the sacred quarter-deck. What was not cattley was coaly. The saloon was a tiny cabin; there was no steward, and the captain was in his shirt-sleeves. My fellow-passengers were a couple of tourists, a cattle-dealer, and two Icelanders. We steamed up the Scotch coast, through the Pentland Firth, and into the Atlantic. The second night closed upon us, and "to-morrow," we said, "we shall see land!" But at three in the morning we were

roughly roused from our slumbers by a tremendous shock, followed by a rush of steam, which sent passengers and crew on deck, to find that the propeller was broken. We had sprung a leak, and out of sight of land, out of the track of vessels, our first-class steamer helplessly rose and fell on the long unbroken billows of the North Atlantic. A gale springing up, we helplessly drifted for four days, and wondered vaguely if we should be wrecked; but more by luck than wit we managed to make the harbour of Stromness. My fellow-tourists, having had enough of Iceland, made the best of their way home by land. The rest of us awaited the relief steamer telegraphed for, and were by her safely conveyed to the east coast of Iceland, and early one morning anchored at the entrance to a fjörd. A boat was lowered, and I, being anxious to see what I could, obtained permission to accompany those who were going to land.



MOUNT HECLA, FROM THE LAVA PLAIN.

The fjörd was narrow but deep, the scenery wild in the extreme. On either hand barren rocks, verdureless from where the long slimy seaweed swept their base, towered aloft, seamed and scarred with wind and weather; a line of snow which marked their limit stood out whitely against a narrow strip of cold grey sky. The young day was raw and chilly. There was no cry of sea-bird, no sign of any living thing; nothing to break the silence of desolation but the sound of the oars in the rowlocks.

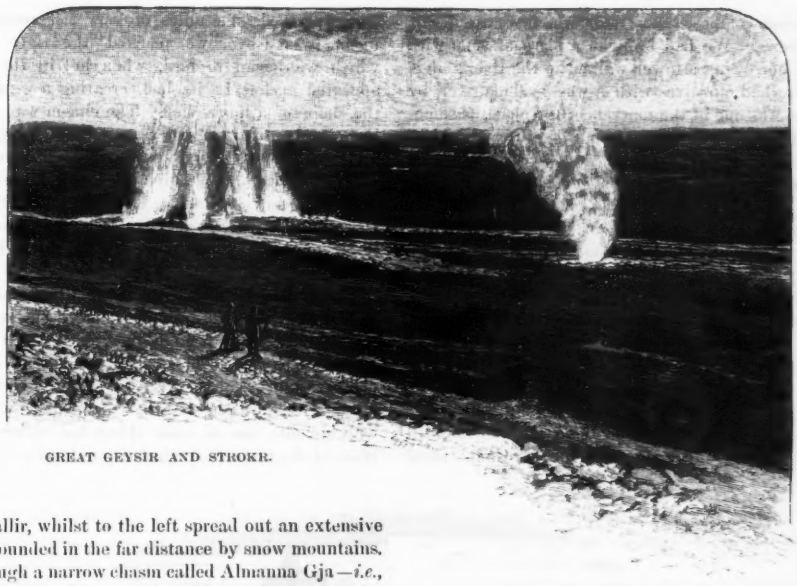
On reaching the head of the fjörd, we landed on a rocky beach. Pieces of wreck lay scattered about, mingled with seaweed and fish-bones. There were two or three low stone cabins, scarcely to be distinguished from the rocks, and half concealed by strings of fish hung out to dry. The air was redolent of fish in all stages of decay and preservation.

After my companions had transacted their business, we returned to the vessel, and all that day steamed along the coast, rugged in its grandeur, and finer than anything I had seen. Often the weather-beaten precipices would be broken by fjörds, and often glaciers were visible, some of enormous size. At one spot a river fell bodily over the cliffs into the sea. We cautiously made our way at half speed; for the coast so often changes as to make the chart unreliable, and the open channel of last month may be barred by hidden rocks to-day. However, without any misadventure we arrived the next day at Reykjavik. Hailing a boat, we were conveyed to one of the small jetties on the sea-beach. It was covered with long slimy green seaweed, so extremely slippery that the first who landed immediately fell sprawling; I, seeing this, followed with fearful caution, but, alas! I measured my length at once; so seeing that we could by no means stand, we discreetly crawled on all fours, and in this highly dignified manner entered the capital.

A long straggling street, the houses unpretentious, but with bright flowers in every window; a square, presided over by a statue of Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, a native of the place; a cathedral, a college, a gaol, no shops, no hotels—such is Reykjavik.

By persevering inquiry I managed to get a lodging for the night in the top room of a private house which an English lord was just vacating, and I bargained for my meals in another dwelling-house some distance off. Then I hired a guide who spoke English, a tent, an enormous pair of boots, and five ponies. With this retinue I departed the next morning for Thingfallir, the old parliament place.

As there are no roads in Iceland, we followed a track across a barren plain, forded two rivers, lunched at noon on biscuits and bread and cheese, and after a short rest, pursued our way up a steep and wild ravine, until we emerged on an utterly desolate plain, the vast expanse of rough lava being only broken by big pieces set up at intervals to mark the track. Suddenly the high plateau ended in a long precipice; to the right appeared the beautiful lake of

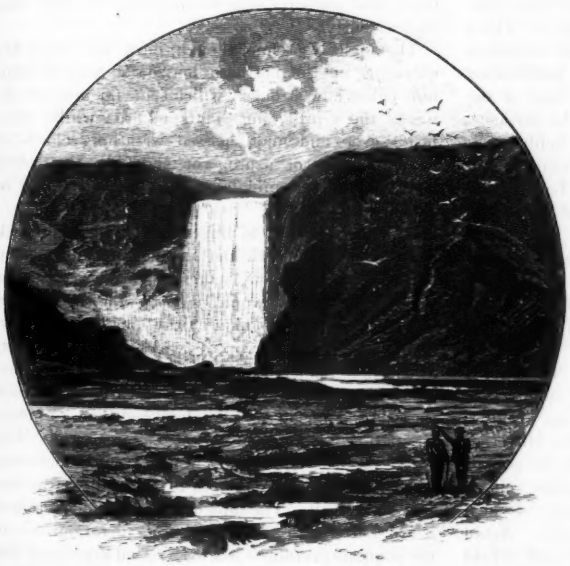


GREAT GEYSIR AND STROKR.

Thingfallir, whilst to the left spread out an extensive plain, bounded in the far distance by snow mountains.

Through a narrow chasm called Almanna Gja—*i.e.*, All Men's Road—a rough, rocky staircase, cut by Nature's hand through the precipitous wall, gave access to the valley beneath. Down the cleft our ponies made their way, slipping and sliding on the lava boulders that formed the stairs until we reached the bottom. Then, leaving the black wall that rose a hundred feet above our heads, we forded the river Oxeraa, and in a few minutes passed a little church, and arrived at the Pastor's house. This was a long low cottage, built partly of stone and partly of turf. Grass grew luxuriantly on the thatched roof, upon which a goat was regaling himself.

We had scarcely finished unsaddling the ponies when the Pastor made his appearance—a tall ungainly old man, with broad honest features, grey hair, and clothed in a suit of rusty black. He shook hands with us both, and conducted us to the little church which, strange as it sounds to English ears, was to be our hotel for the night, asking numerous questions in Danish all the time. Opening the door with a large latch-key, he led the way up the aisle. On the wall at the end hung a rudely painted picture of the Last Supper, and near it stood two enormous candles, one of which he lighted—a necessary process, as the few windows on either side had hanging shutters, which were fast closed and barred. The exterior and interior, like that of all Lutheran churches, were extremely plain. The service is very similar to that of our Evangelical churches in this country, the minister in black gown with white ruff conducting, with perhaps a precentor to pitch the tunes. The worshippers must have come from far, as the Pastor's house was the only one we had seen for miles. Some poor coffee was all that we could obtain from the cottage, and this, with the remainder of the bread



COAST SCENERY, ICELAND.

and cheese, composed our "tea," which we ate in one of the pews. We had brought a piece of soap with us, and borrowing a towel, walked to the river's edge, and refreshed ourselves with a wash. This river, by the bye, was one of the marvels of the place, as sometimes it disappears from view altogether, and then as suddenly reappears.

It seemed that the Pastor's only grandchild was very ill, and hardly expected to live, and the old man was in great anxiety about it. This accounted for our poor tea; for though far from wealthy, they were by no means inhospitable, and promised us fish for breakfast next morning.

On returning to the church the Pastor lent us a couple of blankets, and these with our travelling rugs formed our bed and bedding, and we slept in the pews. Our horses were tethered outside.

Early next morning we crossed a natural bridge to the Althing—a grassy tongue of land surrounded on all sides by precipices from forty to a hundred feet in depth, and, at the bottom, a deep black foss of varying width, on the opposite sides of which rose the dark lava precipices again, the unbroken plain lying all around. In this natural fortification the Parliament used to be held in the days of the free Republic; armed guards defended the entrance, whilst within the members of the Thing deliberated. At the further extremity of the grassy slope was a slight elevation called "The Hill of Laws," and three banks whereon the great leaders of the people sat when the Parliament met.

Having rambled over this curious place, where now only grave-faced sheep assembled, we returned to the church, and found hot coffee and salmon steaks awaiting us. The fresh morning air had given us an appetite, and, having despatched our repast, we mounted our ponies, crossed the plain of Thingfallir, and clambered up a rocky staircase, the counterpart of the one we had descended the previous evening. We traversed a country strewn in every direction with various-sized blocks of lava, whilst we skirted the base of mountains of the most singular colours—red, yellow, black, blue and grey—many of them having the appearance of huge cinder-heaps. Again descending, we threaded a marshy plain, and beheld in the distance the snowy summits of Mount Hecla. Then followed some miles of very disagreeable ruts, until, by-and-bye, we reached the river Bruara, which we began to ford, when lo! in the middle appeared a cleft in its bed, creating a waterfall in the shape of a horse-shoe. The chasm was spanned by a bridge, partly under water, the only bridge in Iceland. Crossing it, we waded through the remaining portion of the divided river, and continuing our journey arrived late in the afternoon at the plain wherein the Great Geysir is situated. Leaving me to put up the tent, my guide set out for a farm not far off in search of food.

We had sugar candy as a substitute for sugar, it being commonly used by Icelanders, but bread and cheese and biscuits were all that we could get besides. By the time we had finished night had closed in, and being warmed and comforted, we took a short quick stroll, which was necessarily curtailed, as we feared walking into one of some thirty hot springs which strewed the plain, and which it might prove an awkward and embarrassing circumstance to step into inadvertently.



THE ONLY BRIDGE IN ICELAND.

The night was fine, though dark, and there lay quivering on the northern horizon a zone of light, now paler, now stronger, which sent far upwards towards the zenith long points of fire; whilst overhead, ever and anon, passed wreathing clouds of delicate pink or azure; or suddenly the whole heavens were illuminated, and then all would be dark again.

It being too cold to linger longer, we went back to the tent, and with the saddles for pillows, and our rugs for blankets, made ourselves as cosy as the circumstances would allow. Fierce gales of wind threatened to blow away our only shelter, whilst the sulphur vapour which constituted our atmosphere rendered breathing difficult. Somewhat stiff and unrefreshed, we rose at an early hour, drank the cold remains of our chocolate, and then, to induce circulation, ran a race to the Great Geysir. This spring has a basin four feet in depth and about sixty feet wide. The water therein is beautifully clear, and just on the boil. The sides of the pool and all around it are coated with silica, and in one direction—where the contents overflow—is a long, broad depression, the silica forming itself into a channel exactly like a



REYKJAVIK.

series of oyster-shells. In the centre of the basin is a tube, like a funnel, through which the water spouts, now a rare occurrence. Its normal condition I have described as always simmering, full to the brim, and giving forth from its wide surface volumes of sulphur steam.

We next visited Strokr—the Hand Churn—a hot spring, in appearance the reverse of its larger relative, being an inverted funnel, small at the surface and larger below. Peering cautiously into its mouth, we could see the water boiling up almost to the top, and sinking again as if in spasms. My guide said that if we fed the Churn with a sufficient quantity of turf it would most likely spout; so digging with the spade some great clods of earth, we carried them to the mouth of the hole, where we piled them up, and toppling them in cannily all at once, discreetly withdrew. Everything remained quiet, and, as we had no more time to spare if we would reach Thingfallir that night, the guide prepared to saddle our steeds, whilst I dug up more sods in the hope that an overdose might prove effectual. However, we must start, so reluctantly I turned my back on disobliging Strokr and rode away. Scarcely had we gone a dozen yards when we heard a loud noise, and looking round, there were all the clods with which we had fed the Churn turning somersaults in the air, borne up by a column of water some five feet in diameter, and varying from sixty to seventy feet in height, whilst a dense volume of steam rolled far over the plain. For many minutes this singular spectacle continued, and when we trotted off exulting at our success, we left Strokr still muttering and sputtering, and protesting at our infamous behaviour in provoking his unquiet spirit.

Calling at the farm, we restored the spade, paid for our extensive banquet, and set off for Thingfallir, where we arrived late in the day. One of the first objects that met our gaze was a tiny coffin of dark wood, which told in language more eloquent than words its own sad story.

The grief of the poor old Pastor at the loss of his only grandchild was most touching to witness, as he showed me the narrow house to which the frail remains of mortality would so soon be consigned. He pointed upward to the infinite blue, where, beyond the range of mortal vision, his dead little one yet lived. The tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks, as he said amidst broken sobs that the time was close at hand when he too would leave this sorrowful earth, where life was made up so largely of meeting and parting, and join the many dear ones, who had gone before him, in that better world—where death cannot enter, neither any more pain, and sorrow and sighing are done away.

I pressed his hand in silence, and as I turned away a sadness seemed to have fallen on all around. A shadow as of the tomb rested on the fast deepening purple of the hills, but the glory that yet lingered on the highest summit seemed an earnest of the immortality beyond.

We made our preparations for the night as before, and rode off in the early morning without saying farewell. Having crossed the mysterious river, and climbed the rocky staircase, we paused for a last look at the wonderful valley and sleeping lake. There was the little cottage with its sorrowful inmates; there too the church, with its barred windows, and the quiet graves around; beyond, the ancient Parliament-place, the lava plain, and the giant hills bounding the horizon. Even as we gazed, the sun peered over the ridge behind us, touched with glory the loftiest snow peak, and thence descending filled valley and lake with a flood of light. With this as a last souvenir of Thingfallir, we slowly turned away, and rode through the rosy dawn towards Reykjavik.

SPIRITUAL BUILDING.

PREACHED THE SUNDAY PREVIOUS TO THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE OF A UNIVERSITY BY THE PRINCE OF WALES.

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."—1 Cor. iii. 10–15.

THESE verses have suggested themselves in connection with the interesting event which, under Royal auspices, is before us this week. You will observe the words, spoken with reference to believers and the Church at Corinth, contain architectural symbols and similes: the master-builder; the foundation-stone; the materials of structure; and so on. With us the interest gathers round an institution for human learning. In the Apostle's case it was the rearing of a spiritual temple. Adapting, then, the subject of the chapter to not inappropriate meditation, we have these successive points brought before us—

I. The locality of the building.

II. The laying of the foundation.

III. The superstructure itself.

IV. The testing day.

I. The *place of building*. It was ancient Corinth, the capital of Achaia. Not the Corinth with which we are familiar in the earlier history of the country. That older city had been burnt down; and a reference to the burning is not improbably made in these very verses. The fatal conflagration was planned and consummated by a Roman Consul, one hundred and fifty years before the Apostle's time. But a new and more flourishing capital had risen from the ruins during the Imperial sway, and by the Imperial orders of Julius Cæsar. And just as the happy accident or conjunction of river, and iron, and coal, and such-like, will always secure the increase and prosperity of more than one of our vast marts, so the natural site and physical advantages of Corinth could not fail to maintain for it a permanent place among the great commercial cities of the old world. It was the key of the Peloponnesus. Situated in the narrow isthmus between the Gulf of Ægina and Gulf of Lepanto, it commanded the traffic between Morea and the continent—northern and southern Greece. Into its harbours came most of the trading vessels from Rome and Italy on the west, and from Ephesus, Antioch, and the islands of the Archipelago, on the east; hence called by one of their own poets, "the bridge of the sea."* Athens, though not now in its full tide of glory, the age of Pericles being long past, still continued the repository of the arts and sciences, and polite literature. But in wealth and manufacture, commerce and population, she had been outstripped by her neighbour. Though Corinth had her gymnasia, her schools and colleges, like ourselves (for these are specially noted by Greek writers), yet it was rather in the midst of a bustling, enterprising port, filled, not with old aristocracy, but rich merchants and traders and shipbuilders; it was not amid groups of philosophers on Mars Hill, but amid the lumbering waggons with their bales of merchandise, and crowds of business, money-making men, that Paul had succeeded in uprearing a spiritual building. The parallel between ancient and modern communities, civic and commercial, might be carried farther still; and that too with regard to profound issues. In the immediately preceding context, the Apostle mourns over divisions, miserable cabals and schisms, which had already sprung up in the infant Church. Parties ranged under favourite names and banners, each bent on disparaging the teachings of the other, and impugning the authority of their accredited leaders. The very runners in the Isthmian games, who at the base of the historic rock (Acro-Corinthus) engaged in friendly contention for a corruptible crown, put to shame the professing athletes for unfading garlands. None of us in this age, assuredly, can be the first to throw the stone at those who had thus early entered, as sectaries, the arena of religious warfare.

A well-known writer has attempted, and not unsuccessfully, to show that wherever there is the restless activity of commercial life, there is a greater likelihood, both politically and ecclesiastically, of this splitting up into parties, saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas."† Yes! even in the little Church of Corinth it was so; and the burden of these first chapters of the Epistle is Paul's censure of this pitiable faction work.

* See Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul. *in loco.*

† See the Rev. F. Robertson's Lectures on Corinthians.

Brethren, am I not warranted in saying, that of our many sins as Christians, and specially in these days of boasted enlightenment and liberty, this is unquestionably the greatest? In the surging crowd that will be gathered next Thursday all will be in loyal unity, and devotion to the *Throne*. How different with the *Altar?* The jarring of religious parties—who dare gainsay it?—is a source of weakness amongst us. Unity is the strong point and the boasted point in the Church of Rome. Although, after all, her lauded unity is the mere unity of coercion and despotism, yet many are thankful to get apparent unity, even at such an unworthy and so base a cost: submitting to slavish subjection of mind and conscience and intelligence, in exchange for the alleged guidance of one supreme, immutable, paramount authority—the infallible Interpreter of Truth, the assumed Vicar of God. If Paul felt a burning indignation at these incipient party feelings in the church of Corinth, what would he not have felt had he been in the midst of ecclesiastical jealousies, and separations, which are the bane, not only of all our churches, but of all spiritual life, in these days and in these British realms?

There was so far apology, in the case of the Corinthians, for this clash of opinion and championing of parties, that they were owing to the mixed population. Corinth, from its site, was the meeting-place of many nations: a strange fusion and medley of Jew, Greek, and Roman—representatives from the Nile, the Orontes, and the Tiber, met in its market-place and harbours, with their provincial creeds, and rival schools, and inveterate prejudices. There is no such cause or palliation for these antagonisms with us. Let that future noble building crowning the adjoining eminence, where all the varied branches of human learning are to have their fostering home under the same roof, read the needed homily and rebuke. It is a type and prophecy—a silent sermon in stone, of what the Christian Church will yet be, and what her loving Lord designed her to be: when "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

II. But let us pass to *the laying of the foundation-stone* (v. 11): "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." On this we need not dwell. It is the Lord Jesus Christ in the dignity of His nature, the divinity of His Person, the completeness of His atoning work and sacrifice, who forms the one only foundation of every true and living Church and living believer. And Paul felt as his apostolic successors in the true sense of the word feel by experience, that it is this fundamental truth of the Gospel, in its divine simplicity—Christ, the tried corner-stone, the sure foundation—which is the secret of all success in preaching. "Christ crucified," now, as it was then, is the power of God unto salvation. Nor is this foundation-stone and foundation truth to be shaped and modified so as to accommodate it to the pride and reason and prepossessions of men.

Paul had received a scant measure of success immediately before going to Corinth, among the curious, novelty-seeking philosophic listeners at Athens. In vain had he attempted to organise a church. Perhaps in consulting the passage you will see that one reason for this was, that he might not offend the scruples of these fastidious hearers. While he preaches Christ, it is not Christ the crucified, but rather Christ "the risen One," and "the Judge." To use a modern phrase, it is perhaps more negative than positive truth he dwells on. The full exposition of the atoning work of his Lord, so conspicuously unfolded in his later Epistles, is totally wanting. The result is failure.

His resolution in Corinth was altered; and it led to the gathering and formation of the largest of his churches. The means employed, the resolve recorded and acted upon, was this—"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Not seeking to grapple with the subtleties of Sophists, and enter an intellectual arena with Epicureans and Stoics, or to win rhetoricians with the flash and glitter of brilliant thought. His powers of preaching were, indeed, depreciated by a large section, compared to those of Apollos. They said, just as we hear it said nowadays, "This Paul is devoid of polish and oratory—all the higher qualities and refinements of a persuasive speaker." They desiderated and applauded gifts that excited and astonished—brilliant declamation—and put small estimate on any others. The unsophisticated man was aware of this himself. "My speech and my preaching," he says, "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." And "again, I came not among you with excellency of speech or of man's wisdom." "His bodily presence," they said, "is weak, and his speech contemptible." But what mattered to him such unworthy and ungenerous criticisms? He knew that it was not by rhetorical art that living souls were won to his Great Master. He knew the danger of making preaching a mere intellectual display—pandering to the Greeks who "seek after wisdom." He had found the secret of success, and to this he would adhere. Such, then, was the foundation-stone, which one, who indeed could boast of no royal pedigree, but who was a veritable Prince, too, among men, came to lay in this commercial city of Corinth.

III. We have *the superstructure*. There are here presented to us, in the passage we are considering, two superstructures reared by two builders (v. 12): "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones;" that is one. If any man build, "wood, hay, stubble," that is another. Observe, both builders erect on the *same* foundation, and the *right* foundation. It is the after-

work alone which differs. In the one case, the structure remains unharmed, uninjured by the fire. In the other case, it is consumed, burnt to ashes. Let us look at both.

In that 17th chapter of Acts, when Paul stood on Mars Hill, with the glorious Parthenon close by him, which, though toned and mellowed by the lapse of 500 years, had still "its gilded and painted columns" and noble friezes, he spoke of the Godhead unlike "*gold*, or *silver*, or *stone*," graven by art or man's device." It has been ingeniously noted, that these are the very same words, in the same order as here. And, therefore, it may possibly have been his recent visit to Athens which suggested the language and simile of our text—these graceful Doric shafts of Pentelican marble gleaming in an Attic sun. Equally possible, it may have been some of the noble structures of old Corinth itself, which had survived the conflagration of Mummius: the magnificent porphyry columns, decorated with the precious metals of the temple of Venus or of Capitoline Jove. While the poorer and meaner buildings of "wood, hay, and stubble"—the wood-work of the walls; the hay, the dried grass that filled the interstices; the stubble, or thatch, covering the roof—while all these were consumed to ashes, what was "gold and silver and marble" escaped unscathed, and survived the fury of the destroyer.*

IV. The spiritual application will best be brought out by passing, in the fourth place, to the *testing day* (v. 13): "Every man's work (or building) shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

That day, it need hardly be said, is the Day of Judgment. Malachi gives the best comment and paraphrase upon it: The Lord shall suddenly come to his *Temple* (or building). "But who may abide the day of His coming? For He is like a refiner's *fire*. Behold, the day cometh that shall *burn* as an oven: and all that do wickedly shall be as STUBBLE" (like the dried grass or inflammable thatch of St. Paul). "The Lord shall be revealed with His mighty angels in FLAMING FIRE." The wicked are to be consumed with the *brightness* (the *fire*) of His coming. †

We need urge no literal interpretation of these various utterances. Whatever be the material fires which may at last wrap our earth in conflagration, let us look to the figurative meaning, as denoting God's omniscient sifting, discriminating righteousness—retributive justice; "Who will render to every man according to his deeds."

For, observe, while elsewhere, in many passages, He speaks of the doom of the wicked, in this He is speaking of *believers*, His people, the Church.

The two builders are both safe at last. They have both built on the same secure foundation. But their superstructures have been very different, and their recompense is different too (v. 14): "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." Now this brings before us a great truth which again and again is presented and enjoined in the New Testament. We have already seen that the giant work of the Saviour's doing and dying stands now, and will stand then, alone in its matchless, pre-eminent glory as the procuring cause of salvation. Without this as a foundation, everything else would be worse than worthless.

> "On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
> All other grounds are sinking sand."

Nevertheless, this passage endorses and enforces similar New Testament averments—that the believer who builds on Christ, resting his everlasting interests on the Divine suretyship, will receive a proportionate corresponding recompense for all deeds done out of love to the Redeemer and from a desire to glorify His holy name. He who builds on that foundation "gold, silver, precious stones"—these virtues, excellencies, good deeds, noble exertions, a holy life, and holy character, these things will live; he will get his reward, and listen to the "Well done;" while the other builder, the man who believed on Christ, but who has shown no such devotion in His cause and made no such sacrifice for His glory, he will have no part in the splendid recompense. His best motives and good deeds may have been so mingled with self and sin, as to be entitled to no other appellation but dried hay and stubble. They will not be taken account of. He will himself be saved, having built on the right foundation; but it will be "yet so as by fire;" saved, and no more. Like a man rushing from a burning house, or let down by a fire-escape, rescued as if by miracle, the fire making wild havoc of all he had clung to. "He suffered loss, yet he himself was saved; yet so as by fire." This doctrine is in harmony not only with the statements of Holy Scripture, but with the principles of natural equity and justice. "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." All will be stars deriving their lustre in the heavenly firmament from Christ the central Sun; "but one star will differ from another star in glory." Many were the runners on these plains of Isthmia, so identified with the Corinth of St. Paul; but it was not those who lagged in the race, or were hampered with weights, but the swift of foot and the strong in heart and purpose, who were wreathed with the proudest crowns of olive and pine on reaching the goal. We listened, but a short time ago, to a harrowing tale of captivity, with all its privations and horrors, from men who have already suffered for their Divine Master, and are ready and willing to suffer again, even to bonds.

* See Dean Stanley, on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, *passim*.

† *Ib.*, vol. i., p. 77.

Are we unwarranted in saying, and saying strongly, how different will be their eternal recompense from those who, though building on the same foundation, have not made any such self-surrender and self-sacrifice? Those who drink of the cup of suffering are to sit on the Master's right and left hand in the Kingdom. Other faithful men, those who are spoken of as "the *wise*," are to shine "as the brightness of the firmament," but such-like hero hearts, who have braved all and endured all to "turn many to righteousness," are to shine "as the stars for ever and ever."

The urgent practical exhortation and lesson is contained in the last clause of v. 10:—"*But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*" The great truth these verses bring home to us is that Christianity is not a mere system of creeds and of dogmas, but a *life*. What are we doing? What are we building? It is not needful that we aspire after great things in our present sphere. It is not necessary that we should, like St. Paul, be wise "master-builders." But whatever be our assigned place and niche in the building, are we *occupying* it? We are only the hand-labourers, God is the Architect. All is planned for us. We work to His plan, no more. Let us do our assigned part, whatever it be. "To every man his work." That magnificent building which is to be much in our thoughts this week, has had, and has still, its divisions of labour. Some quarrying the stones, some working the engines, some rearing the walls, some levelling and shaping the terraces. But each has his allotted part, and the lowliest hewers of wood and drawers of water are indispensable for the rearing and completion of the whole. He that planteth and he that watereth are *one—i.e.*, they do not interfere, but rather co-operate. Both are needed. And so it is in the Christian Church. No one is so lowly that he or she can do nothing. Only do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men, and He will regard your lowliest work. He will accept the farthings, as well as the gold and silver and precious stones. Oh, on that great day when "the Books are opened," let these divine registers contain the record of faith, and love, and charity; submission under trial; a meek bearing of the cross; a close walk with God; a sympathetic interest in the good and welfare of our brother. The cup of cold water, where there was nothing else to give, will weigh more with the Judge than the brilliant action of the parade-day. The patient forgiveness of an injury will win the laurel denied to many a deed that drew down the plaudits of thousands.

Let us leave this House of Prayer to-day, with the devout impression that to each of us is committed a building—a soul building for eternity; a superstructure to rear silently, without pageantry or blare of trumpet; but withal, a great and divine reality. What is to be its characteristic? Are we to build the hut or the palace? Is the material used that which is worthless and perishing, to be finally consumed as tow, or is it that which is to defy the last fires?—a building of God; its walls salvation, its gates praise; more enduring than Parthenon marble, or Corinthian brass, or Ophir gold.

Spirit of all grace, come down and make every one of us a consecrated sanctuary! As spiritual and immortal builders, inspire each lip with the resolve, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until, in this deathless soul of mine, I have found a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob!"

THE SNAPDRAGON AND HER FRIENDS.

BY THE REV. ALFRED J. BAMFORD, B.A., AUTHOR OF "TURBANS AND TAILS; OR, SKETCHES IN THE UNROMANTIC EAST," ETC.



IT was quite clear that the Snapdragon was in a bad temper, though the reason of it was not at all clear. The morning was bright and sunny, one of those glorious mornings so common in the latter part of summer, and all the plants in the garden, except the Snapdragon, seemed perfectly happy. Some were joyously throwing open their full-blown flowers to the sunlight, some were thinking with glad anticipation of their buds soon to break out into blossom; while others, which had done flowering, were comfortably nursing their ripening seeds, and although they did not themselves look as gay as when glowing with bright colour, were heartily enjoying the gay show all around them.

Close by the Snapdragon grew a little Pansy, as merry a flower as ever rooted. It took a good deal to make her miserable. She was always cheerful, but for all that, she felt happier when her neighbours were happy too. Without becoming actually miserable, she was conscious of a kind of chilliness in the air when any of them were out of spirits. She felt, for instance, just now a sort of breeze of unhappiness, almost like an east wind, blowing upon her from the Snapdragon. What was the matter—whether she was sick, or cross, or both—she did not know, but she did know that she would rather have her glad than grumpy, and, moreover, that it would be better

for her, and she determined, therefore, to try and find out what was wrong, and, if possible, to put it right again.

"What a lovely morning, madam, is it not?" said she, by way of a beginning. If she had been addressing almost any other flower of her acquaintance she would have left out the "madam," but she had long ago discovered that her neighbour grew up pretty straight, and was accustomed to stand somewhat on her dignity. Even among the blossoms on her flower-stalks she insisted on what she considered the due observance of rank and precedence; much more did she insist on regard being paid to conventional courtesy and etiquette between different plants. So the Pansy said "madam."

But the Snapdragon took no notice. She either did not hear or pretended that she did not.

"Not very promising," thought the Pansy; "but I 'll try again." At that moment she noticed a very comical expression upon the face of the Daisy, who, as soon as she caught the Pansy's eye, gave her a wink with a good deal of meaning in it. It meant that the Daisy understood exactly how the Pansy felt, and knew exactly what she was trying to do, but considered it a hopeless task to attempt to put the Snapdragon into a good temper when her ladyship thought fit to be in a bad one. There was a touch of sympathy in the wink—which was pleasant; but there was also a touch of superior wisdom in it—which was not. It was as though the Daisy had said, "I have a great deal more sense than to set myself to any such foolish endeavour as that which you have undertaken; but go on, if you like; everyone must learn for herself." So the Pansy felt a little put on her mettle. She was more fully resolved than before to get the Snapdragon into a good humour, if it were at all possible, for it would not only be good for the Snapdragon and herself, as the Snapdragon's neighbour, but it would show Daisy that her airs of superiority were a little out of place. She would try again.

"How are you feeling this morning, madam? There is the promise of a beautiful day. This sunshine is really enough to make anyone cheerful and well, is it not?"

The Snapdragon spoke this time; but it was less a reply to the Pansy's words than a remark to herself, which, however, she evidently intended the Pansy and others to overhear. "Just think," muttered she, "of that Dahlia. I wonder she is not ashamed of flaunting such staring colours in the face of the whole garden. I declare my eyes are so dazzled, it is as much as I can do to see anything else."

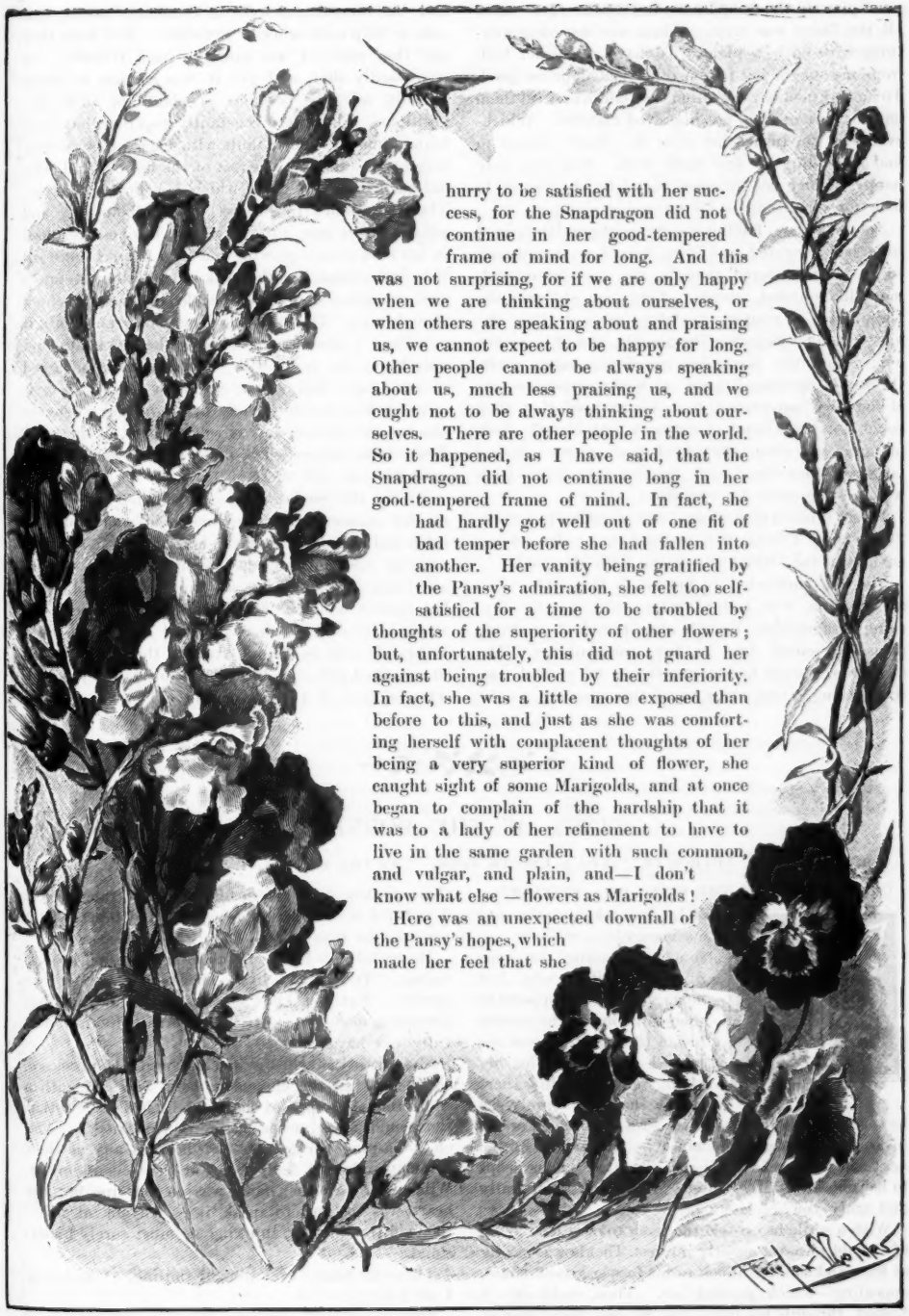
Now, the blossoms of the particular Dahlia referred to were of the same colour as were the blossoms of the Snapdragon herself, but they were brighter and larger. It was no secret that the Snapdragon had been anxious to increase both the brightness and size of her blossoms. She was finding fault, therefore, with the Dahlia for being what she had unsuccessfully tried to be herself. The Pansy knew this quite well, but was far too discreet, not to say too polite, to say so. It would probably have done very little good to read her a lesson on the sinfulness of envy, so the Pansy tried another method, which was all the easier for her, because, being a flower of a rather irregular blossom herself, she did not altogether admire the formal style of the Dahlia, and considered the Snapdragon really beautiful, or, at least, considered that she would be if it were not for the dulling of her colours and cramping of her growth by her envious and unhappy disposition. It was with a clear conscience that she was able to express for her a measure of admiration.

"I suppose I 'm too small to see either you or the Dahlia properly," said she. "You both of you seem to me right up against the sky; but, as far as I can judge, you are very nearly as big and as bright as she." You see, the Pansy knew what was the matter with the Snapdragon—that she was envious of the Dahlia—and so replied to her thought rather than her words. "Of course your style is different from hers," she went on, "and for my part, I think it is better. But then, every plant must blossom out according to its own nature, and must make the best it can of its own type of beauty. We must not blame the poor Dahlia because she cannot blossom after your form."

The Snapdragon was evidently gratified, and answered the Pansy quite pleasantly. The appreciation of the one flower had helped her to forget the superiority of the other, and to turn her thoughts from the Dahlia to herself. She grew quite friendly and free in conversation with the little Pansy, condescending to tell her what glorious and magnificent blossoms she had the last time she bloomed, and what still more glorious and magnificent blossoms she was going to have next time—she was not in bloom just then—and the Pansy listened with humble attention, highly pleased to see the Snapdragon so happy, though not blind to the fact that her happiness seemed to grow out of thinking and speaking about herself. So gracious, indeed, did she become, that she even praised the bright cheerful look the Pansy had when in full bloom. But even in this, I fear there was more desire to say what would be considered the proper thing for her to say than to express any real admiration. She was thinking of the necessity she thought herself under of saying something pleasant because she was so much grander than the little flower she was talking with. She spoke of the Pansy's bright looks: she was thinking of her own superior position and grace.

The Pansy understood this, but did not feel hurt about it. She was too glad to have succeeded in her aim, and was rather inclined to triumph over the Daisy, at whom she sent a quiet sly glance that as good as asked that perky little flower if she had not been a trifle over-wise just now, when she gave her that knowing wink.

But the Pansy was perhaps in a trifle too great a



hurry to be satisfied with her success, for the Snapdragon did not continue in her good-tempered frame of mind for long. And this was not surprising, for if we are only happy when we are thinking about ourselves, or when others are speaking about and praising us, we cannot expect to be happy for long. Other people cannot be always speaking about us, much less praising us, and we ought not to be always thinking about ourselves. There are other people in the world. So it happened, as I have said, that the Snapdragon did not continue long in her good-tempered frame of mind. In fact, she had hardly got well out of one fit of bad temper before she had fallen into another. Her vanity being gratified by the Pansy's admiration, she felt too self-satisfied for a time to be troubled by thoughts of the superiority of other flowers; but, unfortunately, this did not guard her against being troubled by their inferiority. In fact, she was a little more exposed than before to this, and just as she was comforting herself with complacent thoughts of her being a very superior kind of flower, she caught sight of some Marigolds, and at once began to complain of the hardship that it was to a lady of her refinement to have to live in the same garden with such common, and vulgar, and plain, and—I don't know what else—flowers as Marigolds!

Here was an unexpected downfall of the Pansy's hopes, which made her feel that she

must give up the Snapdragon in despair. Yes—after all, the Daisy was right. There was no doing anything with such a plant. To have made her look from one side of her to the other had done no good. To have turned her eyes from the Dahlia and set them on the Marigold had not improved matters. Whichever way she turned her eyes, she clearly meant to find something to find fault with. She was only happy so long as, by some oversight, she forgot to look for something to be miserable about.

So the Pansy, finding the Snapdragon determined to be bad-tempered, and being herself as determined to be good-tempered, thought she had better seek more like-minded friends. Very soon she and the Daisy and a couple of Asters were having the merriest time together imaginable, and it was not long before the Marigolds joined the happy circle. Of course the Snapdragon, with the sense she had of her own importance, took for granted that they could not be talking of anybody but herself—took for granted, when she heard their merry, ringing laughter, that they were laughing at her. Here was fresh ground for complaint.

"Just think of that Pansy," she grumbled to herself. "Only fancy a flower that professes to be above being envious of the Dahlia associating with Marigolds!"

She was muttering to herself in this style when a Geranium, who had a pretty quick ear for anything disagreeable, though almost deaf to anything pleasant, joined her in her complainings. The Geranium mostly had a grumbling fit on, but was, if anything, worse than usual this morning, so she and the Snapdragon were in congenial moods, and able to help each other to grumble. And from that day they grew—I was going to say, friendly. It was hardly that, and yet it was as near to being friendly as was possible to plants of such dispositions. They were constantly together, but they found almost as much fault with each other as they found with others. The rest of the flowers said they did each other no good, which I believe was true. The Geranium's fretfulness and fault-finding, and poking of her nose into everybody's business, resulted in her seed-vessel growing out into a long spike till it looked almost like the beak of a stork or a crane; and wherever she went people whispered behind their hands, "There, look! There's a crane's bill, if you like!" She never got rid of the nickname, and very likely she never will. But she is so ashamed of her long "bill" that, although her blossom is quite pretty, she hides away in the hedges whenever she has the chance, and is seldom seen in the open flower-beds, except when, much against her will, the gardener sets her there.

As for the Snapdragon, she suffered in a very similar manner. She grew more and more quarrelsome and irritable; in fact, she got into a habit of opening and shutting her mouth without saying anything, as though her utterance were choked by her morose temper. Moreover, when her seed-pods ripened, the effect of her continual grumbling could be plainly seen in them. And to this day a Snapdragon seed-pod is as like as possible to the pinched, wizened face of a cross-looking old crone.

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

BY C. DESPARD, AUTHOR OF "INTO A LARGER ROOM," "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.—AT THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

THEKLA had taken up the card mechanically, without so much as reading the name of the visitor who had come at such an opportune moment. But on the threshold of the drawing-room she paused. Who was the big young fellow standing there in the shadow? Surely she had seen those kind brown eyes before. For an instant she thought she must be mistaken; in the next she was reassured, and the glad colour leapt to her cheeks. "Mr. Hinton!" she cried, "is it really and truly you?"

With a smile he crossed the room to meet her. Full of the old pleasant sisterly interest, Thekla was gazing at him, and she saw a look in his face—earnest, timid, appealing—which puzzled her. Then, suddenly, it flashed through his mind that he had heard Marion was disengaged still. Ah! and everyone said that there must be some reason for it. How strange—how delightful it would be if her dear, kind brother Hinton was the reason.

Meanwhile his hand was clasping hers, and he was saying, "Yes, it is I, little Thekla—oh! I beg your pardon. But you know on board the *Amazon* you always seemed like a little girl to us. How wonderfully you have changed!"

She was not offended, as she had been when Isaacson commented on the change in her. She said, with a smile, that she supposed she was a little older, but that she would never, never change to her friends. And oh!—clasping her hands—*had* he seen any of their shipmates, dearest Lady Lucy, or the General, or Mr. Wilkinson? Another name was on her lips, but her heart was too full to speak it. "Anyone at all!" she said tremulously, thinking he must surely understand.

"Give me time," said Ronald, smiling. "And may I sit down?"

"Sit down? of course. What a scatterbrain I am! Wheel the couch before the window, good

Gopal, and bring me my work-table and chair. Are you in a hurry, or can you stay a little while?"

"I have nothing whatever to do until dinner," said Ronald.

"Because, I mean," said Thekla, taking out her embroidery, "it will be such a delightful surprise to Marion and father to find you here when they come back. Now I am going to work, and you must talk, and I shall feel as if we were on board the dear old *Amazon* again."

"I am to talk about *Amazon* folk, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, yes! Have you seen any of them lately?"

"I saw Lady Lucy only two days ago."

The busy little fingers that had been flashing to and fro stopped, and the large grey eyes were fixed upon Ronald's face. "You saw her? Oh! I wish I could!" she cried.

"I have a suspicion that you may see her before the winter is over," said Ronald. "She has an idea that you want looking after,"

"Oh! I do: I do—I mean," stammering and blushing, "I want her advice. I have just begun to go out, you know, and I am afraid I make dreadful mistakes sometimes."

There came a stern expression into the kind brown eyes. What had they been doing to his frank little darling to make her so timorous? "Surely," he said gravely, "you have friends here!"

"Oh, yes. I have my father and my sister. Only—well, I thought I should like a talk to Lady Lucy. Everybody confides in her," said Thekla. She was making a desperate effort to get back to her old light-heartedness, and to forget the skeleton that was stealing her life away. It was an imaginary skeleton, she said to herself. She had only to tell her father how rudely Isaacson had behaved, and he would be forbidden the house. And ah! there he was. "I hear the carriage!" she said, springing up. "Sit where you are, Mr. Hinton. I will tell them a visitor is here. They will be so much surprised!"

In a moment, before Hinton could stop her, she was out on the verandah. The barouche had just drawn up. Sir Richard, who had stepped out first, when he caught sight of his younger daughter's face, all aglow with pleasure and mystery, forgot to give his hand to Marion. "Why, Thekla," he cried, "Thekla!"

She ran into his arms. "Darling, I am so glad to see you!" she whispered.

He stroked her hair. "Then my child is happy?"

"Oh, yes, dear—perfectly happy now you have come back.—Marion," to her sister, who was standing close by, smiling, but not expansively, "there is a visitor in the drawing-room."

"Oh, indeed! Is there?" said Sir Richard. "This is very nice. So you have been playing the hostess in our absence, little madam! Blushing, too!"

"But, father——" stammered Thekla.

"You needn't apologise. You are caught. But girls are girls, and if you will tell me all about it, you shall be forgiven this time. Marion, will you very kindly go in and entertain this visitor for a few minutes? When I have had a few words with Thekla. I may possibly have a lecture for *him*. This way, my little girl."

He drew her to the curtain that shut off his library from the verandah, lifted it, and motioned that she should pass under. "Come," he said, with an encouraging smile—for her blushes and smiles had gone—"tell me all about it. Let your father be the first to hear of your good fortune."

They stood face to face in the cool dark room, luxurious with Eastern *bijouterie* and heavy with the scent of roses and magnolias. Only a few days before Sir Richard had feared he might have to leave it, and with it the things which were dearer than life to him, and at this moment, when, as he believed—and how else was he to interpret her look of smiling mystery?—his child, by yielding to his wishes, had prevented the crisis which was so nearly impending, he felt very tender and benignant towards her.

"You are trembling, my love," he said gently; his hand was on her shoulder, so that he could feel the tremor that passed through her; but the room was too dark for him to see the white anguish of her face. "Then it was true—all true!"—this is what she was saying to herself. She stood at the brink of a precipice, and hands—trusted hands—were pushing her over. She could not speak. She felt, at that moment, as if words would have choked her. Her father sat down on one of the settees, and drew her to his knees. "Sit here," he said. "Ah! child, if you knew how strange it is to me that you, my little Thekla, should be even thinking of such things as love and marriage! Why, it seems only the other day that I took you from the arms of your dying mother. 'Be a good father to my baby,' she said. And I have tried, Thekla."

"Yes—yes—yes! You are the best and dearest father in all the world."

"Hush! hush! my little one. You are exciting yourself. I know you love me; there is no need for protestations. And we must think of this poor visitor we have left with Marion." He was stroking her hair all the time, and his touch was so soft and kind that Thekla began to take heart again. "What is that you say?" he went on, as she stammered something about the visitor's feelings. "He will be pleased? Of course he will. But I think he may be just a little anxious to see us too. Are you surprised that I know so much about it? I think I must tell you a secret. I knew he was coming to-day—I let him come. I confess I was afraid of what the result might be, for it is more to you, and indeed to us all—much, much more than you can imagine, that you should accept this fine offer. But poor Isaacson was impatient. Do you know he is quite ridiculously in love with you, child? If it hadn't been for that—— Why, what is it?" She had drawn herself away from him and sprung to her feet.

"Father," she panted, "you are making a mistake. I haven't accepted anybody. Oh, dearest, don't turn away from me! Take me into your arms again! I love you—you—more than anyone else in the world, and why should I wish to leave you?"

"This is all nonsense, child," he said feebly; but his face turned pale, and he set his teeth together.

"Yes—yes—nonsense!" she cried. "I am your little Thekla, and——" With a stifled sob she threw her arms round his neck.

He thrust her away. "Do you mean to tell me," he said darkly, "that you have refused Isaacson?"

"I couldn't accept him, father."

"Not accept him? You have as good as accepted him already." And then he was silent for a few moments, and stood looking at her. It was a terrible change. All in a moment, like the sweeping down of a tornado upon the stillness of Southern seas, came the swift and awful revulsion of feeling. He was conscious of it himself. He was aware of departing miserably from his own standard of gentlemanly action and feeling, and this consciousness made him all the more angry with the slight girlish creature who had raised his hopes so highly only to dash them to the ground. And what was she—this little girl—his own daughter—that she should venture to resist his will? She must know, by this time, what he desired, and she should do it.

Forcing himself to speak quietly, he said—

"Is Mr. Isaacson here?"

"No, father."

"I gather from what you have said that he has been this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"How long did he stay?"

"I don't know."

"You sent him away?"

"I didn't ask him to stay."

"Answer me without prevarication. It was what you said that caused him to go away?"

"I think so."

"And what is this nonsense, then, about a visitor?"

"Mr. Hinton came, father."

"Hinton?"

"Yes; don't you remember him? He came out with us. I thought Marion would be glad to see him, and I wanted to give her a surprise."

"Oh! a surprise," said Sir Richard, with a smile of bitter satire. "So it is not enough to disobey me yourself—you must entrap your sister into disobedience. I am thankful to know that I need not be afraid. I have *one* dutiful daughter."

He stopped. Thekla did not answer, for she could not. Her face was covered with her hands, and she was weeping bitterly.

"Have you anything to say?" said Sir Richard. "Isaacson will come back at a word from me."

"No, no, no!" she said, shuddering.

"Then," he said sternly, "I must beg you to stay where you are until I can see you again. That Isaacson will come back I believe. I *intend*," with strong emphasis on the word, "that he shall find you more reasonable."

And so she was left alone with her wildly beating heart. She might easily have left the room, for one curtained opening led to the verandah, another to her sister's dressing-room, and a third to Sir Richard's sleeping apartment, which communicated with the dining-room. And this dark, heavily scented room oppressed her like a dungeon, made her feel as if she could neither think, nor breathe, nor understand, nor reason. But she would not stir. Reverence for her father governed her still. She did not think of him as cruel, only as mistaken. It was because he had set his heart upon seeing her rich that he would force this dreadful thing upon her. He could not know how impossible it was.

But if she obliged him in everything besides, then he might come to see that it was not perverseness which kept her steadfast, that in this she could not—she could not be obedient. Had the kind, soft-footed angel from whom, as our Father, for wise purposes, has ordained, men and women in the full rapture of life shall turn away with horror—had the angel of death stood on one side of her, and Isaacson, with all the bright possibilities of his boundless wealth, on the other, her choice would not have wavered for a moment. Nor did she ask herself why. Reasoning itself was out of the question, for there was no room for it. Everything—religion, intellect, taste, the innocence which, like a fair white garment, the Father of spirits sets about His children for their glory and defence—made this dreadful thing impossible, even to her imagination.

And so, while the darkness fell, she sat on alone in her prison.

Presently she heard voices in the verandah—Marion's light tones. "We hope you will come again, Mr. Hinton?"—His answer, curiously grave: "I shall certainly accept your kind invitation, Miss Ellerslie." Sir Richard ordering Gopal to call up Mr. Hinton's syce, the rattle of wheels and horses' hoofs in the compound, and then silence.

Another brief spell of time passed away, after which she was aware of steps in her father's dressing-room. He was moving about, and giving brief sharp orders to his bearer. After a few moments the voices dropped. He was ready, then; surely he would come in and speak to her—he must know how miserable she was. But the curtain upon which her eyes were fixed remained unlifted. The sounds of movement ceased; the glimmer of light died away; she was once more alone, and, gentle and patient as she was, she found her position almost intolerable. Was she to be left all night alone in this dismal place? Would not they send even Luchmee to her? What had she done—what had she done—that she should be so treated? She tried to cry out, but her father's face as she had seen it last came back to her, and her voice died away in her throat in indistinguishable sounds. Deadlier and more awful grew the silence; she was becoming frightened; she could hear her own pulses throbbing; dark fancies bred in hours of study took bodily shape and thronged about her. At last she felt that she could bear it no longer. She was on the point of rushing out, when she heard sounds again; wheels, a prodigious trampling of horses' hoofs; voices; and now her colour rose, and she uncovered her face and sat erect in her chair, looking out before her with dry, blazing eyes. Isaacson had come back, and if her imprisonment was to last all night she was glad of it. To save her life she would not have come out of the room.

"Poor little Thekla!" Surely the voice was purposely lifted. "So she is not able to see me this

evening? That is bad news. We must try to do the best we can without her. To-morrow, I make no doubt she will be all right again."

And then the hateful voice, with its assumed good nature and its veiled brutality, died away in the distance; but it had done its work, for the girl's timidity and terror had gone. Abashed before her father, whom she loved, before this man, who, knowing she did not love him, would buy her with his gold, she could be brave and strong and steadfast.



"Thekla did not answer, for she could not."—*p.* 361.

CHAPTER XVII.—AN ALLIANCE OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE.

Late that evening Lady Lucy Leveridge arrived in Bombay, drove to an hotel, and at once sent out a messenger for Ronald Hinton, who was with her in as short a time as possible.

"Why, Lady Lucy," he said, as soon as he was admitted to her presence, "I didn't expect you for a week at least. You look pale and agitated. I hope nothing is wrong. The General——"

"He is perfectly well, thank you, and will follow me shortly. Sit down, Ronald. No, there is nothing wrong with me," said Lady Lucy, trying to smile. "I have come for that poor child's sake. I can't get her out of my head; so my good husband, who is always distressed when I am, said 'You had better go on at once.' I ought to tell you that since I saw you last I have heard more about her. I wrote to friends in England who have known the Ellerslies for years. One of them was a great friend of the second Lady

Ellerslie, and is co-guardian with Sir Richard of our poor little Thekla. My letter alarmed him; and he has not only given me a few very surprising particulars about the child and her father, but he has also asked me to act as his representative with her. But more of that presently. You have seen her?"

"Yes. I saw her to-day."

"You look grave. For pity's sake don't tell me she is engaged."

"I don't think it has come to that. But something strange is going on. In fact, I was in the middle of a letter to you when I received your message." He then gave a brief account of his visit to the Ellerslies, saying in conclusion: "My own belief is that the man has proposed to her, and that she has refused him, and that her father means to try and make her reverse her decision."

"To persecute her into marrying a man whom she abhors?" said Lady Lucy indignantly. "And what wonder? The man is a barbarian! He hasn't even manners. But I mustn't rave, for that won't help in the least. Ronald Hinton" (abruptly), "do you take a real interest in this little girl?"

"How do you define a real interest, Lady Lucy?"

"Nay; I think I must leave that to you."

And there they paused for a few seconds, and the brave honest eyes of the young man and the brave honest eyes of the woman, who, knowing the world well, had preserved unsullied her freshness of heart, looked one into the other.

"Does it mean," said Ronald at last, very sadly, "that one image fills all your heart and mind, that you see it by day, that you dream of it by night? Does it mean that you spend hours thinking and thinking for one; that for the comfort and happiness of that one—aye, even if you never share in it yourself—you would willingly give your life? Does this mean interest?—because——" His voice broke and his eyes fell. "I don't think I need say any more," he whispered.

And there was no need, for Lady Lucy was weeping. But from that time forth they were firmer allies than ever.

The next forenoon, taking the privilege of an old friend, Lady Lucy called on the Ellerslies. She was pleasantly received by Marion and effusively by Sir Richard, but she did not see Thekla. "My poor dear little sister was not well last night," said Marion. "I am afraid the climate tries her. I gave orders that she was not to be awoke this morning. But she may be getting up. I will call Luchmee."

The pretty little ayah came in, and Lady Lucy scanned her face. She had lived so long in India, and she had watched the people so closely, that she understood them after a fashion that is rare with the Anglo-Indian, to whom, in many cases, the native servant is merely a machine. To Marion, Luchmee was much the same as usual; Lady Lucy saw that in her face which made her tremble. There was anguish in the dark liquid eyes that for one instant, as if in search for help, had sought hers. Was the trouble Thekla's or her own?

"How is the *chota* Miss Sahib now?" said Marion.

"Miss Sahib sleeps," said Luchmee.

Marion turned to Lady Lucy. "Then we had better not awake her. But she will be so sorry to miss you."

"I will send her a message by Luchmee," said Lady Lucy. "Come here, my child."

Swiftly, at the sound of the kind voice, the dark eyes were lifted. They were full of intelligence now. This kind and clever English lady, who could read the heart of the Indian woman as if it were a book, would surely help them.

"Luchmee," said Lady Lucy gently, "you can take your Miss Sahib a message—can you not?"

"Exalted presence," said the ayah, bowing low, "the words that are told to Luchmee she will faithfully tell again."

"They will not be difficult to remember," said Lady Lucy. "Here is my card. Give it to Thekla Sahib when she awakes, and tell her that her old friend Lady Lucy hopes to see her soon. Do you understand?"

"Luchmee understands; Luchmee will remember," said the Indian woman, gathering the card into her bosom and gliding noiselessly from the room.

Later in the day Lady Lucy paid several more visits, and what she heard from her friends in Bombay made her tremble for Thekla's resolution. For the pretty little legend that had made Isaacson a success and Sir Richard a hero had gathered force and volume in its journey from mouth to mouth, and it was repeated to her everywhere. She denied it, of course; but her friends, although ready to admit that there might have been exaggeration, could not and would not give it up altogether. Others had met people, who had met other people, who had been on board the *Amazon* with the interesting young couple; and hadn't he given her presents? and was there not an unfortunate young fellow on the ship who broke his heart, or committed suicide, or something of the like dreadful sort, when he saw what was going on?

"Oh!" cried Lady Lucy, "this is too bad. You have got hold of the wrong end of the story altogether."

But her protests were of no use whatsoever; for, in spite of all she could say, the Isaacson-and-Ellerslie legend held the field.

"The child must be stronger than we think," she said to Ronald Hinton, whom she found that afternoon looking out for her eagerly in the ladies' side of the club, "or she would have been married already. The whole station is against us. What are we to do?"

"I can do nothing," said Ronald, very sadly. "I called this afternoon, and my card was taken in, and the message was, 'Doors shut!'"

"They were at home?"

"Yes, I am certain of it. I saw Isaacson's mail-phaeton and black horses in the compound."

"The plot thickens," said Lady Lucy. "I must get to speak to her. Let me see."

She thought for a few moments, and then said, "There is something going on here to-night?"

"Yes: a musical and elocutionary entertainment. The Ellerslies and Isaacson are sure to attend."

"And it is more than likely that Thekla will be left alone," said Lady Lucy, striking her hands together. "That would be my opportunity. But I should like to be sure before I make the venture."

XUM

"I have it," said Ronald. "You wait here, and I will watch the arrivals; and as soon as I see Sir Richard's party drive in, I will let you know who have come."

The evening came. Lady Lucy, cloaked and hooded, in a beautiful evening dress, and with a card of admission in her hand, was waiting in a corner of the library at the Yacht Club. Ronald Hinton was watching the carriage-loads of gaily dressed people come and go.

The Ellerslies' barouche drove up. It was open, for the night was clear and lovely, and he saw at once that it had three occupants—two gentlemen and a lady. Marion was the lady; Sir Richard and Isaacson were the gentlemen. Armed with this news, he went to Lady Lucy, and she was soon on her way to Malabar Hill.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

"Luchmee dear, what is that? I am sure—I am sure I heard a noise."

"Noise there is none," said Luchmee, lifting the curtain of her mistress's door and peeping out. "Still is the house, and night has fallen. Will not Miss Sahib sleep again?"

"No, Luchmee; I have slept long enough."

"But see; I will fan Miss Sahib, and Sonya shall sing to her."

Sonya was at Thekla's feet. When her mother spoke, she lifted her voice and sang a little Persian song, which ran something like this:—

"Gather roses, gather roses, in the garden of the sun.
The thousand-eyed beholding, whose race is nearly run.
While champa-buds are bursting, and the air breathes soft and sweet,
Gather roses, dearest maiden: they are springing at thy feet."

The sweet thrilling voice filled the room, so that when there were sounds none of the three heard them, and Lady Lucy, whom Gopal had admitted, was actually within the door before the song was over.

Sonya, whose face was towards the door, saw her first, and gave a little cry, which Thekla echoed. But in the next instant the cry was a cry of rapture, for Lady Lucy's kind arms had received her.

"Too bad of me to give you such a surprise!" she said smilingly; "but the fact is that your little maid's sweet voice attracted me; and when I had come in, you know, I couldn't stir. You can't think what a pretty picture you made! But tell me, how is it that I find you here, and not in the midst of the gaiety at the Club?"

The dark flush mounted to Thekla's face. "I am not very well," she said, in a low voice; "and—and someone is there whom I had rather not meet. But"—springing up—"here I am talking about myself and forgetting you. Take off your cloak, dearest Lady Lucy. Oh, no; I am not so ill that I cannot wait upon you. Luchmee, tell Gopal to get some tea ready, and to bring it in as quickly as ever he can. Now I shall be quite comfortable; and oh, *how* delightful this is!" said the poor child, nestling close to her friend.

"You have been alone long, you poor little thing!"

"All day, except for Luchmee; and yesterday there was no one."

"But why?"

"I am afraid it would be too long a story," said Thekla, sighing.

"I have come to hear it, Thekla."

"Then you know?" said Thekla, hiding her face in her hands.

"I know something. You must tell me the rest."

There was a pause, and then Lady Lucy went on. "Listen while I tell you a little story of my own. A few weeks ago, when my husband and I were camping out in a wild part of the Punjaub, I saw amongst the dark hosts thronging about us a face which I thought I knew. It was under a jewelled turban, which crowned a rich Oriental dress, so at first I was perplexed. But presently I saw the stranger address my husband. The General looked pleased, brought him up to me at the door of my tent where I was sitting, and asked me if I had room at the dinner-table for an old friend. Then I saw that my first impression had been right. Through the disguise of the Oriental dress I had recognised—can you guess whom?"

"Was it Mr. Grierson?" said Thekla, whose cheeks were rosy again.

"Yes, our friend Michael, and not changed in the least, though I must tell you that he has become rather a personage. One of his Eastern relatives, who died lately, left him a large fortune, and now, if you please, his head is full of schemes. He is going to educate, and elevate, and no one knows what. That, however, doesn't belong to my story."

"It is just what I should like to hear," said Thekla, who felt as if she were being lifted into the larger life of which she had dreamed, and leaving the bitterness of the present behind her. "Couldn't you tell me?" she entreated.

"Not to-night, my dear child. It would take hours. Besides, we shall hear of all that presently. If I don't very much mistake, Michael is one of those of whom the world will talk; and when the world talks, you know, everybody listens. And now come down, if you please, out of your dreamland. My little story is not meant to send you on a voyage of discovery through the universe, but to explain how I know what I have come here this evening to tell. I wonder if it will astonish you very much to hear that our eccentric friend Michael had more to say about you that night than about his grand schemes for the regeneration of Eastern society?"

"About me? Oh, Lady Lucy!"

"I am telling you the simple truth. In fact, I may say that my presence here to-night is due to him. Do you remember poor Murchison?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do!"

"He said some strange things to you."

Thekla covered her face with her hands, and trembled. "Why do you speak of him?" she said.

"Because I must, dear." As she spoke Lady Lucy laid her hand softly on the girl's flushed cheek.

"Listen to me," she said, "and believe that it is for your sake, and to prevent a great wrong from being done, I speak as I do. Michael was poor Murchison's friend, and he confided to him this amongst other



"She heard a noise, and instinctively her hand closed over them."—*p.* 373.

things—that he had overheard a conversation between your father and Isaacson."

"But ought I to hear? Ought anyone?" cried Thekla. "What was said was not meant for us."

"Dear," said Lady Lucy gently, "you are right, and I respect you for your honourable feeling. But in certain kinds of warfare we must use the defences that are provided for us. This was the case with Murchison, who had reasons—good reasons, I believe—for disliking and despising Isaacson. As it pains you, I will not repeat what was overheard; but I will tell you a fact you may not know—you are the inheritress of all your mother's property."

"And my father—Marion!" gasped Thekla.

"Marion has nothing. Your father has a life-interest in part of your mother's property."

"Has father *no* money of his own, then?"

"I believe not. When he and your mother met, he was on the verge of ruin. This Michael told me. Part of it he had gathered from Murchison's story, and part from inquiries which he made afterwards. But so long as you were living quietly, and Isaacson was away, he made no sign. It was only when he heard that you had begun to go out, and that Isaacson was coming to Bombay, he came to me."

"How did he know?" said Thekla, the colour on her cheek deepening. It was strange and sweet to be so cared for, but she would have prefered that anyone else—anyone else in all the world rather than Michael—should have heard this miserable story.

"How does Michael know everything? I can't tell you," said Lady Lucy; "no one can. But I never knew him to fail in any search he attempted. This, however, was not so extraordinary, for I myself heard through quite another channel that Isaacson gave himself out everywhere as virtually engaged to you."

"I can believe that," said Thekla. "But my father—he had not consented. He was as much surprised as I was when Mr. Isaacson came the other day."

"My dearest child, I am very, very sorry, but I must open your eyes. Your father has made up his mind that you shall marry Isaacson. Can't you understand? Must I speak more plainly? When you come of age, if you wish it, or whenever you marry, should you marry in the ordinary way, nearly all your father's income will leave him."

"But it cannot; it shall not. My father's income! It would be fearfully unjust. If I say I will not take it! If I say I will die first!"

"Your father would prefer to make it certain. Your marriage with Isaacson will do this. He promises either not to touch your money at all, or to give back your father the equivalent of your fortune. I confess I could not at first believe this."

"And I do not; I do not! It is not true. Whoever said so, it is false. My father! No, no; it can't be. He wishes me to be rich. That is natural. Fathers often wish their daughters to be rich," said poor little Thekla, looking at her friend piteously. "But it is not because of that. He knows I would not take his money—I—his little Thekla; and leave him without anything! He knows he has only to speak, and I will, so gladly, give up everything." She tried to smile, but her lips were trembling, and the smile only flitted

over her face for an instant "I rich!" she cried, "and my father and Marion poor? It can't be. Lady Lucy, for pity's sake, tell me you were dreaming when you said it."

"No, my poor child; I was not dreaming. Michael said there was time, and I wrote to England. Do you remember Mr. Harrington?"

"Yes, very well! He was my mother's cousin, and when I was a child I often met him. But he and my father had a dispute about some property, and it is a long time since I have seen him."

"Mr. Harrington is your guardian, Thekla, and he has delegated his responsibilities to me. I am to watch over you in his place—to protect you against your own father, if that is necessary."

After these terrible words there was silence. Thekla did not protest any more. She covered her burning face with her hands, and Lady Lucy, who thought she was weeping, kept silent, feeling it wise to allow this natural sorrow to have its vent before she proposed the plan which had, in the meantime, occurred to herself, and which was that Thekla, if this marriage were further pressed upon her, should leave her father and sister for a time, and accept her guardianship.

That plan was never proposed, for when, after those few moments, Thekla looked up, Lady Lucy saw with surprise that her eyes were dry, and that her face, though white as that of the sheeted dead, was very firm and still. "Thank you for coming, Lady Lucy," she said quietly. "It has been very good of you. But I think, perhaps, you had better leave me now. My father thinks I am disobedient. That, I suppose, is natural, for I have never before refused to do what he asked me. And so I have made up my mind to be very careful in everything else. Then he will see, in a short time, that I don't really mean to be rebellious, and he will forgive me. But if he found you here, he might think I was fighting against him. I am very sorry. I ought to have thought of this at first, and not let you talk to me. Of course, it can't make any difference. My money is my father's: he knows that perfectly well. It is Marion's too. How can there be these differences in families? And if dearest father wishes me to marry richly, it is only because he knows so well that I would never take anything away from him, and that he wishes to see me comfortable. It is all so plain to me. I wonder you could not have seen it," said Thekla, with her little air of dignity. "I shall, of course, make my father understand that I don't care in the least for being rich: in fact, that I had much rather be poor, and then it will be all right. Good-bye;" and she held out her hand.

"But, my dear child," said Lady Lucy, who had never felt so baffled in her life, "supposing your father insists, what will you do then?"

"He will not insist. I am his daughter. I know him better than you can. And, oh! I am afraid I can't talk any more," she said brokenly, being in momentary fear of breaking away from her new dignity, and throwing her arms round Lady Lucy's neck, and crying like a child. "Please—please—leave me."

"If you really wish it, Thekla,"

"I do! I do! And——"

"Well, dear, what?"

The white face had flushed crimson. "If—if," she stammered, "you should chance to meet Mr. Grierson again, will you thank him for taking so much interest in me, and tell him I could never——" The voice died away.

"Go on," said Lady Lucy. "You could never——"

"I shall never marry anyone," cried the poor child; and then she hid her face in her pillows, and Luchmee, whom she had called feebly, came to her, and Lady Lucy went away with a pang at her heart.

Luchmee helped Thekla to undress, and then she and Sonya went away to their hut in the compound, and the young girl was left alone. She was tired, and she hoped to sleep. A curious physical weakness seemed to oppress her. She was glad she had sent Lady Lucy away, and yet she would have called her back, for she felt as if she had not a single friend in the wide world.

She had been lying awake for what seemed to her a long time, when the carriage drove into the compound, and, a few moments later, Marion, who slept in a room communicating with hers by an arched and curtained doorway, came in and began to move about. Thekla, being seized with a strong desire to see her sister, called out, but Marion did not answer, and, supposing she had not been heard, she remained where she was quietly for another few minutes. At last the wish to repeat her strange story, and to hear Marion's indignant denial of it, became too strong to be resisted, and she got up, smoothed her hair, and threw on her tea-gown.

Now Marion, as it happened, was not in an amiable mood that night. Things generally had been showing a perverse inclination to go against her of late. Thekla had been made of importance: she had been overlooked: she feared, since Thekla was rich and she poor, that this sort of thing would go on. Then uninteresting people had paid her attentions, keeping the interesting and important people away; and now, to complete her humiliation, Ronald Hinton, the handsome and devoted young civilian, to whose coming she had looked forward, as giving her the assurance of, at least, some fun, had come to Bombay indeed; but come in a very different character from that which she had expected him to bear. He looked at her calmly: he, who had gone into a small fever of rapture, if, in those happy *Amazon* days, she had so much as smiled at him. And he spoke to her coldly, and showed no particular interest in her concerns. But—which was worse—she had at once suspected that it was Thekla who had supplanted her, and her suspicion had been confirmed that evening. Ronald had, by Sir Richard's orders, been denied the house in the afternoon; but he would not allow himself to be avoided at the Yacht Club entertainment, and, in spite of Marion's studied coldness of manner, he asked questions about Thekla, the gravity and earnestness of which had a curiously irritating effect upon Marion's nerves.

We may say that, so far as this went, Thekla was not to blame. She had not set herself to conquer Ronald Hinton, and she was now what she had always

been—Marion's ready helper and warm admirer. But when we wish to be angry we do not need to seek far for a cause; in fact, as a rule, we are more angry with the guiltless ones than with those who have actually wronged us: their innocence, when we wish to have a legitimate cause for offence, adding bitterness to our displeasure.

Marion persuaded herself that evening that admiration was spoiling her sister. Thekla had become conceited and objectionable; she was obstinate; she was making them all miserable by her perverse opposition to her father's commands; and she was becoming grossly selfish, and taking the best of everything for herself. This last accusation was a little difficult to maintain, till it occurred to her that of their two ayahs Luchmee was much the cleverer, which, of course, was unfair, as she, being the elder, should have had her choice.

Thoughts of this bitter kind were drifting uncomfortably through Marion's mind, when, as she lay upon her bed, with a book in her hand and a lamp by her side, the curtain between the rooms was lifted, and she saw Thekla's white face, lit by those large, pitifully imploring eyes, emerging from the shadows. The sight naturally did not soothe her; rather it added to her irritation; and, being really afraid of saying something she might repent afterwards, she called out petulantly that Thekla should go away, as she was much too tired to talk.

For a moment Thekla paused; but the longing for human companionship and one kind, reassuring word, was too great to be resisted. In the piteous unreasonableness of love she stole in, and took a seat by Marion's bed.

"Dearest," she said pleadingly, "I won't keep you long; but I must speak to you for one moment. I have heard a strange story to-night. I don't believe it in the least; but I want to tell it to you, and to hear you say it is not true."

"You have heard a strange story to-night?" said Marion, ready to seize upon the first occasion for reproach. "Pray, whom have you seen?"

"Don't look so angry, dearest. I couldn't help it, indeed. I saw Lady Lucy."

"Do you mean to say, Thekla, that Lady Lucy Leveridge has been here to-night?"

"Yes, Marion. Why not? She came to see me."

"Stole in, you mean, when she knew that father and I were out of the house. I see it all now," cried Marion bitterly. "And you entertained her, of course, with the story of father's severity and my unkindness—a story which she will be delighted to repeat. I see it! I see it!"

"You see what? Oh, Marion!" cried Thekla, "you frighten me! Why do you look at me so?"

"I frighten her!" laughed out Marion. "I am appearing in a new character. This is really very interesting. Go on, you poor little thing! That is the look that makes people pity you, I suppose."

"Marion, how can you be so cruel? I want no one to pity me—no one but father and you. I begged Lady Lucy to go away."

"Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me what she told you," said Marion, with dignity; "for it appears you *listened* to what she had to say before you sent her away. To my limited intellect that seems a little inconsistent."

"It was wrong," said Thekla, very sadly. "And that is why I am so anxious to tell you. Lady Lucy says I have money—much more than either father or you."

"That is true, or it will be true shortly. You are an heiress. In two years' time—for I believe there are no conditions—you will be independent of us altogether. Did you tell me this that I might congratulate you?" said Marion sarcastically.

"You know I did not," said Thekla, stung almost past endurance.

"Then why, in the name of all that is wonderful, do you come in at this hour of the night to tell it to me?"

"Because," said Thekla, hungry still for that indignant word of denial which would give her peace—"because, Marion, Lady Lucy said something more. She thinks, and some other people think, that it is on account of this father wishes me to marry Mr. Isaacson."

"Well?" said Marion coldly.

"But it can't be; it can't be."

"My dear, to be frank with you, I fail to see why it should not be. If you were a French girl, your marriage would be arranged for you. If you were a princess, you would be married for reasons of State. Why, being as you are, a little person who does not know her own mind—for I am convinced you were pleased enough with Mr. Isaacson a few days ago—we should be so very choice and delicate over you, I cannot really understand. You have everything that we have not: for money means everything in these days. If my father wishes to secure money to himself and to me for the remainder of our days by giving you to a rich and particularly agreeable young man, who has nothing in the world against him, I see no hardship in it—quite the opposite. You, I suppose, have other views. Mr. Hinton, who is certainly handsomer, would be more to your mind."

"Marion, Marion! How can you be so cruel and wicked?"

"Then why," said Marion fiercely, "do you come in at this hour of night, when I am tired and cross, and goad me into saying things which I shall be sorry for presently?"

"Yes, yes; you will be sorry," said Thekla, catching, like one in deep waters, at this little straw of hope. "You are sorry already, my poor darling. It is my fault for bothering you. You know very well that if I were given more money than you I would not keep it. And you know—oh! Marion, say you know, and I shall go to bed so happily—you know that father couldn't do as you say."

"I know this," said Marion, whom the pitiful address, emphasised by the soft shining of eyes that she knew now to be more beautiful and fascinating than her own, had only hardened: "father will have you obey him, or he will give you up altogether. He will put you to school, or something of the sort, till you are of age, which would be an excellent arrangement for us all; and then he will let you take your

money and go where you please. As for not taking it, don't talk such ridiculous, babyish nonsense. Heroics of that sort don't outlast the bread-and-butter age. And now, have you anything else to say?"

"Nothing else. No, I don't think so," said Thekla, pressing her hand to her head. She got up, and went towards her own room, moving uncertainly, like one who is dazed; but before lifting the curtain she stopped and looked round. "Is it true, quite true?" she cried out. "Marion, for pity's sake tell me."

"Is what true?"

"That I must choose—that is what you said, I think; but my head is so strange, I can't remember—that I must choose between obeying my father and losing him?"

"Yes, it is true. There is no other alternative. Ask him, if you won't believe me. He will tell you."

"Oh no! Your word is enough. Thank you, dear, for telling me frankly; now I shall know what to do. Good-night."

The voice died away, the white face disappeared; and Marion, who was trembling from head to foot with terror of herself, lay back against her pillows and tried to sleep. Tried to sleep, but could not. This new agitation, this awful triumph and awful misery, held her spell-bound in their fatal grasp, and kept all her nerves quivering. Once she was moved to go in to Thekla, and gain rest for herself by unsaying her cruel words. But the spirit of pride was too strong to be mastered even by her misery, and, unfortunately for herself, she resorted to another anodyne. It had been given to her during the illness from which she was recovering when she left home, and the relief had been so great and immediate that she had resolved to carry some about with her always, in case the nervous trouble should return. But this was worse than any nervous trouble from which she had ever suffered. In the darkness she groped for the phial, and poured herself out a dose. In a few moments after she had taken it she was sleeping heavily.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE CRISIS.

When Thekla awoke the following morning, she found Luchmee standing by her bedside with her tea-tray, and Sonya peeping in at her smilingly through the mosquito-curtains. Lady Lucy's visit of the previous evening had made them both happier, and Thekla tried to be cheerful too; but she could not. As she took her breakfast and dressed, all sorts of wild plans were drifting through her mind. She would go away: she would be lost: some of these kind Indian people would give her a hut in their village, and she would dress and live as they did, and her father and Marion would think she was dead. It would be better to die really. This she said to herself when she was kneeling by her bedside, and trying, through the terrible confusion of her spirit, to say her morning prayer. But Death, the peace-bringer, will not come to our call. This Thekla knew. So, after a few moments' struggle, she said over the dear old familiar words which she had been accustomed, from her infancy, to repeat, rose from her knees, and went out into the verandah.

Her father was there; but as soon as he saw her he retreated into his library. Did this mean, Thekla wondered, that she was expected to remain in her own room? She made a few steps towards her father's library, and then returned, for a new fear and a new shame had taken possession of her.

Presently, through the brilliant sunlight, she saw Gopal approaching her. He made a low salaam, and put a letter in her hand, which she saw at once was from her father. She opened it, and read as follows:—"If you feel disposed to obey my wishes, come to my room and tell me so; and, in consideration of your penitence, I will try to forget the uneasiness you have caused me. If you are still in the same mind, I must beg you to remain in your own room for the present. Your inability to tolerate the guests whom I choose to invite to the house will prevent you from taking your place at my table or in the drawing-room."

With a burning spot on her cheek, Thekla read the cold and cruel words, each one of which confirmed fearfully what she had heard the night before; then not thinking for a moment of disobedience, she went back into her room.

Slowly, very slowly, the hours of the forenoon wore away. At tiffin-time she heard Isaacson's step and voice in the verandah; but she heard nothing of Marion. Luchmee, meanwhile, went to and fro, waiting upon her, and Sonya sat in a corner, watching her with sad plaintive eyes, that soon—although happily none of them knew it then—would be filled full with a bitter anguish of their own. And still those plans which she could not think out came and went through Thekla's brain. They tormented her by their vagueness, and hoping to steady her brain, she threw down her sewing-work and took up a book. Her late friends and favourites were lying about her. She tried them one after another, but with the same effect. She could not for one moment forget her perplexities.

At last, when she was almost in despair, her eye lighted upon a new book, which had been unwisely lent to her, but which she had not yet had courage to attempt. It was, in fact, a curious book which was written at the time when the terrible league known in India as Thuggee was being hunted down. The awful story, that is nothing more nor less than a plain record of cold-blooded massacres, undertaken and carried out, under the supposed sanction of religion, by men not only to all appearance in their sane senses, but animated in their domestic life by tender and elevated feelings, has a certain weird power, and is not to be recommended as comfortable reading for the timid; especially for those amongst them whose fate it is to be constantly in presence of the dark-hued Indian, who, as a general rule, is a gentle and inoffensive being.

But such as it was, it answered Thekla's need that day, for the horror and pity of it held her spell-bound.

She was deep in one of its tragic episodes when, looking up suddenly, she saw Luchmee, with convulsed face and streaming eyes, standing before her, and the horror of the story being fresh upon her, she started up with a cry of fear. Remembering then that it did not take much to make Luchmee weep, and that

probably the tears were for her, she composed herself, and tried to smile.

"Luchmee," she said, "do you know that crying will not help either of us?"

"Miss Sahib," wailed the poor little creature, "it is the happiness of Luchmee's life to serve you. If she is taken away from you she will die."

"But who thinks of taking you away?"

"The big Miss Sahib. She told Luchmee. Here is her letter."

"A letter—a letter from Marion? How strange!" murmured Thekla. While Luchmee, wrapping her head in her white veil, and sobbing like a child, crouched at her feet, she opened and read her sister's letter.

"MY DEAR THEKLA,—I scarcely remember what passed last night, for I was tired and out of sorts; but I believe I made use of one or two expressions for which I ought to apologise to you. I am sorry I was so hasty; but it was too bad of you to come in as you did, and to insist upon speaking to me when I was tired and irritable. You really don't know what mischief you may do when you act in that inconsiderate way. Everything is so upsetting just now, that I have, with father's consent, made up my mind to take the change which I have been thinking of at once. I have telegraphed to our friends at Poonah, and I will start on my visit to them this afternoon. By-the-bye, if I leave Duniah with you, I am sure you will not mind my taking Luchmee. Having been trained under Janet, she is far more capable, and as I shall be going out continually, it will be necessary for me to have an ayah upon whom I can depend. I have spoken to Luchmee, and instead of taking it as she should—for it is really a compliment to her—she chooses to cry and go on like a baby. Please speak to her, and try to make her understand reason.

"As for you, I hope you will be sensible, and do as father wishes, for I am certain it will be best for us all. I hope you will not think me unkind for saying that I had rather not see you before I start. Forget the worst things I said. It is so unlike me to speak in that way, that I can't get over my feeling of annoyance with you for having goaded me into saying them. Good-bye. When I come back I hope we shall be again, as we have been—sisters and friends."

So Marion's letter ran. With a sinking heart Thekla read it. Here also there was neither help nor hope for her, but she read through the lines that Marion was unhappy, and, after her own fashion, penitent; and the love and pity, which, try as they would, her father and sister could not kill, welled up in her heart, and filled her eyes with tears. "Poor Marion!" she murmured; "it hurts her to be unkind. Luchmee," she went on softly, "get up. It is foolish to go on so; and do you know what they will say? They will say that I have spoiled you. There! That's right; you look more like yourself. Now listen to what I say. You will go with my poor sister without complaining any more—you and my dear little Sonya. Yes, Sonya must go too, for I might not know what to do with her. And you will serve the big Miss Sahib as you serve me, dearest Luchmee, and if she is tired and sad, Sonya will sing to her. Yes; it is my wish. How could I keep you when my sister wants you? Wherever I am, I shall love to think that you are serving her. Besides, it is her order, and we must all do what we are told. You will go, will you not?"

Poor little Luchmee could not speak, for the sobs in her throat were choking her; but she bent low in sign of assent, and then slowly, with a lingering backward look at her young mistress, she hurried away.

It was not until Luchmee had gone that Thekla realised what she had done. Then, for a few minutes, the bitterness of desertion filled her heart. She was alone. In all the world there was no one to whom she could turn for help or counsel. In an agony of weeping, she flung herself down upon her bed. What were riches to come in comparison with this great misery of the present? "Dearest mother," she murmured, dimly understanding now why these strange provisions had been made, "you meant to shield me; but it would have been better not. I might have never known that they do not love me." For this was the bitterness: they did not love her; they did not believe in her love. Had they cared for her as she cared for them, they must have known how impossible it was that she could ever consent to be rich, seeing them poor. As it was, how should she ever convince them?

Marion had laughed at her notion of giving up everything. Would her father do the same? And even if he would not, how could she find out? To tell him what she had told Marion would have been impossible. Filial respect and a sense of shame, which she could neither understand nor conquer, forbade. And how could she offer to give up to him what he felt, no doubt, was his by right? Never once, through all this bitter labyrinth of contending thought and feeling, did it occur to Thekla that the easiest way of solving the problems that faced her would be to obey her father and consent to marry Isaacson. From first to last she felt that out of the question. Some other way there must be, if only she could find it.

For hours she thought and thought, coming no nearer to a solution of her problem, which was to get herself out of the way of her father and Marion, so that the property which would have come to her might be theirs. The afternoon closed in, and she heard Gopal's voice calling severely to her ayah, Duniah, that she should take in tea to her at once. Duniah was a lazy, sleepy woman, who did no more work than was absolutely necessary. She stole in with the tea-tray put it down, and looked helplessly at Thekla, who told her that she would not want anything more that evening. Thereupon Duniah went out to her hut, and, glad of the rest and inaction—for Marion gave her plenty to do—cooked her evening meal, curled herself up in her blanket, and went to sleep.

Thekla, meanwhile took up her weird book again, and lost herself for a brief spell in its horrors. Darkness fell; she lighted her lamp; and then, thinking that the house was curiously still, she called out to Gopal, and asked him if her father had come in. He answered that the Sahib was dining out, and wished to know when she would have her dinner, and she told him

what she would take, requesting that it should be brought to her room. It did just strike her that after he had heard what she had to say he lingered, and there was a curious furtiveness in his expression which for a moment startled her. But this impression was fugitive. Gopal went out, and she returned to her book. On this occasion however, it did not hold her attention long, for a scene out of the past which might possibly have some bearing upon the present had darted in upon her brain.

All in a moment she has left the burning plains of India behind her, and is wandering through her childhood's home. She comes to the large room on an upper storey that is still called the nursery, and sees Anna, her dear old nurse, sitting by the fire. Anna calls to her solemnly, "Miss Thekla, come here. I have something to say to you." "Is it anything more than good-bye, Anna?" "Yes, my bairn, it is more. As I cannot go with you on your journey, I wish you to take this;" and she gets up—Thekla can see her now—and lays her trembling fingers on a parcel sealed with many seals. "This, bairnie, was given to me by one who is gone, to be held in trust for you till you came of age or married, and, but that you 're going so far, I would not give it to you now. But it has come to me that you may want a friend in these distant lands. If you do so, open the packet. But, bairnie, you must promise me two things. You must tell no one you have this parcel and you must only open it if you want for help." This was the scene that memory floated back upon Thekla. She had taken this packet, as she remembered now, and, smiling at the conditions imposed upon her, she had hidden it away and forgotten it. With a curious shock of feeling it came to her that to-day the condition was fulfilled; trembling from head to foot, she ran to her box of treasures, and drew out old Anna's packet.

In the next instant a cry, half of rapture, half of fear, broke from her lips. It was a casket of jewels. The glitter of diamonds, and the deep-glowing rose of the ruby, and the flash of emeralds met her bewildered gaze. Looking closer, she saw writing, and her eyes filled with tears when she read the following words, written in a faint and trembling hand: "These are for my little daughter. I shall give them to my good Anna. She is faithful."

Poor mother! poor mother! Had she found out that no one was faithful but her nurse? Thekla covered her face with her hands, and for a few moments gave herself up to unrestrained weeping.

The torrent of her tears was checked by a curious, uncomfortable, and unaccountable feeling. It came to her like a chill—a hand of ice upon her heart. Through her mingled sorrow and excitement there penetrated a sense of terror, which she could not combat. She knew that the gems she held in her hand were valuable, and she was alone, perfectly alone, with none but dark servants in the house. Even her faithful Luchmee had gone.

The weird stories she had read that day were fresh in her mind as she thought how easy it would be for anyone to put her out of the way and carry off her precious casket. Then another thought came, and she smiled sadly to think of Anna's reason for giving her the packet. If only Luchmee had not gone! If any single being whom she could trust were near, she might put one of her wild plans into execution. In Bombay the gems could be exchanged for money, and with it she could go away, lose herself, be to her father and sister as if she were dead.

All this time her face was covered with her hands, and the jewels were spread out upon her knee.

She heard a noise, and instinctively her hand closed over them. In the next instant she had sprung to her feet, and her cheeks were burning, and her eyes were dry and shining, for she knew that the crisis of her fate had come. In a shadowy corner, half hidden by the curtains that led through her dressing-room to the verandah, a dark, lithe form, with an unknown face, was standing.

(To be concluded.)

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

THY word, O Jesus, in the past,
Once calmed the roaring sea,
And stilled the raging of the blast,
On storm-tossed Galilee.

The sudden tempests of the heart,
That cause distress and pain,
Thy voice can bid them all depart,
And bring us peace again!

Speak, in the accents of Thy grace,
When tears invade the eyes,
When anger flashes from the face,
And words of passion rise—

Say to us softly, "Peace, be still!"
Thou hast the right alone
To rule the thought, to curb the will,
To claim us for Thine own!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

MARCH 16TH. THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

To read—St. Luke v. 1—11. *Golden Text—ver.* 10.

PEOPLE TAUGHT (1—3). Last lesson told of Christ healing many sick who crowded around Him. To-day read of people crowding together to hear Him: Why were they so eager to listen? Because—

He brought good tidings—salvation and peace.

He taught Word of God—not traditions of men.

Picture the scene to the children:—

The day calm and fine—summer weather.

The lake glistening in the sunshine.

Two empty boats lying sideways on the beach.

The fishermen—sitting on the sand—washing their nets.

Christ enters Simon Peter's boat—is pushed out a little from the shore—sits in the stern and teaches.

The people sit on the sand on the shore.

Would we not have listened to such a teacher?

II. FISH CAUGHT (4—7). Christ bids Simon—

Push the fishing-boat out into the deep water.

Let down the nets for a haul.

Notice two things about Christ:

(*a*) *His knowledge* of where the fish lay.

(*b*) *His testing* of Simon's obedience.

What objections did the Apostle make?

(*a*) Night is the time for fishing, not the day.

(*b*) We have toiled all night without success.

Yet he does what he is told. Why?

Because of his faith in Christ. Had already seen many of His miracles, heard many of His words. Is sure can trust Him now. How was his faith rewarded?

A multitude of fish caught, so that the net "began to break" (not "brake" as A.V). Their partners James, John, Andrew (St. Matt. iv. 18—21) beckoned to help—both boats filled with shiny, glittering fishes.

III. A DISCIPLE ENCOURAGED (8—11). What effect had this miracle on Simon?

Fear, because of the mighty power of Christ.

Humility, because of his own unworthiness.

Realised for first time Who and what Christ was—the Son of God, therefore felt his own sin.

How could a sinner stand before God?

How did Christ encourage him?

By *word*—fear not. By *command*—to leave all and follow Him. By *promise*—he should now catch men.

LESSONS. 1. *Faith* in Christ as friend, Saviour.

Blessed are all they that trust in Him.

2. *Obedience.* Work done at God's command must ensure success.

3. *Humility.* Christ's presence and power is for blessing, not for hurt. He giveth grace to the lowly.

MARCH 23. CHRIST FORGIVING SIN.

To read—St. Luke v. 17—26. *Golden Text—ver.* 31.

I. THE DISEASE (17—19). Notice first those present.

Christ the great Teacher instructing even the learned men.

Pharisees and doctors from all parts around.

A crowd of people thronging the house.

Now a procession comes up—four men (St. Mark ii. 4) carrying a sick friend on a litter. What was the matter with him? Palsied or paralysed. Notice about this disease. It was—

(*a*) *Painless.* Person afflicted lost all sense of feeling in his limbs. They were useless and dead.

(*b*) *Helpless.* Person could do nothing for himself—entirely dependent on good-will of others.

(*c*) *Hopeless.* Gradually became worse. Nothing but death could end it.

All this a picture of sin. It is—

(*a*) *Painless.* Often no sense of shame or sin—a living death (Eph. ii. 1).

(*b*) *Helpless.* Of himself no man can turn to God (Hos. xiii. 9).

(*c*) *Hopeless.* The wages of sin death (Rom. vi. 23).

II. THE CURE (19—26.) The man, so helpless himself, got friends to help.

They brought him to the house where Christ was.

They overcame difficulties—taking him up outside staircase, uncovering matting over courtyard—letting him down by ropes, to the presence of Christ.

What made the man so eager to be brought?

Because was a sinner as well as a sufferer.

Had learnt something of Christ's double cures.

So Christ healed first his soul and then his body.

(*a*) Because soul of greatest importance.

(*b*) Wanted to show His power as Son of man.

What objections did some make? That He was speaking blasphemy—claiming a power belonging to God only.

How did Christ prove His divine power?

(*a*) He showed that He knew their thoughts.

(*b*) He healed the man's disease.

What a contrast between the faith of the man and his friends and the unbelief of the scribes!

The same cure ready for sin-stricken souls now. What can they do?

(*a*) *Believe* on Christ who forgiveth sin. (Ps. ciii. 3.)

(*b*) *Come* to Christ who calls sinners. (St. Matt. xii. 28).

See how the cure affected different people.

The scribes were amazed. The people glorified God.

The paralytic departed thankful and happy.

LESSONS. Christ gives to all who come to Him—

1. *Pardon* for the soul—beginning of spiritual life.

2. *Health* and blessings for this life.

3. *Work* to do for Him at home and in the world.

MARCH 30. REVIEW OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS.

Golden Text—Is. xlii. 1.

HAVE had twelve lessons this year out of St. Luke's Gospel. First six were about six different persons. Can children name them? Last six about Jesus doing six different kinds of things. Want to sum up to-day the leading lessons we have learnt.

I. THE ANGEL GABRIEL. Sent by God—came on mission to Zacharias—foretold birth of John the Baptist—punished his father for unbelief.

LESSONS. God's work to be done promptly and fully, whether it be pleasant work or not.

II. THE VIRGIN MARY. Read of her receiving the wonderful news about her babe with humility and faith. Then bursting into song of praise.

LESSONS. God's Word to be received with meekness. The humble shall be exalted. God to be praised for His mercies.

III. THE PRIEST ZACHARIAS. After punishment for unbelief once more showed faith in naming his child—burst out into song of praise. Christ's mission one of salvation—John the Baptist's one of preparation for Christ.

LESSONS. The blessings of speech—to sing God's praise and to proclaim God's truth.

IV. THE SIMPLE SHEPHERDS. They *saw* the bright light, the angel visitor, the Saviour Christ. They *heard* the glad news and the chorus of song. They *told* to all the glad tidings of the Saviour.

LESSONS. Gospel tidings for all men in all places. How does Christ's coming affect us? What mission work can we do?

V. THE AGED SIMEON. Served God all his life—used all means of grace within his reach—had desire granted to see Christ, the expected Saviour.

LESSONS. Faith rewarded by sight in God's good time. Prayer lost in praise.

VI. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. Trained for thirty years—called by God to work—prepared way for Christ by preaching repentance—baptised Christ in Jordan.

LESSON. Repentance first step to salvation.

VII. CHRIST A CHILD. Home at Nazareth in submission to parents. Early loved God's house.

LESSONS. They that seek God early shall find Him. Obey your parents.

VIII. CHRIST TEMPTED. To doubt God, forsake God, presume on God. Met all by God's Word.

LESSON. Resist the devil, and he will flee.

IX. CHRIST REJECTED. Visited old home at Nazareth—at first welcomed, then out of envy rejected. Never went again.

LESSON. They that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.

X. CHRIST THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. Healed all manner of sickness—the unclean spirit, the fever of St. Peter's mother-in-law, the many sick.

LESSON. Body, mind, and soul all blessed by power and mercy of Christ.

XI. CHRIST PROVIDING FOR WANT. People wanted teaching, disciples wanted fish, St. Peter wanted encouraging.

LESSON. Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.

XII. CHRIST FORGIVING SIN. Sick of palsy, helpless, brought by friends to Christ. He forgave the man's sins and healed his disease.

LESSON. Golden Text.

GENERAL LESSONS. Whole Gospel full of the Saviour. Perfect God in fulness of power, grace, and forgiveness. Perfect Man in all stages of life and feeling for all infirmities. Shall we not go to Him, trust Him, copy His example?

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SECOND QUARTER.

APRIL 6TH. CHRIST'S LAW OF LOVE.

To read—St. Luke vi. 27—38. *Golden Text—ver.* 31.

INTRODUCTION. Christ been healing great multitude of people—now preaches to them and His disciples (ver. 17), telling them some of the laws of His Kingdom. Remind of difference between the old religion of the Jews and Christ's new religion. In the old had laws given to guide their conduct *as a nation*—these laws were mostly—

(*a*) *Negative*—"Thou shalt *not*," as in the Commandments.

(*b*) *Punitive*—Punishing for wrong-doing.

Christ gives rules for their conduct as *individuals.*

I. THE LAW OF LOVE. (27—34.) Notice the different points:—

(*a*) *Love enemies,* as Joseph did his brothers after their shameful treatment of him.

(*b*) *Do good to them which hate,* as Elisha gave food to the Syrians who sought his life at Dothan. (2 Kings vi. 23.)

(*c*) *Bless those who curse*—as David did to Shimei. (2 Sam. xix. 22.)

(*d*) *Pray for those who do you wrong*—as Christ did for His murderers. (Chap. xxiii. 34.)

(*e*) *Bear injuries patiently*—as Paul and Silas did their imprisonment at Philippi. (Acts xvi. 25.)

(*f*) *Give to those who ask*—as Dorcas made garments for the poor. (Acts ix. 39.)

(*g*) *Do as would be done by*—as Naaman's little maid did for her master the leper, telling him of Elisha. (2 Kings v. 3.)

All these rules show how much more is required by Christ than other teachers. All men love and help those who love them. Christ's followers must do so to enemies also.

II. THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS. (35—38.) Various details—

Give without stint as God does, Who gives good things so liberally to all.

Lend without looking to receive back.

Be kind to all, as God, loving Father, who sends rain and sunshine to all alike.

Be merciful and not always insisting on rights.

Be lenient in judging others.

Forgive wrongs as would be forgiven.

Result will be a return even in this life.

Enemies will become friends, as the dying thief.

Blessings will return to ourselves in greater measure (chap. xviii. 29): *e.g.*, widow who fed Elijah received food all through the famine, and her son raised to life.

III. LESSONS. Can see principles of Christian life.

1. God has forgiven us, so we must forgive.

2. God loving to all, evil and good—so must we be.

3. Love, kindness, forgiveness, etc., benefit others—melt cold hearts, etc.

4. They also bring back blessings to ourselves.

What a happy religion is ours! its ways pleasantness—its paths peace!

APRIL 13. THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

To read—St. Luke vii. 11—18. *Golden Text—ver.* 16.

I. THE SAVIOUR'S COMPASSION. (11—13.) Christ had been spending a busy Sabbath at Capernaum—healed many sick who were brought to Him—healed Centurion's servant at a distance by speaking a word. To-day does a more wonderful miracle still. A good many people from Capernaum have come with Him and His disciples 25 miles to Nain. What do they see as they approach the city?

(*a*) A funeral procession coming out of the city gates, because burials always outside the city.

(*b*) Corpse of a young man lying on the bier.

(*c*) A weeping widowed mother.

(*d*) Many friends following out of respect and love.

Remember how Christ was perfect Man. Not merely had sorrows of His own, but felt much for other people's troubles. Therefore at once, when saw sad sight, was full of compassion.

What made the case so sad?

The dead man was an only son of a widow.

He died in the prime of early manhood.

His mother would be left poor, sad, solitary.

No wonder much sympathy aroused among her neighbours. No wonder Christ had compassion, Who is touched with feeling of our infirmities.

II. THE SAVIOUR'S HELP. (14—18.) Sympathy very precious, but help better. What did Christ do?

(*a*) *He spoke* to the mother—"Weep not."

(*b*) *He touched* the bier. The bearers stood still.

(*c*) *He addressed* the dead—"Young man, arise."

What a thrilling moment! Grave clothes flung off—prostrate body sits up—closed eyes open—cheeks regain colour and tongue speech.

The young man speaks—embraces his mother. Can be no possible doubt—he is risen from the dead.

What effect did this have on all?

(*a*) *Fear and awe of Jesus Christ*—a prophet indeed—God manifest in the flesh.

(*b*) *Glory to God*, who had done such wonders.

III. LESSONS. 1. Does Christ do such things now? Yes, *His sympathy* ever the same. He feels for all our sorrows. *His help* too is given in distress. What does His religion teach us to do? Visit the fatherless and widows (James i. 27) and relieve their wants. Christ only raised one widow's son, but how many widows and orphans have been cared for by His people!

2. Another kind of death. Those who fear not God said to be "dead in sin." But Christ's voice by His Spirit can wake them. They too may live. (1 Cor. xv. 22.) And they will hear His voice hereafter calling dead to rise, and will live with Him for ever.

HALF-HOURS WITH THE WORTHIES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., F.R.S.E.

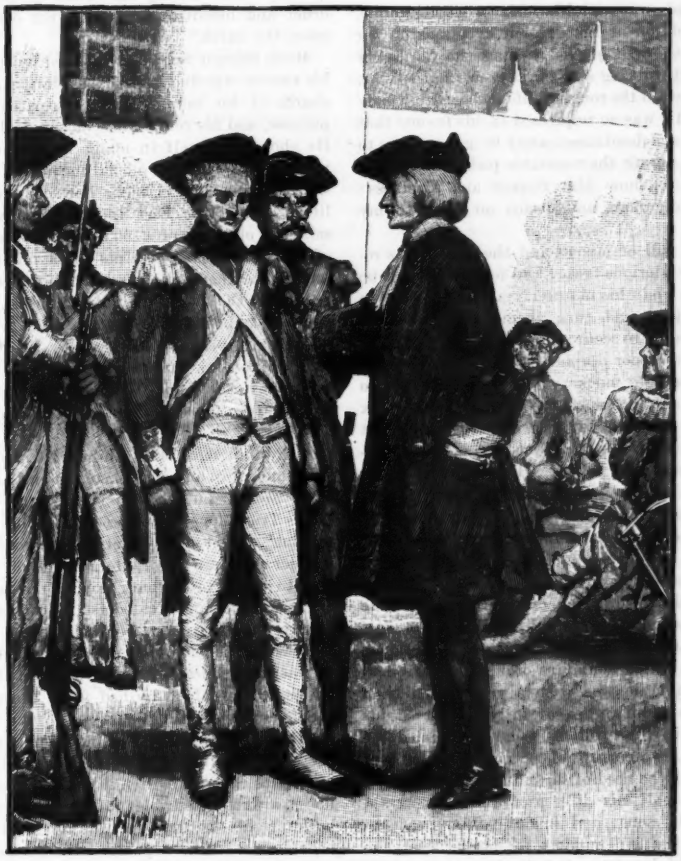
I.—CHRISTIAN FREDERICK SCHWARTZ.

"CERTAINLY it is heaven upon earth," is a saying of Lord Bacon's, "to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." This earth of ours is not too thickly peopled with these emanations of heaven. There seems little fear that *this* population will soon outgrow the limits of our world. Few and far between they undoubtedly are, these men of love, of trust, and of truth; and when we do find remarkable samples of them, their memory is well worth preserving, especially when they occur in the mission-field. For there is so much said against missionaries that it is well to recall to mind some of those whose lives, as spent before the heathen, have preached more powerfully than all their spoken discourses. Pre-eminently such a man and such a missionary was Christian Frederick Schwartz. A German by birth, and sent out to the South of India by a Danish missionary society, he was so much among Englishmen that he became like one of themselves. Never was there a more devoted, unselfish missionary: never one who showed himself more above the things of earth: never one who had more tact in dealing with the natives, and interesting them in the truth: never one who combined more wisely an interest in their temporal welfare with regard for their souls: and never one who had more influence with the powers that be—Indian rajahs on the one hand, British residents and governors on the other—or more skill in conducting negotiations, or who enjoyed more of the respect and confidence of both.

XUM

Born in the Duchy of Brandenburg in 1726, he was dedicated to God's service by a pious mother, who died while he was an infant. A young lady having put into his hands, while a boy at school, Francke's "Footsteps of a Divine Being in the World," he was deeply impressed by it. His earnest desire to visit Halle for the younger Francke's sake was gratified by his becoming a student at the University; and when Francke proposed that he should become a missionary to India, he was quite willing to go, if he could obtain his father's consent. It seemed out of the question that the father should agree to part with his oldest son, who was the prop of the family; but he was so impressed by his son's earnestness that after two or three days he gave him his blessing and bade him depart in God's name, charging him to forget his country and his father's house, and to go and win many souls to Christ. Ordained at Copenhagen in 1749, and appointed to the mission at Travancore, in the south of India, he reached that place in October, 1750, and continued working there and at adjacent places without furlough and with little rest, without wife or child to brighten his home, almost to the day of his death, 13th February, 1798. And seldom has any man died amid louder or more unanimous expressions of affection, honour, and regret.

From the very beginning of his spiritual life



"Conversing with British soldiers."—*p.* 378.

Schwartz was possessed, heart and soul, by a sense of what he owed to Christ, "the Son of God, who loved me, and who gave Himself for me;" and in his discourses, and lessons, and letters, and conversations, the power of this thought was ever showing itself. If a Mahometan asked him—"What is the difference between your religion and mine?" he replied, "We both have a heavy burden of guilt to carry; *you* have none to remove it, but *we* have Jesus Christ—a powerful deliverer." When he pressed Mahometans and others to come to Christ, it was because "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; accepting out of infinite compassion His atonement, which He has

sufficiently demonstrated by His resurrection. He is now the foundation of all grace, so that unless you seek through Him the forgiveness of your sins, the guilt will rest upon yourselves, and you must bear the punishment." "None should dare to appear before a righteous God without trusting in the atonement of Christ. You will find by experience that the doctrine of the Atonement will incline you to be thankful, grateful, and obedient to the commandment."

So it certainly was with himself. Always humble, with a poor opinion of himself, but ever seeking for conformity to the will of God, setting the Lord ever before him, and walking and working as in His sight, he appeared even to the roughest of the heathen a holy man. Hyder Ali was so impressed in his favour that amid his cruel and desolating career he gave orders to his officers "to permit the venerable padre to pass unmolested, and to show him respect and kindness; for he is a holy man, and means no harm to my government."

His life was full of labour, and the labour was rewarded by very glorious fruit; and however much he might be taken up in his maturer years with efforts to pacify fiery rajahs, and turn them from desolating war; or endeavours to secure a righteous administration of law for the poor people to whom the law-courts were but a miserable mockery; or with struggles to protect the country people from the exactions of tax collectors, who would fleece them up to the very point of starvation: he was always intent even on the smallest details of spiritual labour. Teaching in school, preaching by the wayside, instructing catechumens, baptising converts, conversing with British soldiers or civilians, writing letters of guidance to the young or of consolation and encouragement to the bereaved, were his constant occupations.

Even when detained, as on one occasion when he undertook a mission to Hyder Ali, and obliged to wait patiently at Caroor till it should please his highness to meet him, he found abundant occupation. He had prayers and Bible lessons with a young man from Ceylon and his family; he carefully instructed his servants: and in the open street he proclaimed the majesty of God, the corruption of man, the grace of the Saviour, and the need of faith and repentance.

Schwartz was all his life profoundly impressed with the angels' song, and made it his great endeavour to realise it; putting foremost "glory to God in the highest," and believing that when the message of peace and goodwill was received, a spirit of goodwill both to God and to man would spring up and flourish. He felt himself called on on every available opportunity to make the crooked straight and the rough plain; delighted to lighten up gloomy homes and dreary hearts; had a great love for children, and a great pleasure in ministering to their happiness; never turned away from any human being, however repulsive or apparently hopeless, believing that God's grace could soften the hardest and cleanse the foulest, and that as God's love did not depend on the worthiness of its objects, so God's children and servants ought to have compassionate and loving hearts even for the worst of their kind.

It pleased God to reward Schwartz with great success. Even before his day the mission at Travancore and the neighbourhood had been greatly blessed. The converts were counted in scores and hundreds, and under Schwartz's personal labours this success continued. At Tanjore, where many of his years were spent, he continued to reap the fruits of his labours even when the armies of Hyder Ali were spreading carnage and terror around. He moved about in tranquillity even "among the ranks of one of the most cruel and bloodthirsty armies that ever spread ruin upon the earth."

Much though Schwartz effected by his instruction, his success was due in perhaps a larger measure to the charm of his manner, his transparent honesty of purpose, and his remarkable tact in dealing with men. He showed himself in many ways above the love of money. Enjoying an official income of £48 a year, he showed on many occasions how content he was with little. When the East India Company gave him a salary as chaplain of £100 a year, he spent the whole of the first year's receipts on a mission-house and school, and thereafter devoted half to his congregation, retaining the other half for himself, mainly, it is believed, to be spent in charity. Once when for translations and other extra services the Company had resolved to make him a present, he entreated that it might be in the shape of stone and lime, of which they had a store, for enabling him to build a church at Tanjore.

A Brahmin once said of him, "No man lives so holy. Offer money to any other man, and all his good resolutions vanish; but on him it makes no impression."

At Trichinopoly he besought that in place of making a present to him, they would allow to a brother chaplain the same amount of salary as was paid to him, in order that (like him) he might maintain a schoolmaster and a catechist. Notwithstanding his generosity in giving, Schwartz was found to be possessed of considerable property at his death; but it was all bequeathed to purposes of the mission, on whose account alone he had made the accumulation.

Schwartz was sadly distressed by the ill-conduct of the British in India. It was not merely that generally they were cold to his work, so that while the people of Madras contributed ten thousand pagodas for a playhouse, a wretched driblet was all they gave to help in building his church in Tanjore; but that their behaviour was like a public advertisement that they scorned all Christ's precepts. It was gall and wormwood to him, at a public conference at Tripatore, to hear natives say though they thought Christian doctrine, religion, and instruction very pleasing, "we do not see you Christian people live conformably to what you teach. The Christians appear to be doing quite the contrary; they curse, they swear, they get drunk, they steal, cheat, deal fraudulently with one another; nay, they blaspheme, and rail upon matters of religion, and often make a mock of those who profess to be serious." In short, they said, "You Christians demean yourselves as badly, if not worse, than we heathens. Should you not first endeavour to convert your Christians ere you attempt to proselytise pagans?"

"I am convinced," said the Rajah of Tanjore, "that the Christian religion is a hundred thousand times

better than idolatry." Why, then, did he not embrace it? On account of the unfavourable impression which the conduct of the Europeans made on his mind.

In contrast to all this inconsistency of Europeans, the character of Schwartz himself shone out with a pure and beautiful lustre. But first, what was he like? A great friend of his, Mr. Chambers, drew the portrait of his outer man in middle life. "Figure to yourself a stout, well-made man, somewhat above the middle size, erect in his carriage and address, with a complexion rather dark, though healthy, black curled hair, and a manly engaging countenance, expressive of unaffected candour, ingenuousness, and benevolence, and you will have an idea of what Mr. Schwartz appeared to me at first sight."

The testimonies to the beauty and consistency of his inner nature were alike numerous and intensely cordial: "That worthy brother of the mission and labourer in Jesus Christ," said an influential clergyman in England at the ordination of a young missionary, about to join him, "has established such a reputation for candour, integrity, and disinterestedness among both natives and Europeans as cannot fail of recommending the cause of Christianity to men of every description who have heard his name; and this we assert from the concurrent testimony of every person who has returned from India."

Another young missionary who spent three months with him at Travancore writes of him in the most gushing terms: "The account he gave of the many dangers to which his life had been exposed, and the wonderful manner in which it was often preserved, his tender and grateful affection toward God, his fervent prayers and thanksgivings, his gentle exhortations constantly to live as in the presence of God, zealously to preach the Gospel, and entirely to resign ourselves to God's kind providence—all this brought many a tear into my eyes, and I could not but wish that I might one day resemble Schwartz." Another says: "The purity of his mind, his disinterestedness and strict integrity, his active zeal for the mission and his constant attention to the temporal as well as spiritual prosperity of the native Christians, his indefatigable exertions to procure them the means of subsistence, his pastoral wisdom and charity, his fervour in prayer, his eminent talent of engaging the attention of mixed companies by the manner and tone of his conversation, his peculiar skill in noting defects and reproving faults with so friendly and cheerful an air that even the highest and proudest are not offended—these and many other excellent qualities, but rarely found together, render him universally loved and respected.

There was one remarkable feature of Schwartz's life in which missionaries have seldom shared—the part he took in certain political negotiations and arrangements both at the instance of the East India Company (then the governing body in India) and of some of the native chiefs. But these were not ordinary political transactions; it was only when great moral interests were involved in them that he was persuaded to interfere. When the progress of that fierce warrior Hyder Ali was spreading terror in Madras, and the haughty potentate refused to receive an English embassy, Schwartz was the only man that could approach him. "Send me the Christian—he will not deceive me." Schwartz went to him, and was well received, although he was not successful in the object of his mission.

We have not space to go into detail respecting Schwartz's earnest and persevering labour to rescue the people among whom he laboured from the effects of the rapacity of the collectors of taxes, and of the bribery and injustice of those who professed to administer justice among them. We will rather say something of his efforts on behalf of a young prince whom he found suffering atrocious treatment on the part of the ruling Rajah of Tanjore, and the remarkable success with which they were attended.

The child, whose name was Serfojee, had been adopted by the Rajah Tulajèe on his death-bed, and appointed his heir. The reins of government, however, fell into the hands of Ameer Sing, and Schwartz, whom Tulajèe had named as guardian to Serfojee, discovered that Ameer was confining him in a dark and dismal room, which he was never allowed to leave, that he was getting no education of any kind, and was not permitted to visit or have intercourse with the other branches of the family.

It was no easy matter to rescue him from the hands of Ameer, but through firmness and perseverance the thing was done. After some time Serfojee fell most innocently under the displeasure of the rajah, who took the extraordinary method of burning pepper under his window to punish him; the poor boy was nearly suffocated, and doubtless Ameer designed that he should be so wholly. The consequence was that through Mr. Schwartz's efforts he was removed to Madras. Both Schwartz and Gericke, another missionary, made every effort to instruct him; and when he was at a distance Schwartz wrote to him most fatherly letters. Afterwards the validity of Serfojee's claim to the sovereignty of Tanjore came to be disputed, but the decision was given in his favour, Mr. Schwartz watching the case with much anxiety on his behalf.

About the end of 1798 Ameer was deposed, and Serfojee raised to the throne. By this time Schwartz was dead. Serfojee did not become a Christian, but he was a good friend of the mission, and in testimony of his gratitude to Schwartz he erected a monument to his memory extolling his many virtues and apostolic character, and testifying how these won for him the esteem and reverence of Christian, Mahometan, and Hindu alike.

After a short period of decaying strength, Schwartz was gathered to his fathers on the 13th of February, 1798, dying as he had lived. Among the numberless tributes to his character, that of the Honourable East India Company, inscribed on a monument by Flaxman, merits special notice. We can quote but a sentence from a long inscription:—

"HE DURING A PERIOD OF FIFTY YEARS WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD,
MANIFESTING IN RESPECT TO HIMSELF THE MOST ENTIRE
ABSTRACTION FROM TEMPORAL VIEWS,
BUT EMBRACING EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF PROMOTING BOTH THE
TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL WELFARE OF OTHERS.

ONLY A BRAVE GIRL.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"DO you ever tire of this kind of thing?" asked Amy Drummond.

"Tire of what?" returned her friend, with reasonable surprise; for they had been shopping all the afternoon, and were now in a confectioner's, drinking tea—Amy had not tired of *that*.

"Of life generally," she explained; "*our* life—all tennis, and shopping, and parties."

"I never think of such things," replied Miss Wedmore rather coldly, and raised her faintly marked eyebrows.

She was a typical society girl of the upper middle class. Tall, slim, and colourless, with an indescribable air called "style."

Amy, on the contrary, had a distinct individuality. Her wayward bronze hair had a trick of curling itself in little tendrils round her bright face; her limpid brown eyes looked out rather wistfully at the smoothly prosperous world in which she found herself.

"I often think," she went on, stirring her tea rather dreamily, "that I should like to be a working girl. You see, they must enjoy their occasional holidays so much."

Miss Wedmore stifled a yawn, and suggested they should start for home. She was going to a dinner-party, and wanted to make a careful toilette.

"Are you coming to the Browns' to-night?" she asked, as the girls parted.

"No; mamma has made a party to hear Patti at the Albert Hall—the Haystocks, with Caroline Druce and her brother."

"Oh!" returned Miss Wedmore carelessly.

But her cold grey eye noted the warm colour which rushed over Amy's sweet face, and she turned away with a rather abrupt farewell. Self-possessed Emily Wedmore was not wholly indifferent to that handsome young barrister, Edgar Druce.

Very pretty and radiant Amy Drummond looked as she came down the wide staircase that evening, her white gown trailing and rustling behind her, a rich rosy flush on her fair round cheek.

"Come, Amy," cried her mother, "we must start at once; there is always such a crush when Patti sings."

"Is not papa coming?"

"No; he is detained in that tiresome City."

Mrs. Drummond spoke rather pettishly. Her husband was a wealthy merchant, and she, as a prosperous matron with some pretension to fashion, rather looked down on that "tiresome City."

Yet a little pang shot through her heart as she thought of her husband's careworn face. "He has had business worries lately," she said; and, lightly dismissing the matter fell to making a mental list for her next dinner party.

Yet it was no light matter, as many of her husband's business acquaintances could have told her. To use their expression, "Drummond was shaky." That was the reason why, night after night, he pored over accounts in his deserted office, and came home jaded and weary, hours too late for dinner. Poor over-worked, over-anxious City man!

Patti's glorious voice fell on two pairs of unappreciative ears that night—Amy's and her lover's. For though he had not *said* a word of love, his eyes had told, and her throbbing heart had guessed, his secret. And as, the concert over, Edgar Druce helped our heroine on with her cloak, he whispered, "I am going to Egypt. Think of me sometimes, Amy. Not for long—six months or so. I travel with Sir William Hampstead as secretary and companion."

"But your——"

"My profession, you mean," he said, with a gleam of mischief in his brown eyes. "Between ourselves, I am and have ever been—briefless. So a six months' absence will not injure that."

Then the Drummonds' carriage drove up, and our heroine stepped out into the clear night air.

"Good-bye," whispered the barrister, and held her gloved hand a little longer than absolute courtesy demanded. "I shall be back in six months. Meanwhile, think of me sometimes, Amy."

Then the girl gave a last look at his handsome face: for six long months, and then—and then! She flushed at the thought of the happiness which the future would bring.

"Papa is in," she said, when she and her mother were at home, and she saw the familiar tall hat on the hall table. Then she ran swiftly up-stairs to the drawing-room, where the lamp was burning softly and the fire was red and low. She stood for a moment on the threshold; a radiant young figure in clinging white, with pearls at her throat, and white roses across her breast. Then she went to the sofa, on which her father lay asleep. She gently lifted the handkerchief he had thrown over his face. The tender words of greeting froze unspoken on her lips. For his face was set and calm, and the brow she kissed was nearly cold.

Then came a rustle of silk, and after that a piercing shriek. The wife had stolen behind her daughter, and gazed with wild dilated eyes on the face of her husband—the face of the *dead*.

* * * * * *

"Mamma, I *must* get something to do." The speaker was Amy Drummond; the time was six months after her father's death; the place, a tiny second-floor sitting-room in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park.

Mr. Drummond's affairs were found to be hopelessly involved, and, with the exception of the money realised by their furniture, mother and daughter had but fifty pounds a year.

In the sad days which followed her father's death, it was Amy who arranged all business details, who superintended the sale, and who finally, when the dear old home was invaded by auctioneer and noisy bidders, carried her mother off to the cheap rooms she had taken near Regent's Park. For sorrow and misfortune had utterly crushed the spirit of the merchant's placid, handsome wife. Six months had changed her from a happy-hearted, even-tempered mother to a desponding and querulous one.

"Now, mamma," said Amy coaxingly, "I want your advice, you know. So do put on your considering-cap, darling. It is no use to suggest type-writing or teaching, because I have tried both and failed."

Mrs. Drummond made a suggestion at last, and she made it almost hopefully.

"You can write."

"Write what, mamma?"

"Why, tales and things," responded the widow rather vaguely. "I was reading in a newspaper the other day that the author of 'Under a Cloud' made a thousand a year by her pen. And I am sure," she concluded, with a mother's fond confidence, "that you could write something *much* better than 'Under a Cloud;' for I got it from the library, and it was terribly dull."

"Do you think I could?" asked Amy dubiously.

"I am sure of it."

"Well, dear, I will try to-morrow."



"Her heart stood still as she saw her quondam friend's companion."—*p.* 382.

Writing stories, however, was not quite so easy as it appeared at first blush.

All the next afternoon Amy worked hard, and the only sounds in the room were the scratch, scratch of her pen, the loud tick of the clock, and the complacent purr of the tabby cat. At last, just as it began to get dusk, and the lodging-house servant brought up the tea, the budding author threw down her pen, gave a big sigh, and stretched her arms high above her head.

"How are you getting on?" asked mamma, anxiously.

"Pretty well," was the reply. "It is not nearly so easy as I thought it would be. Still, with hard work I shall finish it in a couple of days."

That was an exciting moment for Amy when the story, neatly sealed up and directed to the editor of

a weekly paper, was dropped into a pillar-box. She had enclosed a pretty little letter to soften the great man's heart, and now she sat down and awaited the result. She had not long to wait. In a couple of days the ominously bulky envelope came back with the poor story and the editor's compliments and regrets (lithographed) inside. Nothing daunted, she sent it off to another paper, and waited hopefully for six long weeks.

"They must have accepted it," she said feverishly to her mother.

"I hope so, dear," soothingly. "But why not write another?"

"Oh, mamma, I could not while the fate of this one trembles in the balance."

But it came back, and faint-hearted Amy gave up literature in despair.

"I was never intended to be an authoress," she said, with a queer little smile, half sad, half comical, as she stood before the fire and saw her literary first-born turn to black tinder and go skirling up the chimney. "There remains nothing now but a business life. In my heart of hearts I have always believed myself to be capable of *that*."

"Never!" cried Mrs. Drummond with unusual animation. "My daughter shall never be a shop-girl."

Amy took up the newspaper, and turned to the advertisement column. "Here," she said—"here is Madame Emilie advertising for an assistant. She, so you told me on Thursday, is Lady Sedley. There can be no objection to my working for *her*."

And without waiting for a further protest she ran up to her room, dressed herself in her best black gown, and sallied forth in search of fortune.

Madame Emilie informed her coldly that she would not suit. So she trudged along the busy streets for a long morning in the weary search for work.

She passed the confectioner's where such a few months before she and Emily Wedmore had sat at tea, and she had idly wished herself a working girl. Well, some malevolent fairy had granted the hasty wish, and the wisher was tasting the full bitterness of its fulfilment. Then came another memory, the memory of that evening—sweet, yet so tragic—when Edgar had told his love, and her father had died. Tears stood thick in her eyes, poor little footsore, would-be shop-girl, as she thought of her lover. He must be back in England now. Would he seek her out, and love her still, despite her poverty? Or would he, like the other friends of prosperous days, conveniently forget her? And while she asked herself sorrowfully which of these two things her hero would do, the answer, or what she took for it, came. A rather shrill and affected woman's voice was in her ear; a dainty gown, brushed against her. The wearer passed on. Amy recognised the smooth, carefully dressed head, with its jaunty hat, the perfectly fitting tailor-made gown, as Emily Wedmore's; and her heart stood still as she saw her quondam friend's companion—the tall figure, the handsome face, tanned by a foreign sun, of Edgar Druce. A wild longing seized the poor child to hide herself, to prevent any possibility of those two seeing her.

She turned into a confectioner's, and mechanically ordered a cup of coffee and a roll. And there, at the little marble-topped table in the busy shop, she buried her love, turned her back on the careless happy past, and strove to show a brave front to the terribly real and sordid present.

All the big shop-keepers looked askance at the little figure, and said shortly that they required someone with experience. They kept her waiting, even for that unsatisfactory morsel of information; and while she waited, a whole battery of scornful eyes was turned on her sweet quivering face, and supercilious voices audibly voted her "dowdy."

At last, however, a kind providence led her down a side street, a quiet street, just out of the whirl of its big sister, yet a very exclusive and aristocratic one, as befitted the neighbourhood. And the same pitiful spirit who had guided her there stayed her weary feet outside a little low-browed shop, in one of the small panes of whose old-fashioned window was displayed the familiar notice—"Wanted, an Assistant." Amy opened the door, and a very ugly old Frenchwoman raised her beady black eyes from the cap she was trimming. Our heroine's timid heart fluttered, the milliner was so very ugly; but if her face had matched her heart, it would have been lovely and pitiful as an angel's. And that morning she saved one sad little soul from despair. She engaged Amy for a month on trial.

CHAPTER II.

So Amy Drummond blossomed into a shop-girl. Every morning she carefully disposed the hats and bonnets in the window, and strewed flowers and lace fichus and elegant trifles in lavish profusion round the shop; and that done, she sat at the little table in the corner, and hemmed lappets and linings. She was not advanced to important work yet.

So six months passed, till one day, just before the New Year, a carriage stopped before madame's door. The customer was a new one, and at sight of her the demure assistant's heart began to thump in a most unbusinesslike way. She stepped forward with the usual deference to serve—Emily Wedmore. That self-possessed young lady was rather startled when she recognised Amy Drummond in the respectful shop-woman. But she soon rallied; and having hastily decided that it would be wiser to recognise her former friend, she held out her slim perfectly gloved hand and gave a smile, chill as the rush of wintry air she had brought in with her. Then she murmured a few stereotyped words of surprise and condolence, put off the acquaintance, and assumed the fashionable lady with great ease and *nonchalance*. When at last she had selected a hat, a Brussels lace shawl, and some French flowers, she turned to Amy

with something of her old manner. "I am obliged to be particular, you know, because," with a slight smile curving her thin lips, "these things will be part of my trousseau; I shall be married on the thirtieth, and you will never guess to whom. In three short weeks I shall be *Emily Druce*." She gathered her costly furs around her, and stepped out to her carriage. The patient girl began with numbed fingers to clear away the finery which lay scattered on counter, chairs, and table. Her brain, her very heart, seemed numb. He was going to marry Emily Wedmore. The words, so lightly spoken, burnt themselves into her memory—"In three short weeks I shall be Emily Druce;" and bitter tears fell from her brown eyes, and took the curl from a costly ostrich feather. She huddled it into its box. Madame would have been wroth indeed, kindly soul though she was. Private sorrows are all very well—in their place. But the trade axiom is this—Heart-break or no, be careful of the stock.

Two months more went by. She trudged daily to the little low-browed shop. Sometimes, in wet and murky weather, she took an omnibus, but not often, because the money which the dear household treasures had fetched was nearly gone. Soon she and her mother must depend solely on their yearly fifty pounds and Amy's slender earnings. No wonder, then, that she grudged her scanty pence for omnibus fares, and patched her gowns and darned her gloves with true heroism. Poor brave Amy!

It was March—a bleak gusty afternoon. Amy had been to Grosvenor Square with some bonnets. As she came down the steps of the stately town-house—a wind-blown little figure, with an errand-boy at her heels—a gentleman passed. She shrank back into the gloomy portico; it was Edgar Druce. But he had seen her. He came forward with hands outstretched, and with such joy shining in his handsome face that the girl was startled.

"Miss Drummond—Amy!"

"How do you do, Mr. Druce?" she said, in the primmest of matter-of-fact voices. He was Emily's husband now—she must never forget that. To make sure of not doing so, she added politely, "How is Mrs. Druce?"

He looked surprised; then seemed to recollect, and answered coolly, "She is very well, I believe. But," he went on impetuously, "we do not want to talk about *her*. It is enough for me that I have found *you*. Oh, my love, my poor little love! After all these months—and thus?"

He touched her black gown tenderly, and gazed meaningly in the direction of the milliner's retreating errand-boy.

"I asked Emily; I asked everyone," he went on hurriedly. "They knew nothing about you or your mother, except that Mr. Drummond was dead, and that you were much poorer."

"But Emily is Mrs. Druce," she faltered.

"Of course she is," he answered promptly. "Mrs. James Druce, she married my second cousin, Jim."

So, crooked paths were made straight, and it was a very happy shop girl who parted from her lover at madame's door.

"I shall come and meet you to-night," he said. Then, with a comical wry face, "I shall walk up and down till they put the shutters up."

She gave a merry little laugh—such a girlish happy ripple—and looked at her sweetheart archly. "You will do nothing of the kind. I shall be free in ten minutes. This is Saturday, and the usual half-holiday."

The Parisian hats and bonnets were treated very irreverently that afternoon. What cared their custodian for the inanimate heaps of gauze and silk and feathers when her lover—her very, very own—was waiting?

So, in the growing dusk of the gusty March day, these two walked slowly and by devious ways towards the modest Regent's Park lodging.

Edgar had told his love, and had been shyly accepted. "Only," she said, "I am so far beneath you now; I am only a shop-girl."

And he made this remarkable speech: "I wish I were a shopkeeper." This he explained a minute later by saying, "I forgot to tell you that I also am in trade. You see, law did not pay, and I was looking round for something that would, when an old college chum, Richard Sugden, who has a regular genius for house decoration, asked me to join him in business; and between us we are making rather a good thing out of it. At present we rent a house and have merely an office; but by-and-bye we shall take a higher flight, and own a Bond Street shop."

"Oh!" said Amy, with deep thankfulness, "I am so glad, because now you will not be ashamed of me and *my* shop."

"So far as *yours* is concerned," he said, with an early assumption of marital authority, "it is a shop of the past. You meddle no more with French bonnets, unless to fit them on your own pretty head."

And she entered no protest. On the contrary, I think she gave a sigh of deep relief.

It was nearly dark when they reached Amy's home and that independent young woman drew her latch-key from her pocket, and took her lover in.

Mrs. Drummond was sitting in the firelight, an open letter in her lap. She hurried forward to meet her daughter, not noticing the tall figure which stood in the shadow.

"Oh, my darling!" she cried hysterically, "my Uncle Jonas is dead, and has left me three hundred pounds a year. Think of that! and I have not seen or heard of him since my marriage. And now, Amy, you will be free of that dreadful shop."

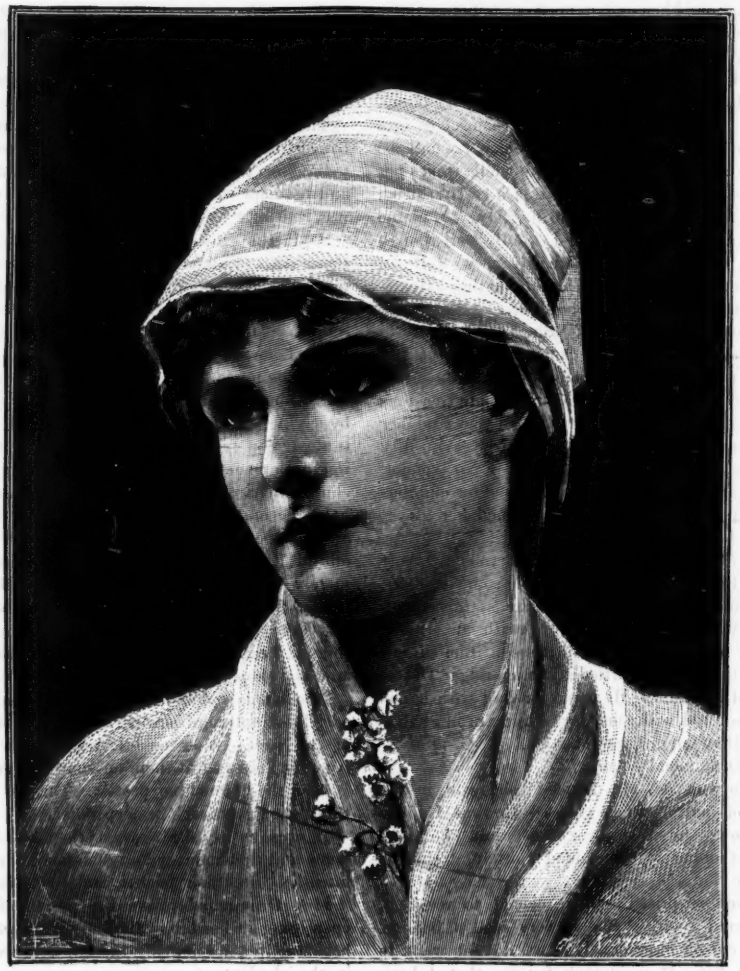
A little choking rose in the daughter's throat—a little sound which was half a sob.

"Dear mamma," she said, and gently pushed her lover forward, "I shall never be free of a shop—never, so long as I live, for I am going to marry a man who will keep one; and here he is!"

ALICE L. DUDENEY.

DISTRESSED: AT REST.

A CONTRAST.



A MIND distressed! O weary hours
Of each long day, each sleepless night
A mind distressed! O baneful powers
Of keen remorse and care—the night
Of haunting memory that preys
Continuously on heart and brain!
A mind distressed! O restless days
Of bitter, never-ending pain!

A mind at rest! O swift-sped hours
Of each glad day, each peaceful night!
A mind at rest! O golden powers
Of an approving conscience, white
From stains that foul in Error's ways!
O joyous calm of heart and brain!
A mind at rest! O happy days
Of sweet Content's unending reign!

G. W.

WHAT THE JEWS BELIEVE ABOUT THE FUTURE LIFE.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BURNET, M.A.



THE Jewish faith, like the Jewish race, occupies a unique and an isolated position. Whilst orthodox Jews accept the Divine authority of the Old Testament, they reject the fuller revelation of God in the New, and fail to recognise in our Blessed Redeemer the long-expected Messiah. This being so, the inquiry naturally arises, what are their views respecting the life beyond the grave? A system of mere morality may be very valuable in the regulation of the present life; but the worth of a religion is chiefly proved in the last solemn hours, when flesh and heart are failing, and the curtain is rising which hides the eternal world from our sight. This is the fiery ordeal to which every form or system of belief is exposed, and in its searching flames all the wood, hay, and stubble of human invention must perish, whilst the gold, silver, and precious stones of God's own truth will remain. How is it with modern Judaism? Controversy would be here quite out of place. Our aim is simply to ascertain what our Jewish brethren believe on this subject, in the hope that we may gather some thoughts of value for ourselves, or may view the substantial verities of our own faith more brightly exhibited by contrast. There are, then, two questions which we will endeavour to answer, first, what is the popular belief about the condition of the departed; and secondly, what grounds of confidence does Judaism offer in the prospect of death?

If modern Jews had sought light on these great questions solely and directly from their ancient scriptures the answers would not be difficult. There the doctrine of man's future life, though less prominent or clear than in the New Testament, is revealed with ever-growing clearness and fulness. Even the resurrection of the body is implied, where it is not distinctly taught. Our Lord rebuked the Sadducees who denied it as "not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God," and pointed them to the words addressed to Moses at the bush as sufficient proof: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The Pharisees, on the other hand, who accepted the whole of the Old Testament as inspired, held this precious truth, as the writings of the Prophets (particularly Isaiah xxvi. 19; and Daniel xii. 1—3) justified them in doing. They allowed, as St. Paul said before Felix, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. These are the two classes, into which throughout the Bible men are broadly divided, and two corresponding states after death are more or less plainly spoken of, whereas a third or intermediate state is not even hinted at.

Unhappily modern orthodox Jews have not drawn their beliefs immediately from the pure fountain of Revealed Truth, but in great measure out of the turbid streams of tradition handed down in the Talmud and other writings of the ancient Rabbins. These, as Jesus told the Pharisees, have often made the Word of God of none effect through their traditions, and so have mystified and perplexed the minds of their disciples. Thus the Talmud asserts that "at the day of future judgment there will be found three classes of persons. The first will consist of the perfectly righteous, the second of the perfectly wicked, the third of the intermediate, whose iniquities and righteousness will be equal. The perfectly righteous will be immediately sealed to eternal life, the perfectly wicked will be sealed to hell, the intermediate will go down into hell and come up again."

Other authorities have discovered two Paradises, one above, in heaven, the other below, on earth. Access to the upper is not granted to the spirits of the righteous at once, but they must first pass a kind of novitiate in the lower. In both, it is said, there are seven dwellings for the reward of the righteous according to their deserts. Hell, too, is represented as divided, much like Dante's "Inferno," into different zones suited to different degrees of punishment. But as regards the Jews themselves such punishment is rather purgatorial than final; for in the Talmud it is taught that "all Israel shall have part in the future life," as it is said, "Thy people shall be all righteous and inhabit the land for ever."

This consolatory notion is connected with very singular theories about the origin of human souls, which in some degree anticipated the teaching of the New Testament. According to some of the Rabbins, the bodies of men are inhabited by a triple soul: the nephesh, or animal soul; the ruach, or spirit; the neshama, or the highest form of life. These correspond to the three worlds, which a man is, or may be, qualified to inhabit. The nephesh enters him at his birth; at the age of thirteen years and one day, if his deeds be right, he becomes possessed of the ruach; and if his deeds continue to be right, in his twentieth year the neshama becomes his. But if his deeds be not right, the nephesh and the ruach remain without the neshama. This distinction, although here enshrouded in so much gross and vain imagination, would seem to contain a grain of precious truth, which the inspired Apostle has revealed when he prays for the Thessalonians that their "whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Man's nature is there spoken of as tripartite, the highest department being the spirit, which in the unrenewed is dead, and remains in abeyance until it be quickened by the Spirit of God.

Such, then, are some of the ancient Jewish beliefs about the future life. We need not attempt to explain or harmonise them, but will rather hasten to inquire into the practical effect of this teaching on the popular mind in the present day. What, we ask, are the grounds of confidence offered by modern Judaism in the prospect of death?

On this point we need not examine the writings of eminent doctors, or excavate the mines of theologic lore laid up in the Talmud. We simply turn to

authorised forms of prayer and manua's of devotion. Such is the "Arbre de la Vie," a book of prayers for the sick, the dying, and the departed, which has been sanctioned by the Grand Rabbins of France. These prayers are composed in great measure in the words of Holy Scripture, especially of the Psalms; and, so far as they are such, they are, of course, very beautiful and expressive of the purest devotion. When the Angel of Death is hovering round a sick man's bed, he is directed to follow the example of good King Hezekiah, and in a spirit of submission to entreat the Lord to raise him up. He is also exhorted to make a full confession of his sins to God, and if he is conscious of any wrong in word or deed done to his neighbour, he is bidden not only to ask his forgiveness, but also to make any reparation in his power. Great importance, we may observe, is attached by pious Jews to this last duty, and we have heard of their taking long and expensive journeys in order to be reconciled to a dying acquaintance. All this is indeed highly commendable, and worthy of imitation by us Christians. Still the question arises, how the dying sinner hopes to obtain mercy from the just and holy God, Whom he has so often offended. In one place he is instructed to say: "If mine hour to leave the world is now come, let my death be an expiation for all the sins which I have committed since my birth even to this day." At the same time, the trembling soul is advised to cling to a misquoted text of Scripture, as if it were said in Proverbs xxviii. 13 that "He that confesseth his sin and repents sincerely is forgiven." Then a passage from the Talmud is added to the effect that "Four things can awaken the Divine compassion, viz., almsgiving, prayer, resolutions of amendment, and a *change of name*."

This last very singular ceremony takes place in the Synagogue before the ark. After certain prayers, the Minister opens one of the sacred rolls, and the first letter which presents itself on the right side of the page will indicate the name to be given. If it be Aleph, the name shall be Abraham; if Mem, Moses; and so on. What, we ask with surprise, can be the virtue of a new name, when a man is passing into a state where earthly titles shall all be forgotten? Buxtorf, a great authority on these subjects, informs us that this is done in order that all hard and evil decrees may be repealed. If death be decreed for the bearer of the first name, it is not decreed for the bearer of the second, who is now regarded as "another man, a new creature, a child recently born to a good life and length of days."

Other prescriptions follow, which we need not mention; but when the end has come, those around the dying person are exhorted to redouble their efforts for his salvation by repeating these sacred, time-honoured sentences in Hebrew—

"The King Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever."

"Blessed be the Name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever." (*To be said three times.*)

"Jehovah alone is God." (*Seven times.*)

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

Amidst these solemn recitations of the Jewish creed the disembodied spirit wings its flight into the presence of the All-Holy and Merciful One. Thither we cannot follow it. We rather ask, in conclusion, what consolation does Judaism offer to the survivors in the darkest hour of nature's loneliness and desolation? The forms of interment are simple and impressive, not unlike those observed amongst ourselves; but can the mourners consign the remains of their dear ones to their last resting-place in "a sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life"? Alas! no. A painful uncertainty still clouds the prospect. An immediate entrance into Paradise is assured only to the perfectly righteous, and as none are such, in most cases, if not in all, it is assumed that the departed are in Purgatory, and dependent on the intercession of their friends for their release. Accordingly a form of prayer in Chaldee, the Kaddish, is to be used after the funeral, on the eve of every Sabbath, and on other occasions during eleven months. It is specially intended to be said by the eldest son for a deceased parent. It may be rendered as follows:—

"May the Name of the Eternal be glorified and sanctified in this world, which He will renew one day, when He shall raise the dead and call them to eternal life, when He shall build the Divine City, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and establish there His Throne in all its glory. At that period idolatry and superstition shall be banished, the worship of the true God, the one God, shall be established over all the earth, and the very Holy One (blessed be He!) shall reign in all His glory, in all His majesty. Oh! may this be soon in our days and in the lifetime of all the House of Israel, and say 'Amen.'"

The legend of the Kaddish in the Talmud is strange and quaint. When the Rabbi Akiba had one day met in the fields an old man bending under a heavy bundle of wood, the doctor asked him whether he were a man or a ghost. He replied that he was a man already dead, and that each day he had to carry such a load into Purgatory that he might be burned most miserably on account of his sins. Then the Rabbi inquired whether he had not a surviving son, and where the son lived. He thereupon proceeded to the place and taught the youth to say the Kaddish for his father. Some time after the latter appeared to Akiba and informed him that he was now in the Garden of Eden. Upon that the Rabbi wrote to all the Jewish schools commanding the use of this prayer.

This story has, of course, very few believers in the present day; but the use of the Kaddish is almost universal. The views of modern Jews about its efficacy differ very widely. Practically, however, it is thought to benefit the departed in some way. Not only is there the natural longing for communion with dear ones gone before, but there is the lingering fear that all is not well with them. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, apart from belief in Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life? One by one Jews, as well as Christians, have to enter the valley of the shadow of death, and how dark must it be without the bright lamp of God's fulfilled promises! Still, their responsibility is not equal to ours in this matter. Very earnestly would we plead with them in the words of the Prophet—"O House of Israel, come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

XUM

"UNDERNEATH."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



I HAVE a message to-day for you who cannot help thinking of your trials, your infirmities, the cross that is laid upon you, the burden you have to bear. You cannot forget your trouble—it is no use trying to make light of it, for it is a real and heavy affliction, and your sad heart feels its pressure. Well, just for a while to-day, friend, look your trouble—your cross that God has chosen—full in the face; realise its weight if you will, including every foreboding you experience, every worry that oppresses you, each vexation you have to bear. Then rejoice to know that the burden need not in any wise overwhelm you, since this is the assurance of God's holy Word—"*Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.*"

You are conscious of exceeding weakness, but *underneath* your feebleness is the strength of God: He bears up worlds; He controls all power that exists—none can describe or limit His Almightiness, and His strength is underneath your infirmity. A good, great man said once it rejoiced his heart when a little child, wondering how to cross the road, came up to him trustfully and said, "Please lift me over." How readily he took up the child in his arms, and with what confidence the little thing nestled against him, forgetful of fear! Does your Father in Heaven care less for His child than that good man did for a little unknown wanderer? No, feeble and suffering one; take comfort in the certainty that underneath your weakness, to uphold, sustain, and strengthen you, there abides the power of God.

The pain does not seem too hard to bear when you realise that underneath you, amid all your sufferings, is the Master's remembrance. The robust, healthy, fortunate child is not the one the parent thinks about most in the family, but the child that lies worn with pain in the sick-room, and looks to the mother for help and cheer. Never for one moment does the Lord forget His suffering ones; every pain laid upon them He understands as mortal vision never can. Underneath all your pain, child of God, is the eternal, unsleeping remembrance of your Lord and your Redeemer. Underneath your every need, felt and unfelt, is the care that provides for the sparrows, the grass, and the flowers—the care that is pledged never to forsake you, and that numbers the very hairs of your head. Beneath your weight of perplexities, beneath your doubts, your frettings, and your helplessness, is that sure and strong foundation on which now and henceforth your soul may rely—the wondrous, ever-living Love from which nothing can separate you.

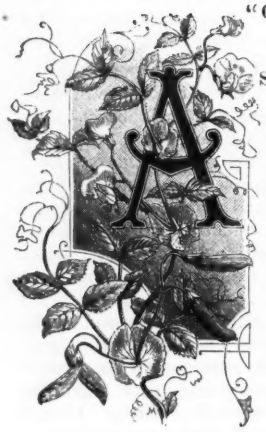
"There is nothing but *love* between God and my soul," a believer once said earnestly; the cares and difficulties cannot part you from Him, since however your fear may magnify them, underneath *is* the Everlasting Love. God's love is beneath, and above you the stars of promise are shining through the darkness of trouble. Look no longer at your trials, but see how bright the promises! Though they shine with heavenly radiance, their glory seems to come right down and meet your own special case, your peculiar need to-day: you can lay claim to them as your own; they belong to you, for they are the promises of Him who is nearest and dearest to you—Jehovah-Jireh—the Lord who provides when otherwise all is shadow. Think of these promise-stars: "I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight." "Lo, I am with you alway." "Come unto Me, and I will give thee rest." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever."

A Christian visitor tells of a much-tried saint who could not sit up without the support of bands and braces. He had been helpless and suffering for many years, and the visitor asked, in great compassion: "My friend, are you left quite alone in your infirmity?"—"No," was his triumphant answer; "I am not alone, for my God is with me." In pain and poverty he still possessed his treasured Bible, and the assurance of the near presence of his Lord. So the message I would bear to you just now is this: God is very near to you—so near that if you will only bid farewell to doubt and disquiet, and lean simply and entirely on the Master, you will know and prove how the touch of His power, His love, can sweeten sorrow, and lift away heart-heaviness. Where, oh, my soul! is the burden that bowed thee down? Where is the sting that embittered thy portion? Since for ever and ever underneath this life of mine, with its weight of sorrow, its manifold needs, its infirmities of soul and body, abides the covenant of my living Lord—"Underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

M. S. H.

"GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.



AS to its being a "hard case"—this of Harold Stuyvesant's—the real object of my history is to invite an impartial judgment, as, of course, everybody concerned was biassed one way or the other. The women naturally took his side; their sympathies will always be stirred by anything that looks like a case of persecution; the men, as naturally, held that he deserved considerably more than he got. I incline to think that the last was Stuyvesant's own opinion.

I.

It seems only yesterday—although, in fact, it is four years ago—that the dovecots of Bishopshaven were fluttered by the advent of this surprising stranger—this delightful American, with his money, his philanthropy, his fine eyes and Vandyke air of majestic melancholy. This last quality excited less odium than usual in clubs and committee-rooms, from the fact that it was obviously a gift of nature. His worst enemy never accused him of being affected.

He carried the highest credentials from his previous home in Philadelphia, U.S.A. But, as everybody said, "What could Stuyvesant and Co. want with credentials to anybody?" The Stuyvesant millions were a sufficient guarantee. The present representative of the firm was only a sleeping partner; his life was devoted to philanthropic objects; and when it was rumoured that he meant to settle at Bishopshaven, all the charitable societies rejoiced as those that find great spoil. He stated, with the most charming frankness, that he was not born to his greatness.

"I had no claim whatever on old Mr. Stuyvesant," he said. "I had lost my parents, and he was childless. He took a fancy to me and adopted me, gave me his name, and took me into his business. It is a thing more frequently done in America than in England. When he died, he left me everything. There was no injustice in it, as he had no near relatives."

And inquiries made by some cautious spirits of their correspondents in Philadelphia, confirmed these statements. Of course, this brief *résumé* by no means satisfied the active curiosity of the provincial mind. But Mr. Stuyvesant, unpretentious as he really was, in spite of the Vandyke air, which he could not help, was emphatically not a subject for intrusive questioning.

It was not to be supposed that the good folks of Bishopshaven would omit to ask themselves what could be the attraction which fixed Mr. Stuyvesant to the town which he had at first visited as a casual stranger, or that they should fail to congratulate themselves on their own acuteness, when an engagement was announced between him and the niece and heiress of Edwin Prothero, of the great Quaker banking firm of Forwood and Prothero.

Matters stood thus, when one morning in April last Miss Prothero's low carriage, with its pretty pair of grey ponies, happened to be waiting outside the miserable shanty which Bishopshaven public spirit still suffers to exist and call itself a station. She herself, a small and dainty figure in the neatest possible costume of silver-grey, trimmed with grey fur at the throat and wrists, and with a cap of the same material over her shining hair, had descended to the nether regions of the platform to meet a friend by the incoming train. A rather large lady, much befurred, was emerging from a first-class carriage as Nancy came up.

"How is thou?" she said, with that disregard for one of the principal rules of concord common among the Northern "Friends," "and where are thy boxes, and has thou had a good journey? Come along; John will look after the luggage. I have something to show thee."

"I see thou hasn't learnt to talk any slower," laughed Miss Hardinge, consenting to be towed in the wake of her impetuous friend.

"What a pretty little turn-out," was her comment on being established in the pony-carriage. "Is this what thou wanted to show me?"

"Yes. I thought I would like to drive thee home in it. I only had it the other day—my birthday. Uncle Edwin gave it me. He is so kind."

"I wonder he didn't keep it for another occasion."

"Yes," Nancy answered, blushing and dimpling a little, "he said he had thought of that, and then again he fancied I might like to have it now, and very likely something else would have occurred to him by that time."

"Is it to be soon, Nannie?"

"Before long, I think. The time isn't definitely fixed yet."

As they turned into the principal street of the town Miss Hardinge's eyes were caught by an immense poster, which announced that Mrs. Olinthus P. Fiske, of Bleeksville, Ohio, U.S.A., would lecture the following evening, chair to be taken by Edwin Prothero, Esq., J.P.

"So they've come," she said.

"O! very much so," Nancy replied, with a tragi-

comic grimace, "and so I can't put thee into the best bedroom, my dear, thou knows."

"That 's very hard lines," said the other, laughing. "But tell me about them ; are they nice ?"

"Thou 'll see," Nancy answered, with an arch look. "But perhaps I ought to prepare thee a little. Mrs. Fiske is a dear old lady. She is rather absurd, but I like her. As to Florida Challis, I really can't describe her. She is beyond me."

"She is Mrs. Fiske's daughter, isn't she ?"

"Yes, Mrs. Fiske married, very young, a person called Challis, of New Orleans. Mr. Stuyvesant knew her in America, and he told me. This person was a sort of French Creole—very handsome, I suppose, and a great scamp. He treated her so badly that at last she had to get a separation, and she came and lived in Philadelphia, with her little girl. At last, this man Challis died, and by-and-bye she married again. But I think it was before that she took to public speaking. She thinks she has a mission. I wish it had begun at home. Miss Challis has evidently done just as she liked ever since she could stand alone. She keeps Uncle Edwin in a state of perpetual astonishment, though he is far too polite to say a word."

"It can't be very comfortable for thee."

"Well, it isn't. But it is amusing to watch her, sometimes, all the same. Spencer Forwood—by the bye, thou remembers him, the son of uncle's partner—happened to travel with them from New York, and he is quite wild about her, poor boy !"

"Is she pretty ?"

"That's not the word at all. She is just magnificently handsome."

"I am getting quite anxious to see this pair."

"Thou wilt have the pleasure very soon. Did I tell thee that they had put Mr. Stuyvesant up as alderman for this ward ? He didn't care about standing, but uncle and the rest of them persuaded him. There was no one else on our side who would have done so well. I don't think Josiah Forwood likes it, and yet he won't stand himself. I think he is jealous of Harold's influence in the town. He has been anything but amiable lately."

"People tell me Mr. Stuyvesant is very much liked. We had Mr. Meyer of St. Thomas's over the other day. He said, 'He is a thoroughly nice fellow.'"

"It isn't that only," Nancy replied. "He is so genuinely *good*." She spoke with the quietude of a fixed belief, but her cheeks were flushed, and her grey eyes shining. And Miss Hardinge, who had had her misgivings as to how far her young friend's heart was engaged in this marriage with a man sixteen years her senior, looked at the proud, glad face, and felt reassured.

Just at this moment, as if to confirm an old proverb, a gentleman came down the steps of the Town Club, which they were then passing, and lifted his hat. Miss Prothero reined up her ponies, and he went across to the carriage.

"Louisa, let me introduce Mr. Stuyvesant."

Miss Hardinge experienced a momentary shock of surprise. She knew that Mr. Stuyvesant must be nearly forty ; but, at the first glance, he looked ten years short of that age. A more careful look showed her lines of thought and trouble round the keen dark eyes, gleams of silver here and there in the thick curling hair. His manner had a certain grace that is rather at a premium in towns like Bishopshaven. Miss Hardinge began to feel that her friend was very fortunate.

"I think the thing that made me take to him first," said Nancy, when they had passed on, "was the way in which he used to talk to me, just as if I knew as much as he did. Of course I didn't ; but it was nice to be treated like an intelligent creature, and not be told—as Josiah Forwood is always saying—'My dear Anne, thou knows ladies don't understand these matters.'"

"He is very handsome," said Miss Hardinge, "and thou always said thou never would marry a handsome man."

"Oh, I meant a barber's block," she answered ; "or a *pretty* man with no character in his face, like Spencer Forwood."

The individual who was so unfortunate in his outer man as to incur such criticism, happened to be at this moment emerging from a back entrance to the large premises of Forwood and Prothero. It opened into a narrow lane. At the corner of this was the inevitable public-house, and a door or two up, round the corner, a small tobacco-and-news-shop, at the door of which two or three men were lounging, who might be leniently described as sporting characters. Young Forwood gave a rather furtive glance behind him as he moved in the direction of the group.

"Any news of the Donisfield match ?" he said.

"Sloggers beat," said the man addressed, taking his pipe out of his mouth to make the remark, and then putting it back.

"Are the papers out ?"

"Telegram !" said the other, and then swore. He had betted rather heavily on the other side, and lost. Nature demanded some expression of feeling.

Spencer's countenance, on the other hand, expressed the most lively satisfaction. The "event" had made him a gainer by about fifty pounds. But it was almost ludicrous to observe the change in his expression when Mr. Stuyvesant suddenly turned the corner and came upon him. The men grinned and nudged each other. Mr. Stuyvesant appeared not to notice them.

"Are you going on ?" he said to Spencer. "Shall we walk together ?"

"Bother the fellow !" said the youth to himself. "I thought he was safe in his committee-room."

"Mr. Spencer," began Mr. Stuyvesant, in his slightly formal way, "I was sorry to meet you there just now."

Spencer Forwood was a tall, slim young fellow, with fair hair that stood on end, and a complexion

like a girl's. He had an unfortunate habit of blushing when embarrassed or angry, and now his very ears were crimson.

"I don't see," he answered, with his nose well in the air, "that you need trouble yourself, Mr. Stuyvesant."

"Oh, I agree, it is not a serious thing of itself," replied Mr. Stuyvesant suavely; "but when I am told that you have been betting heavily at recent matches——"

"Who has had the cheek to carry tales about me?" young Forwood interrupted.

"I have heard it in several quarters. It is matter of common talk. And—you will excuse me, Mr. Spencer—I was very sorry."

"I think all this is very uncalled for," Spencer answered, speaking fast, and with a sense of injury. "I suppose you mean it all right, Mr. Stuyvesant, but a fellow likes to be let alone. And to come poking after me like this, I say—confound it, you know!—it isn't gentlemanly."

"Ah!" said Mr. Stuyvesant, unmoved by this last insinuation, "you've been winning, I see. I'm sorry—I wish you'd lost."

"Thank you for nothing," growled his companion.

"You make me do what is very unpleasant," Stuyvesant continued. "You make me remind you of a circumstance some time ago, when I understood I had your promise to give up gambling."

There was no need to recall the incident more distinctly. Spencer perfectly recollected an "event" a year ago, that had not turned out so prosperously as this one. He owed one hundred pounds, and as his spending allowance was scanty for a young man of his expectations, he had no possible means of meeting it. Hanging over his head was the awful threat of an appeal to his father, a Friend of the oldest and severest type, and a Spartan disciplinarian. At his wits' end, he applied to Mr. Stuyvesant, who at once supplied the needful sum, together with some very good advice, which the prodigal took as a child takes powder in jam.

He now felt embarrassed as well as angry. He could not deny that he had made a promise.

"That was for races," he muttered. "You said nothing about football."

"My dear fellow," said Stuyvesant, kindly and gravely, "that evasion isn't worthy of you. I daresay you think this is very unwarrantable interference, but I can't help caring. You don't see where all this leads. You are only thinking of the fun.

"I tell you, Forwood," he went on, speaking with a deeper earnestness, as he saw the look of impatience and vexation on his young companion's face, "I am speaking from a dearly bought experience. There is a cloud on my life that will never lift till my dying day. I can't think even now with calmness of what I might have been spared if there had been a single soul in my hour of temptation to say to me what I have said to you."

Young Forwood was touched as well as surprised by an outburst of emotion so unusual in the calm and courteous gentleman. There was no mistaking the genuineness of the feeling that could so shake his self-control.

Spencer felt it difficult to say anything further, and they walked some distance side by side without exchanging a word.

At the corner of the High Street Stuyvesant stopped, and held out his hand.

"You will think of what I have said?" he asked, smiling; "and—I have entrusted you with a little confidence, Spencer. You will respect it?"

II.

BY the evening of the same day the impression that Spencer Forwood had received from Mr. Stuyvesant's remonstrances had had time to evaporate, and he had begun to work himself into a pretty state of indignation over the fact that any person should be "such a cad" as to presume on having once obliged a gentleman with a loan, to the extent of keeping a watch upon the aforesaid gentleman and treating him like a baby. Apart from this, he was not disposed to amiable relations with Harold Stuyvesant. He felt painfully raw and young in comparison with a person who, in point of travel, experience, and adventure, might be counted a fair modern representative of much-enduring Ulysses. Then Stuyvesant had captivated Nancy Prothero, with whom, until the last year, he had fully imagined himself to be in love. And although he had now rectified the mistake about the object of his affections, that did not make the intrusion of the American any the less offensively patent.

Miss Prothero's engagement had been a more serious disappointment to Spencer's father than it was to himself. Ambition, as everyone knows, may be as serious a factor in a town council as in the Concert of Europe, and Josiah Forwood devoted his mind to the promotion of his family influence in Bishopshaven with just as much zest as if he had been a reigning Sovereign with a potent voice in the Eastern Question. His son as he grew up was more and more a disappointment to him; but if he could be married to a woman with brains and an heiress—and Anne Prothero met both these conditions—the glory would not depart utterly from his house. Before he had time to see how small were Spencer's chances of interesting Nancy, this interloper from America came, saw, and conquered. Mr. Forwood did not quarrel, of course, with one who was so soon to be admitted into his partner's family; but he nursed his grudge until it grew visibly.

And these were not the only grudges that were nursed against the too-fortunate Stuyvesant, who, if he ever had had any painful episodes in his career, seemed to have quite forgotten them when he appeared at Mr. Prothero's house that evening. Beech Hill, the banker's house, was a big, brown, square structure, with that look of solid comfort about it

which is the true-born Briton's chief desideratum. What the building itself lacked from an æsthetic point of view, was fully made up for by the situation; for it stood on the top of a green bank, shaded by fine old beech-trees. On one side the hill descended by terraces from the lawn in front of the drawing-room windows, on two others it fell away in broken slopes strewn already with wild hyacinths and clumps of yellow daffodils.

The drawing-room which he entered had a physiognomy of its own. The colouring of the room was harmonious but sober, the furniture rather heavily handsome. The only pictures on the walls were the portraits of bygone Protheros in drab surtouts or mob-caps. But, then, every article of furniture was made for comfort; one could move without trembling for the safety of Japanese jars or occasional tables, and there were flowers everywhere.

Nancy, in a black lace dress, with the slightest possible relief of pale blue ribbon, was sitting near the fire, talking to Mrs. Fiske and Miss Hardinge. She looked up and smiled at him as he came in, and went on with what she was saying; while Mr. Prothero came forward with a budget of questions about his election prospects. The old gentleman found him a little *distrait*—he was noticing how Nancy's face lit up as she talked; how her cheeks grew rosy, and her grey eyes shone and sparkled, and once or twice, when her glance met his for a moment, the sudden beautiful softening of the bright, keen, resolute face.

But, certainly, no one but a lover could have placed Anne Prothero's good looks in comparison for a moment with those of the girl who came in from the conservatory a little while after Mr. Stuyvesant's entrance. Her cream-coloured dress with a square cut bodice seemed much too elaborate a toilet for the occasion and the habits of the household; but she was the sort of person on whom the simplest dress looks more effective than it should. She had fastened a crimson camellia in her black hair, and carried another, swinging it carelessly by the stalk. She walked in slowly, with a wearied, sulky look on her handsome face, and moved towards a chair at the further end of the room, nodding slightly to Stuyvesant as she passed him.

"I've been stealing, you see," she said in an offhand way to Nancy, fastening the camellia into her sash.

"Oh, Florida! my sweet!" remarked her mother.

Nancy smiled, and said something pleasant about the becomingness of the flower; but contrived to telegraph to Miss Hardinge her feeling that her two-days' guest had taken a liberty.

Mrs. Fiske then reverted to the arrangements for her lecture.

"I do trust," she said, "it is being well advertised."

"I think it is," Nancy replied; "I gave out innumerable leaflets, and I see bills everywhere."

"It's very lovely of you to take the trouble," said the lecturer effusively; "but we don't mind trouble when we have the good cause at heart, do we, dear? When I think of the teeming millions in this town alone——"

"Go ahead, mamma!" put in Florida. "There can't be more than fifty thousand people in this town, I'm positive."

"You are always so accurate, my pet," replied Mrs. Fiske, with unruffled temper. "I do so delight in accuracy. They say that is the value of a mathematical training—it makes you accurate. But, even putting it at fifty thousand, and I dare say——"

"I wish you wouldn't talk shop, ma. I presume we shall have to hear what you've got to say tomorrow night. You might let us off now."

It was evident from Miss Challis's tone, quite as much as from her words, that she was a prey to the ailment known as bad temper. Even Mrs. Fiske's mild face flushed a little at this last interruption, and she remarked aside to Nancy that the darling was very highly strung, and that the journey had been too much for her.

At this rather electric moment Mr. Spencer Forwood entered, and Florida's face expressed her satisfaction at the prospect of something amusing.

"Are they always as dull as this?" she asked him. "Everything is so awfully proper, I can't exist."

And now, as Mr. Prothero was busy talking social statistics to the two elder ladies, the engaged pair had an excuse for escaping to the conservatory together for a few minutes.

"You are worried, Harold. What's the matter?"

"Nothing," he said. "Nothing—now."

He was standing with his arm round her; she threw back her fair head so as to look up into his face.

"There is something, Harold. What is it? Has Josiah Forwood been disagreeable?"

"You know I don't care for Josiah Forwood. No; I was wishing I had been a better man for your sake, Nannie."

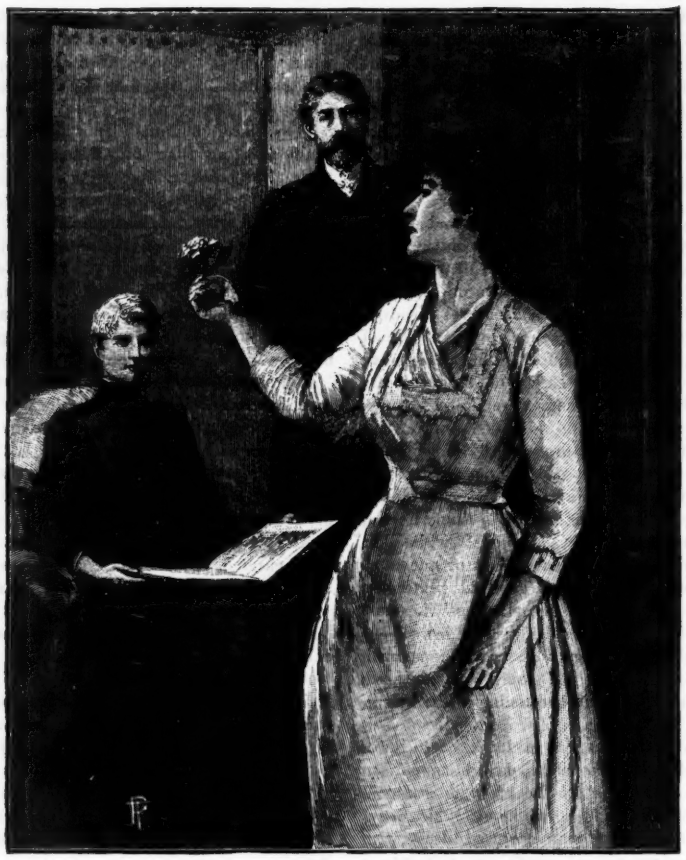
"You are good enough for me," was all she said; but the look she gave him was so full of tender pride that it seemed strange he should wince under it. Yet he did.

"I sometimes think," he said, "how it would be if you found out that I was not—that I had not always been——"

She laughed up at him.

"If you had not been the best man I ever knew I shouldn't have thought of you," she said. "But come; I don't want those people to fancy I neglect them. I think you are getting run down. You must go away for a day or two when this tiresome election is over."

When they came back into the drawing-room, they found that "a change had come o'er the spirit" of the scene. Nancy raised her eyebrows at her companion. "This is a new development," she whispered.



"'I've been stealing, you see.'"—*p.* 391.

On the voyage from New York, where Spencer Forwood had made Florida's acquaintance, she had gained some celebrity for her banjo-playing and singing. As Spencer happened to remind her of this—"I've got my banjo here," she said. "I'll fetch it."

Spencer looked a little dubious. He knew that Anne Prothero had never been allowed to learn music, even of the most decorous and classical type, and he feared that Miss Challis's *répertoire* would not commend itself to her host.

"I don't care if they like it or not," she said. "If I don't do something I shall suffocate."

So when Nancy returned with her lover, she found her warbling—

"Will you open de door, Maggie Judah;"

while Mrs. Fiske continued to pour out a stream of reminiscences into Miss Hardinge's politely attentive ear, and Mr. Prothero ambled up and down the room decidedly uncomfortable at the character of the music that was going on in his drawing-room (for, as we have said, he belonged to the old school), but unwilling to interfere with the amusements of his guests. Finally he could bear it no longer, and quietly departed.

Just as Florida was finishing her third ditty, Mr. Forwood, senior, appeared upon the scene. He cast a reproving glance upon the banjo-player, which she sustained with great coolness. When Miss Prothero introduced him to Miss Challis, he said—

"It is fashionable in America, I suppose, for young ladies to play on that instrument?"

"It is becoming fashionable everywhere, I think," said Nancy, who felt bound to take the part of her guest against what she felt to be an impertinence.

"Ah," he replied, "I hope it may be long before thou becomes a fashionable person, Anne."

His object in coming seemed to be to carry off his

son, to whom he addressed a rather sudden question as they were going down the drive.

"What took thee up there to-night? Not business, I think."

"I just went up to call," the son replied.

"I wish I could have found thee spending thy time more profitably. And don't go making a fool of thyself with that young woman. I shall seek an opportunity with Edwin Prothero to tell him what I think of the ways of his household."

And so the pair went discontentedly home.

Edwin Prothero, meanwhile, quite unconscious of the offence that the ways of his household caused, was quietly conducting family prayer. As for Anne, if she had had a Quaker cap over the soft shining coils of her hair, she might have sat for the portrait of that ancestor of hers who died of gaol-fever in the county prison to which she had followed her husband, one of the earliest confessors among the Friends. She knew the story well; that and others like it had been the romances of her childhood. Her romance, her enthusiasm, her personal and family pride, of which the banker's daughter had a share that would have sufficed a Montmorency or a Howard—although, like a prudent person, she suppressed those tendencies to such a point that few suspected them—all ran in the same channel. The sense of belonging to a line of honest men, who had suffered for conscience' sake, but never as evil-doers, was as much to her as an hereditary coronet. For the same reason she never fretted against the limits imposed by the stricter members of her sect. Other young Friends of her acquaintance went to balls and theatres, and attired themselves in all the colours of the rainbow. Nancy Prothero's dress was always severely, though daintily, simple, and her wildest dissipations were a lecture or a Philharmonic concert; and this less out of reasoned conviction than because to do otherwise would not be in accordance with traditions which were precious to her.

But if she had been a finished coquette she could not have done anything more calculated to enhance the attractions she had. The *cachet* conferred by intercourse with "the best society" is one thing—and a charming thing—but there is a grace of breeding that may be acquired outside Court circles. It consists in reticence, calmness, sincere benevolence, heart-refinement. And of this good breeding no better school could be found than Edwin Prothero's household. It was this that gave a crowning grace of simple and delicate dignity to the gay, frank, high-spirited girl, a touch of sweet reserve and calm to the eager, sensitive face.

It is to be feared that Miss Challis was not in a frame of mind to profit by the closing exercises of the day. She was intensely and naturally annoyed at Josiah Forwood's behaviour to her; and yet the kindness of Mr. Prothero and his niece was scarcely more agreeable. She felt that they disapproved of her, and she was as quick to feel the disapproval of those about her as she was incapable of the self-command that would have avoided it—a temper as unfavourable to happiness in this world as can well be imagined. There was something in the sober calm of the Puritan household that, even while she chafed against it, touched an answering fibre somewhere in her strangely mixed nature. It was stupid, and slow, and monotonous, she said, but it filled her with a vague, vexing sense of her own deficiency.

Florida had another reason for feeling out of humour with her surroundings and herself. The presence of Harold Stuyvesant would of itself have been a trial to her; to meet him as the accepted lover of her hostess was worse, if possible. Four years back, while Stuyvesant was still their fellow-townsman, Miss Challis—then a just emancipated school-girl, impatient to begin what she, like many another novel-nourished young woman, considered the main business of life—had selected him as the appropriate object of a *grande passion;* and not only so, but on one occasion, piqued by the grandfatherly way in which he treated her, she surprised him by sobbing out a revelation of the place her fancy had given him. It was a distressing moment for him. He had been a most kind and helpful friend to the child herself and her mother, without a thought of any such sentimental complication. Looking back upon the circumstance, as she could not help sometimes doing, though the thought of it seemed to scorch her, Florida could not but admit that he had behaved like a gentleman. Nevertheless, she knew so little of what honourable feeling enjoins, that she saw nothing improbable in the idea that he had made Anne Prothero acquainted with the whole story. Nancy could not at all understand the suspicious looks that her guest sometimes bent upon her. The fact was, Florida was incessantly seeking for some indication of how much her rival knew, or if she knew anything.

When the party separated for the night, Nancy accompanied Miss Hardinge to her own room, which opened on the same corridor as Florida's. It was connected with a small dressing-room, which also opened on the corridor, and the door of which was open as Florida passed. She went to her own apartment, changed her shoes for a pair of soundless velvet slippers, and crept back to the dressing-room.

As soon as the two friends reached the shelter of their room Nancy carefully shut behind her the door that opened on the passage (it did not occur to her to think of the dressing-room door), and then, dropping into an easy-chair, on one side of the fire—Miss Hardinge was already ensconced in the other—she uttered the weighty monosyllable—

"Well?"

"Oh, I think he's delightful, Nannie!"

"That's right. I thought thou'd like him. I'm afraid it has been rather a dull evening for thee. I thought uncle would have relieved us of Mrs. Fiske. He gets on very well with her, but Miss Challis frightened him away with her banjo. I am sorry for that girl; she is bored to death here, I can see."

"She has one resource in that young Forwood."

"Oh! he is hopeless—a gone case. And I am afraid there will be no end of trouble, for Josiah Forwood will never allow it."

(Here a pair of velvet-shod feet shuffled noiselessly into the adjoining dressing-room, and Miss Challis's ear approached as nearly as possible to the door of communication, which was slightly ajar.)

"I suppose Miss Challis likes him?"

"Oh! as to her," answered Nancy, with a ripple of laughter in her voice, that made the listener want to choke her, "she is immensely in love, one can see—with herself."

Her voice dropped with the last words, so that Florida had the annoyance of missing the concluding part of the sentence.

"I don't think she will ever care much for anyone else," she went on. "Harold told me all the—— What was that noise?" For at this point there was a sound as if some garment had fallen from a hook in the next room.

"Nothing, I think. You were saying——"

"Oh! that Harold told me all about her family, and I know he was very good to Mrs. Fiske when she first came to Philadelphia. She has said so to me herself."

Florida was no longer benefiting by the conversation. There is a rather hackneyed quotation to the effect that

> "Trifles, light as air,
> Are to the jealous confirmations strong
> As proofs of Holy Writ."

To Florida, with her mind full of a preconceived idea, the words, "Harold told me," were enough to confirm her suspicions. A sudden choking sensation seized her; she rushed from the room, throwing down a dress that hung beside her as she did so, and flung herself on her own bed in a hysterical passion of rage and shame.

"I'll pay them out!" she gasped, as soon as she could get back her voice. "Oh, I hate him—I hate him—I hate them both!"

And she lay there sobbing, and revolving schemes of impossible vengeance, long after both the objects of her anger were fast asleep.

(To be concluded.)

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

49. In what words did our blessed Lord first make known to His disciples the nature of their ministry?

50. What great act of faith was manifested by St. Peter when our Lord called him to be a disciple?

51. What power did Jesus claim in the earlier part of His ministry, thus showing that He was God?

52. Which of the Apostles speaks of eternal life as God's gift to man through the redemption wrought by Christ?

53. Quote a passage from Isaiah in which the gentleness and tenderness of God are set forth as the mark of the ministry of Christ.

54. In what words does our blessed Lord set forth the great principle which should guide us in our dealing with one another?

55. Our blessed Lord says: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." What practical illustration of this command is found in the Book of Kings?

56. Our Lord tells us to "pray for them who despitefully use us." In what way has He set us an example?

57. What little slave-girl illustrated by her conduct the words of our Lord—"Love your enemies"?

58. What miracle of our Lord best illustrates the compassion and sympathy of God towards man?

59. Which of the Apostles speaks of sympathy towards one another as the leading characteristic of true religion?

60. What was there in the restoration to life of the widow's son, at Nain, which made the multitude feel that God had visited His people?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 312.

37. It was during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and when Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judæa. (St. Luke iii. 1, 2.)

38. That they were of the seed of Abraham. (St. Luke iii. 8; St. John viii. 33, 39.)

39. By preaching repentance, *i.e.*, the putting away of sins, which were an obstacle to the acceptance of Christ. (St. Luke iii. 3.)

40. He denounced them as a "generation of vipers." (St. Matt iii. 7; St. Luke vii. 30.)

41. That having been tempted Himself, He is able to help us when we are tempted. (Heb. ii. 18.)

42. That Satan departed only "for a season." (St. Luke iv. 13.)

43. They thrust Him out of the synagogue and led Him to the top of a precipice near the town with the intention of casting Him down therefrom. (St. Luke iv. 28, 29.)

44. The words were first used by Moses in reference to God's feeding the children of Israel with manna in the wilderness, and thus Jesus implied that God could also feed Him. (St. Luke iv. 4; Deut. viii. 3.)

45. St. Luke iv. 16.

46. That the unclean spirit in a man cried out with fear, and was afterwards cast out by our blessed Lord. (St. Luke iv. 31—35.)

47. Jesus visited St. Peter and healed his wife's mother. (St. Luke iv. 38, 39.)

48. St. Luke says, "He laid His hands upon every one of them and healed them." (St. Luke iv. 40; and St. Matt. viii. 16.)

XUM

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.



THE LOHARDUGGA LEPER ASYLUM, CHOTA NAGPORE, BENGAL.
(From a Photograph.)

"NONE OF THEM DIED FOR ME."



A CHILD LEPER.
(From a Photograph taken at Lohardugga.)

INTEREST in the lepers, those special objects of the Saviour's help, has been greatly revived of late, and attention is justly drawn to the noble deeds wrought by Protestant missionaries in India. We read of a Leper Asylum at Lohardugga, Chota Nagpore, Bengal, with fruit-trees around, planted by the patients from time to time. Here John Newton, the lepers' friend, tended his charges devotedly, risking his life by coming into close contact with them, yet mercifully preserved from contagion. He was a medical man, and shone out as an earnest physician of the soul; his work amongst the inmates of the asylum was greatly blessed by God. Of another grand yet humble worker we hear that on one occasion, when a patient died, he performed the last offices, carried all that was mortal to the grave, and buried it himself, as no helper volunteered. A native Christian doctor who had been a Mahometan, and was clad in spotless muslin, did not shrink from placing his arms round a sufferer, raising him gently, and placing him in a comfortable position. The leper was coarsely dressed, and to the spectator the action recalled those tender words, "the love of Christ constraineth us." Mr. Budden, of the London Missionary Society, and Mr. Vaughan, of the C.M.S., put forth noble efforts on behalf of the sufferers. The Rev. Dr. Bauman, also of the C.M.S., was enabled to erect a place of worship in connection with the Calcutta Leper Asylum, and an aged woman, over eighty-two years old, was there led by the preacher to the Divine Healer. A sceptic asked her if the many gods and goddesses of her own religion would not suffice, but she had an answer ready for him—"*None of them died for me.*" It is in His name and for His sake Who died for us, that help and sympathy are sought for these far-off needy ones, and those seeking to relieve them. The secretary of this grand work, the "Mission to Lepers in India," is Wellesley Bailey, Esq., 17, Glengyle Terrace, Edinburgh.

THE MUSICAL CLOCK.

A friend of ours received a legacy of an ancient clock, so constructed that it charmed the household with beautiful music, "and," said he, "when away from home, I was conscious of missing something sweet and pleasant, which on remembrance turned out to be the melodies of my clock." It came to pass one day that the music did not sound to him so

sweet, and day by day there was a perceptible falling-off in the dulcet tones that had given such delight. At last the clock seemed to murmur rather than give music, and threatened to cease its tuneful notes entirely. "Dust and dirt," pronounced an expert, who was consulted as to the cause of the change. Under his skilful hands, the clock was thoroughly cleansed, and again the sweet music rang forth, clear and beautiful. As our friend mentioned the incident, we were reminded how necessary is the *spiritual* renewing which only can attune our hearts day by day to holy and helpful strains. The mire and dust of earth too often still the melodies of the soul, and these must be removed by fresh communion with the Lord, daily touching, by faith, of that Life which is altogether lovely.

USEFUL LIVES AND USEFUL BOOKS.

The author of the popular biographies of the men who have risen from humble surroundings to the Presidentship of the United States, Mr. W. M. Thayer, has recently written a biography of Benjamin Franklin under the title "From Printing Office to the Court of St. James's," which is published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. Of course Franklin's widely read autobiography did not leave very much that is new to be said about his life, but Mr. Thayer has succeeded in re-telling the story in an interesting way, and in putting many points in the great printer's public life in a new light. The work is one which, like its predecessors in the "Log Cabin" Series, cannot fail to be productive of good in the minds of young readers, and we heartily commend it. A series of earnest sermons by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, describing and illustrating "The Philanthropy of God," has just been issued by the same publishers. The title Mr. Hughes gets by a rather happy translation of the Greek word rendered "kindness" in the fourth verse of the third chapter of the Epistle to Titus. Many current topics will be found incidentally dealt with in the course of these addresses, but always in a thoughtful and sympathetic manner, and keeping in view the aim and purpose of the series, the illustration of the wonderful sympathy of God with man. The volume is a timely one, and likely to prove very helpful to preachers and teachers. There are some very pretty verses in a tasteful little volume entitled "Through Fields of Light" (Hodder and Stoughton), which have been collected from among the writings of the late Edwin Hatch, D.D., by his widow. Some have never seen the light before, others were only printed privately. All alike are now given just as they were written, most of them for the author's friends. How strange it is, in this age of change, to hear of an English city which has already had a settled form of civic government for a thousand years! This is the case in Winchester, and this fact alone would entitle the city to a place in the "Historic Towns" that are dealt with in Messrs. Longmans' series. The Dean of Winchester is the author of the volume on this old cathedral city, and he has told his story with all the affectionate enthusiasm of a resident who loves the city of his adoption. No one can spend even an hour in Winchester without seeing numerous evidences of its venerable age, and a very brief acquaintance with Dean Kitchin's book will show how many of the best sides of our English life are associated, in one way or another, with the ancient capital of Wessex and England.

LEFT IN THE QUARRY.

"Opportunity," it has been said, "is the flower of time," and to some people the flower may seem lost, and the stalk alone remaining. Let us not be too sure that our opportunities are past; they need seeking and inquiring for with full purpose of heart, and to the prayerful life that truly desires them they will yet become visible. It is a grand thing to know our opportunities, however, when they are granted to us—to say to ourselves, "Now's the time," and to make use of the present, all else being so unknown and so vague. How many a life-wreck, how many a wasted career has been brought about by procrastination! The time for the good work, the kindly greeting, the helpful letter, went by; and we had no part or share in what we knew to be blessed and Christlike. Why should we put our hands to the plough concerning that scheme which is just now upon our hearts? Because in a brief space the changes of residence, fortune, circumstances—life's uncertainty—may have put the ministry beyond our reach. Dr. Maclaren tells of lonely quarries wherein have been found blocks, squared and dressed, evidently meant for palace, shrine, or some important building. But no use has been made of them—the building for which they were designed is reared without their help. "Beware," says he, "lest God's grand temple be built up without you."

"THE VETERAN MISSIONARIES' HIVE."

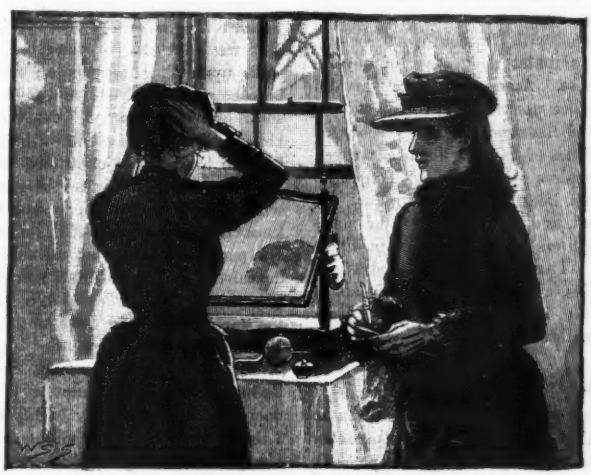
A lady, who sympathises with the efforts put forth by the London City Mission to brighten the declining days of disabled workers, and to care for their widows and orphans, writes to the Society that she has added to her six bee-hives a *seventh*, on behalf of the veteran missionaries. "The bees have been so very industrious," she reports, "that I have sold the honey for £1 4s., which I now send, with best wishes for the dear old people." He who has promised that the righteous shall not be forsaken, must be well pleased with the solicitude of the London City Mission to make the closing scene of life's pilgrimage a land of peace to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day in the Master's warfare, and likewise to those they leave behind when called to the rest beyond. As far as their strength permits, several of the aged pensioners still engage in Christian work, such as visiting the sick, and conducting Bible-classes. Some of those most infirm make their sick-room a

XUM

Bethel, by receiving visitors for religious counsel and prayer. Of one thus resting and waiting, a neighbour writes : "He is adviser-general for the village, and to many beyond ; with him it is a smile and a good word for everybody. When he is removed, the best influence we have ever had about here will be taken from us." The City Mission veterans have, in many cases, passed through perils and adventures which have tested the noblest qualities of Christian manhood. We read of a worker appointed to a neglected district near the Tottenham Court Road, which was crowded with the violent and dissolute. A drunken tailor insulted and attacked him for venturing to bring the message of the Gospel to his room. "A third time," said the missionary, "I tapped at his door, when he exclaimed, 'What ! come again !' and raising his 'goose,' he continued, 'If you come an inch further I will give you a bit of this.'" His visitor proved intrepid in his longing to see the drunkard a good and happy man. By-and-bye, the tailor shook hands, remarking, "You are a queer fellow to be religious, afraid of nothing. Yes, we will be friends." A few months later the reading of God's Word, and prayer, had brought the poor drunkard to the feet of Jesus, and his formerly ill-used wife was also found at the services held by the missionary, who, after twenty-six years of such arduous labour in the harvest-field, received his home-call with joy.

"THE CHRYSALIS OF ETERNITY."

Thus has Time been defined by Richter, and few of us remember from day to day what issues hide within the passing hours, what a solemn trust is the *present*, which so soon will be the past. It was once said of an individual, "He loses half an hour every morning, and runs after it all day long, without being able to overtake it." These words might be quoted now and then, perhaps, concerning *ourselves*, for the moments, the half-hours, are lost and wasted almost unconsciously, when they might be definitely used for good. We all require time for rest and recreation as well as labour, but many a moment is perfectly aimless and thrown away, tiring us more by its want of purpose than if we had filled it with work. We would remind our readers of that very useful society, the "Spare Minute Club," which relieves many cases of distress, and weaves leisure moments into chains of brightness and blessing. "Be merciful after thy power" is the watchword inspiring the association, concerning which particulars may be learnt from Miss Sargent, 20, Castellain Road, Maida Vale. Members undertake to work one quarter of an hour daily, or one hour and a half weekly, fining themselves threepence each week the work is left undone. The foundress was a hospital visitor, and became acquainted with so much domestic trouble in connection with the patients, that she longed to devise some regular means of comfort and assistance. The "Spare Minute Club" helps the sick, the widowed and the fatherless, the struggling poor, and those earnestly seeking work. "That 's impossible for me," said a poor zinc-worker, when the doctor ordered him a sea-change. The society sent him to a home at Folkestone, and he completely recovered his health. A poor invalid was asked if he was worried by the sound of the mangle provided for his wife. "Worrited by the mangle !" he cried. "I likes to lie and hear the blessed sound ! Won't it keep the missus and the kids from the workhouse ?" The hon. sec. of this club would be grateful for hospital or convalescent home letters, old sheets, linen, and new or mended clothes, but begs to be allowed to request that no clothes be sent from houses where there has been *infectious* illness.



USING THE SPARE MOMENTS.

"IN HIS NAME."

It has been said in the past, and not without truth, perhaps, that the girls of the working classes were better looked after spiritually than their sisters in homes of comfort. Now, however, societies exist to help all classes to fulfil the Master's bidding, and to follow in His steps. There are good works calling forth the time and talent of those whose days once hung heavily on their hands, and of late another



"Looking after the helpless and lonely."

association (originated in America) leagues "the King's Daughters" in a guild of active work for the Lord. Miss Tatham, 22, Welbeck Road, Birkdale, a lady who is connected with the Southport society, sends us a little pamphlet suggestive of several branches of helpfulness. Among these are "invalid cookery and ambulance work among the poor," infirmary visitation, and the supervision of discharged patients, making articles of clothing for needy cases, looking after the helpless and lonely. "To gentlewomen of the British Isles, younger and older," the pamphlet is addressed, and it is hoped that branches of the "King's Daughters" may be formed in different neighbourhoods. There are special ministrations adapted to older ladies, and one "group" consists of "little children of the King," from six to ten years old, who try to be truthful and polite.

SERMONS, SKETCHES, AND STORIES.

Preachers have few more difficult tasks than to address a congregation of boys, and the preacher must be endowed with a peculiarly sympathetic mind who can successfully reach such a body of hearers. This thought is called up by the perusal of "Christian Conduct," a volume of sermons preached in the chapel of Mill Hill School by Mr. Vince, the headmaster, who has made admirable choice of subjects applicable to the wants of his boys, and dealt with them in a very happy manner. The volume is one that should be in the hands of all teachers of boys' classes. This volume is published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, who also send us a volume of memorials of Andrew Kennedy Bremner, who is well described in the title as "A Child of Faith, in an Age of Doubt." Mr. Bremner's life was a short one, but it was an interesting and an earnest one, and its story, as told by his brother in this volume, will well repay reading. Another very interesting biography that is before us is Dr. Donald Fraser's "Life of Mary Jane, Lady Kinnaird" (Nisbet and Co.). Lady Kinnaird's name was so long known in connection with many good works that we feel sure her friends and fellow-workers will welcome this sympathetic memorial of her good life. "Old Crusty's Niece," from the same publishers, is a very pretty story told by the Rev. J. Jackson Wray and T. Jackson Wray, very closely written, but very well worth reading. Those who have to give addresses to children will find some very useful illustrations from nature's book in "Simple Lessons from Nature" (same publishers), by M. Cordelia E. Leigh. The volume consists of five-and-twenty well-classified lessons, from which useful hints might well be taken by those who have not at command the necessary resources for original research in this direction. Indeed, young teachers might do very much worse than take the outline of each of these lessons as a skeleton for their whole address.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS.

Some people are inclined to argue against religion because they have met poor specimens of Christians. But we have not to place our hopes and lean our souls upon Christian people; the Lord God Himself is to be our confidence, and none that trust in *Him* shall ever be ashamed. At the same time, could believers only realise what a help or hindrance they form to their fellow-creatures, they would pray yet more fervently that they might grow likeminded with the Master, and represent to those who do not know Him some image of His mercy, His forgiveness, His patience. "It is no use talking to me!" cried a despairing soul to a Christian friend, who was urging him to seek the pardon of the Lord, "I have gone too far—God would have nothing to do with me." Presently his friend reminded him rather coldly how often he had given him help, and how ungratefully he had requited his kindness. "What!" cried the poor fellow in surprise, "are *you* talking like that? I thought whoever else might cast me out, I could always trust in *your* kindness. And so I can—nothing has changed you—nothing will."—"I only

wanted to prove to you," said the other, "how it would surprise you if ever *I* cast your past in your face. Now, if you can wholly trust in the love and pardon of an erring fellow-creature like myself, can you not more trustfully throw yourself on the mercy and pardon of *God?*" Light broke upon that despairing soul, and the prodigal was drawn, through confidence in a Christian man, to trust in the forgiving Lord, concerning whose grace to the contrite the poet cries—

"Shall we attempt with puny force
To lash back ocean with a rod?
Arrest the planets in their course,
Or weigh the mercies of a God?"

THE Y.M.C.A. IN JAPAN.

One of the most striking features of the present rapid spread of Christianity in Japan is the success attending recent efforts to organise Young Men's Christian Associations in that country. At Tokio, the capital, such unions, each consisting of some forty students, have been formed in three Government and three missionary schools and colleges, while there is also a city branch. Buildings for the use of these young men unitedly are now in course of erection. While Christianity numbers about one in twelve hundred of the population of Japan, it has gained one-fifteenth of the students in seven prominent Government colleges. A leading scholar in one of these, when asked, "Why do many among you hesitate to accept the religion of Jesus Christ?" answered, "Nearly all who investigate it carefully do accept it." The Secretary of the American Y.M.C.A. Central Committee, lately visiting Japan, was struck with the missionary spirit of the native Christian youths at the Doshisha College, Kioto. At their instance he held evangelistic meetings among their still heathen companions, many of whom were led by this means to join the college church. From June 29th to July 10th, at the earnest request of the teachers and scholars in this institution, meetings for Bible study were held at the same time as the Northfield Summer School. Native pastors and young men from all parts of the country were invited, five hundred of whom were present. Addresses were given on "The Bible," "The Holy Spirit," "Prayer," "Methods of Work," by ten Japanese speakers and seven foreigners. A report of this gathering, entitled, "Guku Sei no Dai Kwai," "The Students' Great Gathering," is now published and widely read. It is hoped that a similar meeting next summer may be held in the new Y.M.C.A. buildings already mentioned.

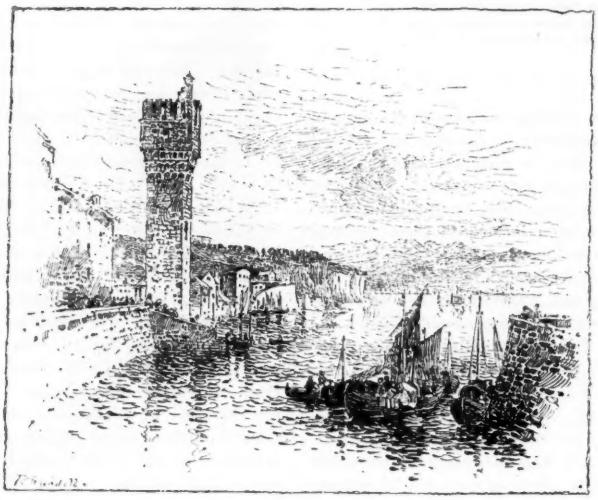
FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS.

Many Sunday-school workers and scholars know that in the British Museum are many objects of interest to them, from the light which they throw upon the Bible records. But their difficulty has hitherto been that these were so scattered through the various collections as to make it difficult for a student to visit all that he should see. The Rev. J. G. Kitchin, M.A., has now prepared a descriptive guide to the principal antiquities which illustrate and confirm sacred history, under the title of "The Bible Student in the British Museum." This little work is issued by Messrs. Cassell, and, armed with this, any scholar visiting the British Museum could not fail to derive much pleasure and instruction from a survey of its treasures. We are glad to welcome a new and cheaper edition of "The Marriage Ring" (Cassell and Co.), by the Rev. W. Landels, D.D., which is admirably adapted for a present to those recently married or those who are hoping shortly to be married. It is full of good and kindly counsels. A capital story for girls is "Polly: a New Fashioned Girl," issued by the same publishers, and from the pen of our old friend L. T. Meade, whose work needs no further recommendation to the readers of THE QUIVER. There is much that is very interesting in the little volume entitled "India: Sketches and Stories of Native Life," by the Rev. J. Ewen, just published by Mr. Elliot Stock. The work is the outcome of a long residence in India, and a careful study of the Mahometans and Hindus of the Northern Provinces. The work cannot fail to be useful to all who have the interests of mission-work at heart. The Rev. C. H. Butcher, D.D., formerly Dean of Shanghai, and now chaplain at Cairo, has collected in a tasteful volume, issued by the same publisher, some of the sermons that he has preached to his congregations in the East. Of course the volume will be chiefly interesting to those who heard the sermons at the time of their delivery, but they have a value for all as an illustration of earnest work in distant lands. Temperance workers will find "The National Temperance League's Annual for 1890" a veritable armoury for the year's work. It not only gives statistics of the past year's campaign, but supplies not a little information that should serve to make the new year's work more easy and more successful.

A DISTRICT-VISITOR'S EXPERIENCE.

"The first visit I made," said a devoted East End worker, "was to a woman who had invited me to call upon her, but who met me on the landing with uplifted fist, daring me to approach any farther." Such a reception made the visitor's heart quail within her, but she is one of those who in any perplexity call upon the Divine assistance promised to the needy and trustful. A few gentle words calmed the tumult of passion that had greeted her approach, and a request that she might be allowed to come in and sit down led at last to permission for her to read to the poor woman from the Gospel of comfort and peace. Since that day many a similar scene has defied the truth and endeavoured to daunt Christian courage. In one room a poor trembling wife could scarcely control the vagaries of a wildly

drunken man, and in other cases coldness, haughtiness, opposition, have discouraged the visitor. Perhaps one of her most trying moments was when a man in a lodging-house expressed his approval of her efforts by giving her half of his saucer of tea, but she knew better than to refuse it, and finished it heroically, though it was flavoured with onion. A lady working hard among the poor said recently, "I do not know how I should have kept up heart of late but for two cases of conversion among those I visit." She was surrounded by discouragement, but those two cases shone out as God's witnesses that His Word will bear fruit even in unlikely soil. And so we could not help feeling that the toil of the East End labourer had been nowise in vain, when we heard the letter written to her by a poor labouring girl in that locality, blessing her that she had cared for her soul, welcoming her as a friend whom God had sent, and telling her she too would try what she could do to shine for the Master in that neighbourhood.



AT SAVONA.

AN ITALIAN MISSION TO SEAMEN.

The Church Mission for Seamen, Savona, Italy, was commenced about four years ago, and is now carried on in what was once a small theatre. The institute comprises a reading and recreation-room, and there is a library, to which additions would be welcomed. There are regular religious services, and a concert is held weekly. "We are now endeavouring," say the workers, "to arrange for short daily services on board the ships in port, so as to help and comfort many who are striving to walk in the narrow way." The sailors themselves are ready enough to aid the concerts, when once the ice is broken; and when there is an extra amount of talent forthcoming, the friends get up additional "sing-songs" amongst the men in port. Sympathising visitors passing through Genoa and along the Western Riviera would be gladly welcomed if they could look over the institute and lend their aid at some of the gatherings. When Jack comes ashore a cozy place with English papers has great attractions for him, and it is most important that he should find a shelter elsewhere than in a drinking saloon. Body and mind are well cared for at the various seamen's institutes now provided by Christian thoughtfulness, but the higher side of the work is going on at the same time, and good seed is being sown.

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from December 20th, 1889, up to and including January 22nd, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month.

L. V. D., Grampound Road, 5s.; E. L., Grampound Road, 10s.; Mrs. H. Moore, Hildenboro', 5s.; A Lover of Little Ones, Ingleby, £1; A. H., Birmingham, 2s. 6d.; Wood Green, 5s.; Johnny W., Leeds, 2s. 6d.; Miss Pryce, Shifnal, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, Shrewsbury, 10s.; Anon., Henley-on-Thames, 2s. 6d.; Thekla, Wakefield, 5s.; Edie, St. Leonards, 2s. 6d.; Thankful, Warwick, 10s.; G. S. Smith, Enfield, 5s.; Anon., Sleaford, 5s.; R. N., Primrose Hill, 2s.; A. W., Crawley, 1s.; H. O. and E. E. C., Warwick, 5s.; S. S. W., Birmingham, 5s.; E. N., Winchester, 2s. 6d.; J. J. E., Govan (27th donation), 5s.; E. M. S., Rickmansworth, 5s.; H. S., Liverpool, 3s.; Poor Mother, Glasgow, 1s.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of 7s. 6d. for the funds of the Homes, from "A Friend, Leamington."





BABY'S FIRST VISIT.

(See p. 473)



THE PROCESSION.

A GREAT SUNDAY-SCHOOL.



DR. JAMES MACGREGOR once said that Sunday scholars were the staple product of Stockport, and declared that the world might be searched in vain for anything in any way approaching the statistics in connection with the great school of that town. Though these are doubtless valuable and significant, the truly enormous influence which the school has exercised cannot adequately be gauged by them. An institution which has had six thousand teachers, and through which one hundred thousand scholars have passed, must necessarily have done much good that no system of official statistics, however complete, can possibly show, or that never will be known on earth. "The incidents that constitute the true history of our school year," says the Hon. Secretary (Mr. James Leigh) in one of his admirable reports, "cannot be written in these pages. They belong rather to such records as the Angel of the Apocalypse was commanded to write, and they can only be read when the seals are opened in the presence of that great assembly which no man can number." Much, then, must be left to the imagination.

The present building was commenced in 1805—rather more than twenty years after Sunday-schools were first brought prominently before the public—and cost upwards of £4,000, exclusive of the ground rent. In a circular issued at the time, the committee stated that the institution was founded upon the broad basis of universal philanthropy, and that it was intended to concentrate, as far as possible, the piety, charity, and talents of all parties. "The children," added the committee, "will be taken in turn to all the places of worship in town where accommodation is provided for them;" and it was



A WRITING LESSON.



IN THE LABORATORY.

further stated that scholars would be taught to read and write, and (in special cases) to keep accounts. As regards the management of the institution, it was provided that the committee, elected annually, should regulate all pecuniary matters; that visitors or superintendents, to each of whom would be allotted a particular department of the school, should be chosen from the most experienced of the teachers; and that, to connect together as much as possible the various branches of the school, there should be appointed a general inspector, whose office should extend to each department. This arrangement has, with few modifications, continued with complete success up to the present time.

It was at first feared that the building was much too large; but in 1835—thirty years after its opening—experience proved that the contrary was the case, and an appeal for funds being made, the response was so liberal that the committee were soon enabled to considerably enlarge it. Meanwhile, four branch schools had been erected by members of the committee at the different outskirts of the town, and were being carried on under the same management as the parent institution, and supported out of the common funds. Since then, the only addition of note was that made in 1884, when a new infant-school was built. The total cost of erection, with the branch schools, was £22,000.

To architectural beauty the principal building has little pretence. It is built of brick, and stands in such a position that it can be seen from many parts of the town. Yet, notwithstanding its lack of interest to the lover of the picturesque, few institutions in the neighbourhood are more worthy of a visit. During school hours it is a veritable hive of industry. From the corridors running through the building there open a number of doors leading into the various rooms, of which there are more than one hundred in the school. Most of these are class-rooms. About sixty classes are held every Sunday, some—which are divided into sections, each furnished with a teacher—containing between three and four hundred scholars. In addition, there is what is known as the "Large Room," which is capable of seating between two and three thousand people, and in which are held the monthly and annual services. There is also a periodical room (where about 22,000 publications are sold annually), several rooms for night classes and for the management of the institution, and three libraries—one each for the ordinary scholars, the first and second classes, and the teachers.

On the books of the large school there are generally about four thousand scholars, with about three hundred teachers and forty visitors or superintendents. These statistics are exclusive of the branch schools; with them the totals are much larger—namely, between five and six thousand scholars and five hundred teachers. Altogether, about one hundred thousand scholars have passed through the school, and there have been about six thousand teachers—a grand result which must be extremely gratifying to all concerned in the management of the institution.

Secular education, as we have seen, was one of the objects of the founders, and indeed writing lessons have always been given during Sunday afternoons. Now, however, week-night classes are held during the winter months. The average attendance is about one hundred and fifty scholars nightly, and the curriculum is pretty much the same as that of a well-managed mechanics' institute. This department is kept well in touch with the requirements of the time, the latest improvement being the erection of a laboratory that is probably



A LITTLE SCHOLAR.

surpassed by none within twenty miles of Manchester. Some years ago the science classes won for themselves a high position, and this they have succeeded in fully maintaining.

There are also in operation other organisations for the mental or social improvement of scholars, such as a Band of Hope, a flourishing sick and burial society, male and female improvement classes, etc. At one time the "Big School" (as it is familiarly called) had a band, consisting of some of the finest amateur musicians in England, and at the present time it is famous—in something more than the circumscribed sense in which the word is usually employed—for the excellence of its services in this respect. The school has a choir of two hundred voices and an orchestra of thirty performers.

In connection with the school there is no church, nor is any particular sect or denomination recognised; but the churches and chapels in the town are visited occasionally, while on one Sunday evening in each month a local clergyman preaches in the large room. Here, too, the annual sermon is delivered by some prominent divine. As a proof that the committee strictly carry out the design of the founders of the school, it is worthy of note that among those who have officiated at the yearly gatherings have been men representing many schools of thought. J. Brewer, Rowland Hill, Thomas Raffles, Thomas Chalmers, John Styles, Robert Vaughan, John Stoughton, Hugh Stowell Brown, Norman Macleod, W. B. Robertson, Dean Stanley, Donald Fraser, Newman Hall, James Macgregor—these are a few of the names that arrest attention on glancing down the list of preachers of anniversary sermons from 1806 to date. The whole of the expenses of the institution—about £800 per annum—are defrayed by voluntary subscriptions. Towards this sum as much as £500 has been collected after the annual sermon.

If a stranger wishes to see the largest Sunday-school in the world at its best, he cannot do better than visit it during one of these anniversary gatherings. Or, if he wants to bring home to his mind how great a force Sunday-schools are in the training of youth, let him see the annual procession, which takes place in June, and in which between four and five thousand scholars, past and present, take part. To see both is almost an education, so far as judging of the great influence at work on the rising generation is concerned. And yet this is only one school.

When we remember that, as John Bright once said. "There is no field of Christian benevolence which has yielded a greater harvest to our national interest and national character than the great wide-spread institution of the Sunday-school," we should think with profound gratitude of the founder of that institution, and of the many zealous and pious workers in the same field who have succeeded him—men who, without thought of earthly reward, have carried on the Master's work at the cost of much self-denial. In this respect the Stockport Sunday-school has happily been very fortunate. Willing workers it has never lacked, and to this fact must doubtless be attributed much of its great success.

THE WORLD'S TRINITY.

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

(PREACHED AT A COMMERCIAL CRISIS.)

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."—JEREMIAH ix. 23, 24.

THESE words bring before us a Trinity which men deify: *wisdom, might, riches.* None of the three are in themselves unworthy. As subordinate objects of aspiration they are not only lawful, but commendable, and may be consecrated to high purpose. If made the terminating objects of life, the ruling, absorbing passion of the soul, they are fraught with peril. If rightly guided and rightly used, they may exalt, elevate, ennoble. If *misused* or abused, they may and will only accelerate and insure deterioration or ruin. They are like the steam engine, which if skilfully directed will speed along its lightning path in calm and stately majesty, and hundreds will quietly resign themselves to its tractable guidance. But leave it in unskilful hands, and it will rush away in uncontrollable madness, breaking, like another Samson, its iron withs as if they were tow.

Let us briefly consider, in succession, each of these three objects of human pursuit and ambition.

1. "LET NOT THE WISE MAN GLORY IN HIS WISDOM." *Wisdom!* This is a noble subject of glory. No wonder it is put first in the triple theme. The inspired prophet looks to the greatest of earthly triumphs, the triumphs of mind, the achievements of intellect. The conquests of wisdom are greater than those of heroes or armies. No brute force, no outward calamities, no war or pestilence or famine can arrest

or destroy them: no earthquake can engulph them. The warrior's victory of to-day may be reversed to-morrow; fire and sword may leave the fairest domain a blackened waste. *Mind* outlives all catastrophes. The ashes of the philosopher may be scattered on the river, and borne down in insult to become the sport of the ocean; but his mighty words and doctrines are remembered and treasured when the tongue which spake them is silent. No monarch that ever swayed sceptre is to be compared to the sovereign *Thought!* We see the deification of *Wisdom* in ancient Greece. Minerva (the Goddess of Wisdom) was the presiding deity in her Parthenon. It was her poets and sages, her sculptors, orators, and statesmen, who mainly constituted her pride and boast. Her Lyceums and Porticoes were more to her than navies and martial camps. It is the country in all the world (past or present) which has exercised the greatest influence on *Mind*. Wisdom and greatness were with that people synonymous. Yet what did Greece, the soil of Pericles and Demosthenes, Socrates and Plato, do to work out the mighty unsolved problem of aching humanity? *Nothing*. "The world by *wisdom*" (by all the boasted wisdom of its sages, its laws, its sensuous refinements, its poetry, its art)—"the world by *wisdom* knew not God."

A nation that gloried in its *wisdom* may well read a lesson to *individuals*. All honour to men of science, and doubly so in these decades of her greatest triumphs. All honour to the distinguished names of those who in our own country have enlarged and are daily enlarging every department in the domain of natural truth. But higher honour to those who with a Newton spirit have made the noblest discoveries of the finite only the ladder-steps to the grander discoveries of the Infinite. As it is the principle of the modern Baconian philosophy to approach Nature, the volume of the outer world, with a child-like reverence, saying, "*What sayest thou?*" so is it the attribute of Christian wisdom to approach the other volume (the volume of Revelation) saying, "*How readest thou?*"* Seeking to be wise up to what is written, but not wise *above* what is written; feeling that "the wisdom of God is wiser than men." Oh! whatever be the boast of intellect and the triumphs of her reputed monarchs—however wondrous the powers by which Science now controls the elements; her steam, her telegraphs, her arsenals, her dockyards, her navies; her astronomers mapping out the pathway of the stars, calculating to a minute the time of the eclipse, and registering with fidelity the return of the comet; her geologists reaching down to the foundation-pillars of the earth; her navigators exploring their way amid the icebergs of eternal winter; her travellers through untrodden continents casting new and invaluable trophies at the feet of discovery—yet nevertheless the telescope of the astronomer, and the shaft of the geologist, and the compass of the navigator, and the keen eye of the geographical explorer, can throw, of themselves, no gleam of light on the vastest and most momentous subject of all. Here philosophy must own itself a little child, and opening *this Book of God* read of a new "*Wisdom*" higher than all ethical systems, transcending all the guesses of humanity at its noblest and best, a "new thing on the earth"—"Christ crucified, the power of God and the *Wisdom* of God."

2. "LET NOT THE MIGHTY MAN GLORY IN HIS MIGHT." We have spoken of Greece as the impersonation of *Wisdom*. We may well take its sister-kingdom *Rome* as the type and embodiment of *Power*. "Might" or "strength" was the name of the Eternal City; and when a Jewish Prophet speaks of this Roman Empire, he takes as its meet symbol "a beast whose teeth were of iron and his nails of brass, which is to devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces." As we think of Greece in connection with the Grove and the Academy, the Pnyx and the Agora, so we are in the habit of associating Rome with the Campus Martius—with conquering armies, the spoil of vanquished nations, the insolence of power. She was the mighty Nimrod in the ancient chase for sovereignty; and her bow, like Jonathan's, never turned back.

But behold the emptied quiver now! Where is her boast of chivalry and power now? Where her legions which made the world tremble? The saying of Jeremiah is chiselled on every ruin of her capital, on every moss-grown fragment in her naked Campagna. "Let not the mighty glory in their *might*." "Ichabod: the glory is departed!"

Our text, however, here again speaks, not of *empires*, but of *individuals*. It addresses, not the mighty *kingdom*, but "the mighty *man*." It would tell each of us how poor and paltry the highest objects of human ambition are—statesmanship, titles, rank, military glory—if they are made the supreme and ultimate objects of life. Such are only the *accidents* of existence; they are, in themselves (many of them), praiseworthy. They may be lawfully aspired after; and when the proud pinnacle is attained, noble is the influence which the child of genius or fortune may wield over his fellows. But they are a poor portion if the aspirant on realising his dreams of earthly ambition comes to fold his arms and say, "This is my rest, this is my glory." "As for man, his days are as grass." And if man will not rise to a true estimate of himself, how often does God pour contempt on his false glory! scathe with one lightning glance his tower of pride and ambition, and leave it a humiliating heap of ashes! Nebuchadnezzar was a mighty man who gloried in his *might*. God sent him forth to herd with the beasts! Sennacherib was a mighty man who gloried in his *might*; his words were, "By the strength of my hands have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." God converted his tented field into a necropolis; the morning sun rose on a camp of the dead! Herod the Great was a mighty man, with the blood of Rome in his veins. He made it his object to overawe by dazzling proofs of regal

* See Dr. Chalmers' "Evidences of Christianity."

splendour the spirit of the Jewish people. When the shout arose from an obsequious crowd in the theatre of Cæsarea, "It is the voice of a God," the King of Kings sent a loathsome disease to give the lie to his divinity! What a picture is that we have in one of the grandest but most fearful passages in Isaiah! It is the vision of these same "mighty men" who had been glorying in their might entering the abodes of Death and Hades. The millions they had dragged at their chariot-wheels, the captive thousands over whom they had wielded their sceptres, are represented as crowding from their varied places to hail with sarcasm the approach of the old tyrants. "Where is your power now? Where your jewelled coronets, your victor garlands, your processions to the Capitol? Thou didst say in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God! Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, and did shake kingdoms? How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the Morning!"

And such, brethren, is a picture, an awful picture, of what the mere lust of power and might will lead to if unsanctified and unregulated by higher principles. Nothing is there nobler than to see one encompassed with the insignia of earthly power, another statesman like Daniel, strong in the maintenance of high-souled honour and integrity, seeking to feel that he has been invested with these for no mean, or paltry, or time-serving purpose, but as a minister of God to do His pleasure and promote His glory. On the other hand, "I saw the wicked great in power, spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed, and lo! he was not. Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Let not, then, the mighty man glory in his might!

3. LET NOT THE RICH MAN GLORY IN HIS RICHES. As *Wisdom* in itself is not forbidden, but is rather the noblest object of human ambition; as *Power* in itself is not illegitimate, but may be wielded as a mighty instrument for good; so *Riches* are not in themselves proscribed. There is not one verse in Scripture which denounces the *possession* of riches as a sin. The *love* of money it speaks of and condemns as the root of all evil, but not *money itself*. In the parable of the rich fool who pulled down his barns and built greater, the man was not condemned because he was *rich*, but because he was a *fool*. If he had been poor, he never perhaps could have manifested his folly, for he would have had neither barns to dismantle nor enlarge. The possession of money only helped to develop his selfish passion, and publish to the world his folly. His riches might have been a blessing, inestimable to himself and others, had he used them well; had he been faithful to his stewardship, and like the giant oak thrown out a hundred sheltering arms to the poor, and fatherless, and friendless. But he was a traitor to this great trust, and "Fool" was the word which Incarnate Truth wrote on his gravestone. It is the sinful lust of money, the desire of more, hoarding for the sake of hoarding, the vulgar craving and boast of increasing wealth, ever eking out the web on the golden loom — in other words, it is *covetousness* which God condemns. The rich man *glorying* in his riches, as if they were the great end and goal of existence; as if the mere *having* of these riches (or acquiring more) constituted the *summum bonum* of life. And say, is there a spectacle on earth more miserable than the poor gold-digger (not of Ophir, or Australia, or California, but the gold-seeker and gold-digger among ourselves), piling up his heaps, not one coin of which he can carry with him beyond the grave? Like Icarus he soars upwards and ever upwards nearer the sun; but the golden beams he loves so much are the first to melt his waxen wings and bring him to the dust. The hands of Mammon will smooth no death-pillow. The golden oars will not ferry across Jordan. The golden keys will not fit one lock or gate of the only true *Golden City*. When Death comes, that great canceller of all bonds, he will make every coin look as base alloy. Remember the words, and who uttered them, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!"

Such, then, are the three false subjects of glorying enumerated in the text.

The prophet now passes to the theme or subject of true glory. "*But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*"

On this, time forbids adequately to enter. I can only observe that the prophet here sets forth in an attractive delineation, and in loftier words than his own, the *one* all-sufficient satisfying portion. *Wisdom*, *Might*, *Riches*, are all good, only if they are ladder-steps conducting to the Divine throne. Before man can truly glory—or, what is equivalent, be truly happy and blest—you must restore him to what he *was*, and to what he *had*. Worldly philosophy, martial power, golden ingots, cannot do that. They are husks without the kernel. They may feed one part of his nature, but they are a mockery as food for the nobler cravings of the immortal counterpart. They may even so far avail through life; but what can they do for him at death's inevitable hour? Greek! what says thy philosophy then? Rome! what says thy boast of heraldry and pomp of power then? The whole writings of antiquity, the familiarly known "classics," shrink appalled at the contemplation of the dark fabled river. The *present* was their all. Paul's quotation of the tenet of one of their own philosophic schools was the prevailing accepted sentiment of the ages of Paganism: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But the same Apostle brings the Christian to that river's brink; and as he himself is preparing to plunge in, whispers in the ears of others the ground of his own triumph. "The cross in which I glory disarms death of its terrors. None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish my course with joy."

Men and brethren, be it yours to seek this true subject and theme of glory; this only *panacea* for all the evils of life; the disarmer of future dread and misgiving; the rod and staff conducting and supporting through all its valleys till you come to the last one of all. *Know God*, study His perfections, delight in His Word, adore His Sovereignty. "Acquaint thyself with Him, and be at peace." If His way appear to be dark, remember it is the right way. He inscribes over His every dealing, "I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness on the earth." Thus making Him your stronghold, alike in the day of adversity and prosperity, you will rise superior to all life's vicissitudes. Whether your stewardship be the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and influence, and worldly wealth; or whether yours be the lowly lot, the uncultured mind, the restricted means—ay, the rifled and desolated home, and the crash of earthly fortune—you will be able to glory in the noble avowal—

> "O Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
> Who art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown,
> Give what Thou canst; without Thee we are poor,
> And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

BY C. DESPARD, AUTHOR OF "INTO A LARGER ROOM," "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XX.—A FRUITLESS SEARCH.



IT was much more than a nine days' wonder. Indeed, we may safely say that never, since the days of the Mutiny, had English society in India been so deeply moved. For, while interesting in itself, as all cases of mysterious disappearance must be, it drew a painful importance from the circumstance that it shook that sense of personal security without which life would be almost unendurable. If, it was argued, a young girl, beautiful, rich, happy, and tenderly cared for—all of which Thekla Ellerslie was generally supposed to be—if such a girl could disappear suddenly from her own father's house in a great station like Bombay—disappear as absolutely as if she had been spirited, body and soul, to some distant planet, who was safe?

The circumstances, known, before many days had gone by, through the length and breadth of the country, were as follows:—

Thekla, who had been absent from the famous entertainment at the Yacht Club, was suffering from a slight feverish attack. Her father gave her a simple remedy, and kept her in her room. Late that evening—this was not meant to be known; but it leaked out through ayahs' talk—there had been a few words between the girl and her elder sister. Regarding the subject of the dispute no one was quite clear; but some—the sensational—thought it had to do with a gentleman lately come to Bombay, who had transferred his attentions from the elder to the younger sister. What appeared to be certain was that Miss Ellerslie had, on the following day, left home rather suddenly to visit some friends at Poonah.

Here a singular complication occurred. For reasons of their own, the sisters changed ayahs: the ayah who had hitherto served the younger, and who was a faithful and intelligent servant, going with the elder sister to Poonah; the second ayah, a woman who seemed to have been stupid and lazy, staying in Bombay.

On the evening of the day when the elder sister left home, Sir Richard dined out. He returned home later than usual, and found the house perfectly quiet. He awoke late the following morning, and, being tired and out of sorts, he spent the greater part of the day in bed.

On the afternoon of that day, Gopal, his khansama, sent in to ask him if he knew where his daughter was, reporting that she had not been in since the morning. He was a little annoyed, for he thought she might have sent in to inquire for him before going out; but he was not the least alarmed. He got up, however, and went into her room, which was just as she had left it in the morning; the bed open, and articles of her dress, with the trinkets which she generally wore in the evening, lying about. Thereupon he called up the ayah, and ordered her to put the room tidy. The afternoon wore away; but still he felt no anxiety, though his displeasure increased; for he thought that, in being away so many hours without letting him know where she was, his younger daughter was taking advantage of her sister's absence; and by this time he had made up his mind that she was spending the day with Lady Lucy Leveridge, who, as he heard, had paid a visit to his house on the evening before his eldest daughter left home.

When evening fell, he sent a messenger to Lady Lucy's hotel, with a note requesting that Thekla should be sent home at once. Here an unfortunate delay occurred; for, after his messenger had waited some time, the note was brought back to him with the information that Lady Lucy had left the hotel that afternoon. The messenger was Gopal, the khansama, a person of remarkable acuteness. Instead of returning to his master with this piece of news, he made inquiries on his own account, the result of

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"'I know you: . . . you are Ronald Hinton.'"—*p.* 412.

which he communicated to Sir Richard on his return. It was in consequence of this communication, which, though mistaken, was proved to have been given in good faith, that another night was allowed to elapse without any serious steps being taken to recover the lost girl. Her father believed that she was under the protection of Lady Lucy and General Leveridge, and being deeply wounded by the way in which, as he thought, he was being treated by his daughter and her friends, he would make no sign.

The following day Lady Lucy and her husband drove up to his house. They were admitted, and he went in to meet them, being prepared, as he said afterwards, for a stormy interview, when, to his horror and dismay, they asked to see Thekla. It came out then that it was not his daughter, but another young lady, whom Gopal's informant had seen with Lady Lucy on the afternoon after Thekla's disappearance, and the question now was, Where could she be?

Up to this—we have taken up the story three months in advance — that question remained unanswered. Space would fail to tell of the efforts that were made to trace the unfortunate young girl. Legal machinery of every kind was set going. Magistrates, lawyers, the subtle and clever Indian police—all were busy, but all for the space of that three months worked in vain. Time was their enemy. In those fatal three days of delay to start the search every trace of her was obliterated.

This was what was generally known in Bombay, whence it found its way to other parts of India, producing the most extraordinary excitement. Many set their wits to work, and the wildest theories were started, while letters containing the most impossible suggestions were written to the papers.

There was one theory in the wind, of which no one ventured to speak publicly, but which had a distinct and disastrous effect on the feelings of the community towards Sir Richard Ellerslie and his remaining daughter. It was built up on the ruins of the pretty little legend that Lady Lucy Leveridge had once combated in vain. Some now were heard to

whisper that it was impossible this secret could be so well kept without collusion from the family. And was there not a certain supineness in the conduct of the search at head-quarters? The servants, for instance —that astute person, Gopal, who had answered so glibly at the inquiry, and the young girl's ayah—was it possible that neither of them nor any of the others had seen her leave her room? For this is what everyone of them maintained. No one had seen her go. Was this natural? Nay, was it possible?

The legend, as I have said, had fallen into ruins. It was pretty well known now that Thekla Ellerslie did not wish to marry Isaacson, and some had it that the real reason of the indisposition which had resulted in her being left alone with native servants was her conflict with her father on this subject. It was known, further, that when she came of age—an event which was nearer, rumour said, than most of her acquaintances imagined—she was entitled to her mother's property, on the proceeds of which her father was living, and that this was the secret of his strong desire that she should marry a man of large wealth; for, in such case, his present income would in all probability be left with him.

She declined the rich marriage, and almost at the same instant she disappeared. Was there not, whispered the sensation-mongers, something strange in this? No one uttered the ugly word "murder." That would have been too horrible, too blood-curdling. But she might be hidden—kept out of the way until she would consent to the marriage her father had arranged for her, or until she should be of an age to dispose of her property by her own will, when, of course, the condition of her being received by her family would be that she should dispose of it to her father.

This particularly wild conjecture gained colour from the circumstance that, as soon as decency would permit, Sir Richard left Bombay, and that those who met Miss Ellerslie reported a curious change in her. It did not come all at once. At first, though to all appearance distracted with grief and anxiety, she was in her manner generally very much what she had been; but as the days went by, bringing no news of her poor little sister, her vivacity departed, and there came a strange dazed look into her eyes, just as if, people said, she was continually haunted by some painful dream. Lady Lucy Leveridge, who had thrown all her energies into the search, but as yet with no result, noticed this, and she spoke of it to Ronald Hinton in one of their many consultations; for he, as we shall imagine, was leaving no stone unturned to unravel the dreadful mystery. Lady Lucy's remark, which for a moment startled him considerably, sent him on another tack: but concerning this we shall have more to say presently. Here we may mention that they had, in the meantime, called in the assistance of Michael Grierson. "He took a strong interest in the poor child," said Lady Lucy. "Already he knows more about her affairs than we do. It is due to him, you know, that I came to Bombay when I did."

Michael was on the point of starting for England, with the view of gathering together men and materials for one of his great educational and society-regenerating schemes in Northern India. At Lady Lucy's request, he stopped at Bombay and met her and Ronald Hinton there. They told him the story of Thekla's disappearance. Strangely enough, he had up to this heard nothing of it, although it had gone the round of the English papers, and his horror and dismay were disconcerting even to Lady Lucy. The first shock over, he, to use her own expression, cross-examined her as if she had been in a witness-box. A curious spasm contracted his face, when, in the course of her story, she told him how Thekla had received the accusation against her father. Hinton had been glad when he heard it. He had wished that his poor little darling should know exactly how she was being treated. Michael shook his head sadly. "You should have remembered," he said, "that Sir Richard was her father, and that she loved him. You accused him, and the whole of her true sweet nature sprang in arms to his defence."

"She would find out that I was right," said Lady Lucy.

"Yes. And what might the effect not be on such a nature?"

"You don't think—you can't think——" began Lady Lucy; and Ronald Hinton sprang up.

"This is becoming too horrible!" he cried. "I cannot bear it. Tell us, for pity's sake, what we are to do!"

"Go on searching. There is nothing else," said Michael.

"And you?"

"I will search too; but in my own way."

He left them then, and, although Lady Lucy heard of him as spending another week in Bombay and seeing all sorts of people, she did not see him again at that time. He proceeded, as she found out later—a little, it must be confessed, to her disappointment—on his voyage to England.

There was one person who, if the former pretty legend that for a time had gained credence could have been supposed now to have had any basis in fact, should have been foremost in the search for Thekla, but who actually did little or nothing. That person was Isaacson. Shortly after the story of the disappearance became known, he paid Sir Richard a visit, wishing, to use his own expression, to talk the thing over. Sir Richard, who looked haggard and careworn, received him coldly, and he asked, in his blunt fashion, if he was to consider the engagement at an end. "Unless you can find my poor child and bring her back to me, it must be at an end," said Sir Richard. "Between us we have driven her to despair."

"Oh! is that your opinion?" said Isaacson. "Well, if so, I'd better say good-morning."

"Funny people there are in the world!" he muttered to himself as he turned away. "A girl, while she stays at home and behaves herself, is a bore. She gets lost and gives no end of trouble, and she's a heroine. I don't think a heroine would suit your book, Montague Isaacson, so perhaps you'd better make up your mind to give up this little business. It's a pity, for she's a handsome girl; but there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. I'll have a shot at the Simla beauties, and when little Miss

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Thekla comes back, as I am sure she will do—and penitent too, very likely—she may just whistle for me."

CHAPTER XXI.—AMONG THE HILLS.

With its usual severity the month of May has set in, and the people in the plains of India—the white-skinned strangers from the dark and friendly north—are panting out the long days in rooms artificially darkened and cooled, and, in the mornings and evenings, going out in the lightest of raiment to breathe the heated air. Fortunate are those who, like Sir Richard Ellerslie and his daughter, can leave the burning arid plains behind them and find a summer refuge in the hills!

Sir Richard has taken a house at Darjiling for the season. It was a long journey from Bombay, but (so at least a few of his acquaintances are beginning to say) this was all the better for him. He wished to put distance between himself and his first Indian home. That home, it is rumoured, he has given up. Surely a very hasty decision; but he has taken his whole staff of servants, including the ayah who was so deeply devoted to his lost daughter, up to Darjiling.

Whether he has continued the search or given it up in despair no one knows. It is in this high valley, in any case, that we find them again, the time we have chosen to look in being the late afternoon of a day which, but for the fierce glare of the sun, undarkened by the floating clouds that make the beauty of our northern skies, would have been almost like a summer day at home.

The bungalow is beautifully situated on one of the little eminences that abound in Darjiling, and it is faced on two sides by an open verandah, between whose pillars, which are gay with climbing roses, peeps of the lovely green valley, dotted over with bungalows and gardens and woods, and the confused world of far-receding hills, with, in the distance, gleaming white and wonderful from the sky-line, the awful peaks of Kichinjunga, that monarch of the mountains, are to be seen.

The young girl, who, with eyes wide open and full of a nameless pain, is lying on one of the couches in the verandah, has become accustomed to this glorious spectacle. At first it did her good. For a short space she was lifted out of herself; she ate and slept naturally, and she thought she might some day be able to think naturally again. But the uneasiness from which she had been suffering came back, she resorted to the old dangerous remedy — the dose that makes her sleep and forget her misery—and now she is as weak and languid as when she left Bombay.

As she lies gazing out dreamily, her father comes in. "Marion, my love," he says softly, "General Chesney is here."

She turns her eyes upon him. "Well, father," she answers.

"He is in my library, dear; but he is not satisfied with my society. He wants to see you; shall he come in?"

There is a brief pause. Marion looks as if she were trying to rouse herself. "General Chesney," she repeats in a low voice.

"Yes, darling, the General," says her father, patiently. "You like him, you know."

"Oh, yes, I like him. He didn't forsake me like the others. He is a good man. But——"

"He is waiting, dear. May I not tell him you will see him?"

"Yes, in one moment. Father, do you think——"

"My dear girl, do let him speak for himself."

"Oh! but that is just it. Should he speak? Ought I not to tell him——?"

"Marion, you will send me mad!" says Sir Richard, in desperation; then, trying to control himself, "Didn't I say, dear, that this was to be a closed subject between us?"

"Between you and me, father——"

"And you will not surely drag others into our secrets!"

"I have thought once or twice," says Marion, turning her pain-haunted eyes upon her father, "that this ought not to be a secret—that if I had told everything exactly as it happened—how cruelly I spoke, and how she looked as she went back to her room, it might have been a clue. I should like to know, father, to be sure, even if" (shuddering) "it is the worst. Sometimes when I lie awake at night, I have dreadful ideas about her being alive, and in misery, and long, long years going by—all the years of her youth—and our never finding out."

Sir Richard's face has changed as his daughter speaks; but he sets his brows together and answers firmly: "You are morbid, Marion. I have told you over and over again that you are not so much to blame as you think. You spoke roughly—that I regret: but you spoke under the influence of strong aggravation. For many reasons I must beg you not to mention the subject to General Chesney. I am afraid to think what he or anyone else besides myself would imagine if you were heard speaking as you have spoken now. Ah!" as the sound of a step and a hearty voice calling him comes from the drawing-room, "here the General is! Couldn't be patient any longer."

A fine-looking middle aged man, tall and broad, with grizzled hair and beard, sunburnt complexion, and the face of a true warrior of civilisation, which should be as tender as it is strong, appears in the entrance to the verandah.

"Do please forgive me," he says, looking at Marion and speaking in a voice as gentle as if she were a little child, and he was afraid of alarming her. "I was impatient, and that is the truth of it. I haven't seen you for two whole days, Miss Ellerslie."

"What a long—long time," says Marion, giving him her hand and smiling.

"Now you are laughing at me," says the General, holding the little hand, which is one of the dearest things in all the world to him, a trifle longer than is altogether necessary. "But, to be frank"—he sees out of the corner of his eye that Sir Richard has gone away—"the days when I don't see you seem interminably long."

"The days long, when you have so much to do in them? It is you who are laughing, General, and"—with one of her old smiles—"at the expense of poor

little me, who have nothing to do but to lie here and think of you."

"Do you, really?" The colour springs to the bronzed cheek, and the manly voice that once and again has risen above the roar of battle is hoarse with emotion. In another moment the strong hand that is tearing at the tassels of the chair-cover will grasp the little white hand that lies within its reach, and then——

"Ah! what is that?" cries Marion.

"Nothing! nothing!" answers the General, strongly irritated, of course, by the interruption. "A wrangle amongst the servants, I suppose! Sir Richard hasn't got them under proper discipline. I've told him so again and again. You don't mean to say that you are frightened, Miss Ellerslie?"

"Go away, please—go away!" gasps the girl, who is looking out before her with frightened eyes.

"Go away, and leave you in this state!" protests the General.—"Here, some of you lazy louts! Khansama! chuprassie! ayah! have that noise stopped. It is disturbing Miss Sahib."

"I am afraid she must be still further disturbed." The words are in English, and the voice is undoubtedly that of an Englishman.

"Insolence!" cries the General; but even as he speaks, the words are frozen on his lips.

Marion has risen from her couch and is standing beside him, with face as white as death, and trembling lips, and eyes full of horror. "Hush!" she says, in an intense whisper. "You mustn't speak. They are coming to tell me that she is dead."

"Don't listen to her. She is mad," says a voice from behind. "I warned him."

"I did not come so far to be put back by excuses now," says the intruder, a tall young fellow with a stern face, who stands at a little distance from Marion, looking at her fixedly. "Are you enough yourself to know me, Miss Ellerslie?"

"Yes," she says wearily, "I know you. I thought you would come. You are Ronald Hinton."

"And you know why I have come?"

"To ask me about Thekla."

"Will you answer me, before those who are standing here now? Will you tell me what you have done with her?"

For an instant the pale lips move; but no sound comes from them.

The General comes forward. "What is all this?" he says.

Ronald does not so much as notice him. "If you will not speak, I must.—Boy," to his servant, "tell Ahmed to bring in his prisoners."

"I protest," says Sir Richard, coming to the front. "She cannot stand this excitement. It will kill her."

But Ronald gives no more answer to him than he had done before to the General, and in the next instant two native policemen appear in the verandah leading Luchmee, whose face is hidden in her veil, Gopal, the khansama, and an Indian who does not belong to the household.

"Have they come to accuse me? Did they hear and understand?" says Marion, sinking down into a chair, and covering her face with her hands.

Ronald looks at her for a few moments silently, then he says quietly, but very sternly, "Miss Ellerslie, I must ask you to be good enough to look up for a moment."

She obeys. There is a dazed look in her eyes, which makes him fear that she really does not understand what is said to her; but now there is no other course but one to pursue. A little parcel is in his hand. He opens it, and shows a small necklet of diamonds. "I will not ask you if you have ever seen these before," he says. "I will tell you what I know about them, and then you shall judge whether it will be well for you to speak or keep silence. I found them at a jewel merchant's in Bombay. Judging from certain marks upon them that they had not been righteously come by, I took the trouble of finding out their history. I traced them back to that man" (pointing to the stranger), "and he asserts that he had them from the khansama Gopal, about the time when Sir Richard Ellerslie's younger daughter disappeared."

At this Gopal and Luchmee lift their eyes and look reproachfully at the stranger, who preserves a stony demeanour.

"I thought this suspicious," Hinton proceeds, "and I made further inquiries, in the course of which I discovered that the man Kaisoo, who disposed of the diamonds, is this woman's brother"—he pointed to Luchmee—"and has been acting under her instructions."

A thrill of surprise passes through the little company.

Luchmee, who had wept night and day for her young mistress—can she be implicated too?

"The jewels," goes on Ronald, very gravely, "with others, which, guided by this clue, I found in Bombay, are by Sir Richard recognised as having belonged to his second wife."

"Jewels that were lost years ago," says Sir Richard. "Ask any of my friends if I have not constantly complained of their mysterious disappearance."

"It may be," says Ronald, "that this mystery also is in a fair way to be solved.—Miss Ellerslie, I have a painful office, but I must perform it. These people state that they received these gems from you."

All eyes—the General's, Sir Richard's, Ronald Hinton's, the servants'—are turned upon Marion, for they are expecting her indignant denial of the charge.

The General whispers to her encouragingly. "This is barbarous," he says; "but who minds what these *canaille* say? Lean upon me, dearest Miss Ellerslie. Look them in the face and speak out."

"Yes, yes; speak out. It is absurd. It bears falsehood on the face of it," says Sir Richard.

"I shall be thankful for ever if you can deny it," says Ronald.

Marion looks before her still with that fixed and dreamy gaze. "What is it?" she says, when they all press her to speak.

"They accuse you of giving these jewels as bribes, I suppose, that they might spirit away your sister," says the General.

"My sister, my poor little sister! She has gone. It was my fault. I meant to tell you. Why are all these people about? I don't think I could tell it before

them. Such a number! And how strangely they are looking at me! Father," says Marion, throwing herself into his arms with a piteous cry, "take me away. I've told you, you know, and you can tell Mr. Hinton."

CHAPTER XXII.—THE DAWNING OF HOPE.

THE excitement in Bombay and Calcutta, spreading thence to all parts of India where English people were settled, was overpowering, and the circumstance that everyone believed some horrible solution of the mystery had been discovered, and that no one outside the little inner circle of those immediately interested in it knew positively how the solution had been reached, or the actual form it had taken, added intensity to the general interest.

The few English people concerned in the scene at Darjiling were, each for reasons of his own, particularly reticent concerning it, and yet it leaked out that Marion and her father, who were actually more interested than anyone else in Thekla's disappearance, had been proved to have some hand in it. But, so it was rumoured, the only witnesses against them were people of the country, whose testimony is notoriously untrustworthy Some had it, however, that the native witnesses were supported by material evidence, which would be brought forward at the trial that was to take place at Bombay in the winter.

Two of Sir Richard Ellerslie's servants, a khansama who had hitherto borne an irreproachable character, and an ayah, with a man outside of the house, who was said to be related to the woman, were committed for trial, and Sir Richard and his elder daughter were subpœnaed under heavy penalties to appear as witnesses. It was whispered that if their evidence should turn out unsatisfactory they would run a serious risk of standing in the dock beside the prisoners; for those who were conducting the inquiry had made up their minds to leave no stone unturned to sift out the truth and lay the blame of the great crime which, as everyone began to fear, had been committed, on the right shoulders. This was the state of affairs when Lady Lucy Leveridge, who was at Darjiling, having gone thither at the urgent request of her old friend General Chesney—it was several weeks after Ronald had set the new proceedings on foot—received the following telegram, sent on to her from her home in the Punjaub:—

"Stop the Ellerslie case. I have important evidence. This is urgent. You will receive news by next mail. "MICHAEL GRIERSON."

She sent the telegram on to Ronald Hinton; he communicated the news to the lawyers and police, and it was soon known throughout the country, to the great disappointment of lovers of sensation, that possibly there might be no trial at all.

Lady Lucy, in the meantime, hurried to General Chesney's rooms. Ever since the painful scene at the Ellerslies', in which he had unwillingly borne a part, the General had been in a very strange condition. He professed himself bitterly indignant at the way in which the sweetest and truest girl in the world had been treated. He was angry with Ronald Hinton—angry with his old friend Lady Lucy—angry even with Marion's father, for not loudly asserting their conviction of her innocence; and yet there were moments when a cold and cruel doubt, which, warrior though he was, made him shrink and turn pale with sudden fear, would steal into his heart, and lie hidden there like a serpent. Those jewels, which Sir Richard had acknowledged as having belonged to his second wife—how did they come into the possession of the native servants? And why had Marion's manner been so strange? It had been enough, not to bewilder her only, but to kill her outright, poor little darling! Still—ah! how passionately he had longed for one strong indignant word of denial, one outcry of the pure heart, stung past endurance by the cruelty of its accusers!

He went to the bungalow the day after the servants were seized. Sir Richard saw him, but he was not permitted to see Marion. "She is in a high fever. I shall lose her too," said the unfortunate man.

The day after, he went again. Marion was a little better; but she was still in a critical state, and could see no one but her father. It was then that he had written to Lady Lucy Leveridge, and entreated her, by the friendship that for many years they had borne one another, to come to Darjiling.

Lady Lucy, who was allowed to see Marion, did not bring out a very comforting report. "She has something on her mind, my poor friend," she said.

But after her visit to the prison where Luchmee was confined, she brought back more reassuring news. Luchmee, she felt convinced, was not so guilty as she gave herself out to be. Even on her own testimony, which, Lady Lucy maintained, halted in many particulars, she would not believe that she had received and passed on bribes to compass the destruction of the young English girl, whom, up to this, she had professed to adore. There was, moreover, a grossness—a want of proportion about the story which made it incredible.

"But would she," said the General, "accuse herself falsely?"

"She might," said Lady Lucy—"I have known of such cases—if the motive were strong enough."

"But what could the motive be?"

"That is exactly what we must find out."

So it went on day after day—Marion ill, Sir Richard haggard and anxious, the General hoping only because he would not let himself despair, and Lady Lucy lingering on week after week in the hope of making Marion speak, or of coming to some truer understanding of Luchmee.

At last, when she was on the point of going away in despair, and letting things take their course, this telegram arrived.

It came in the afternoon of a stormy day. Having telegraphed it on to Bombay, she rushed, through torrents of rain, to the General's rooms. He was sitting beside a wood fire, gazing dismally into the glowing embers, and listening with a dull heart to the beating of the storm, when he heard her cheerful voice outside. "May I come in, General? I have news."

He leapt up. "Lady Lucy—out in this weather! Come in! come in! News or no news, you are always welcome. Take this arm-chair by the fire!"

"No, thank you. And I will keep my cloak, if you please. I must rush on to the Ellerslies at once. Perhaps you will come with me." And she showed him the telegram.

The red colour came rushing to the bronzed face of the soldier. "I wonder," he said, "if you interpret this as I do."

"How do you?"

"I think she has been found."

"And I am certain of it," said Lady Lucy.

Without any more words they started off, and another few moments found them in the verandah of Sir Richard Ellerslie's bungalow; then the General drew back, and Lady Lucy, having given her wet cloak to the ayah, went on into the drawing-room, where, looking white and worn, Marion Ellerslie was lying.

"Thank you for coming to me through the rain," she said softly; "and didn't I see someone with you?"

"Yes, dear; General Chesney is in the verandah."

"Tell him to come in, please; it is cold out there."

"You are sure you are strong enough to see him?"

"Oh, yes; and he has been so kind. Those are his flowers," pointing to a basket of magnolia blossoms. "They fill the room with their scent. When I look at them I think that there is someone who believes in me; and the ayah tells me he has been here every day to ask after me. I should like to thank him."

For a moment Lady Lucy paused, looking at Marion searchingly. Then, a new idea striking her, she went to the verandah, and taking the General by the arm, drew him to the furthest corner from the drawing-room. "Miss Ellerslie wishes to see you," she said.

"Have you told her?" he asked eagerly.

"No; I will tell her before you."

"Is that fair?"

"I think so—perfectly."

"You are a woman, and ought to know. I place myself in your hands," said the General, whose voice was trembling with emotion.

When, after those few moments' delay, they went in, they saw Sir Richard with his daughter. "I have just heard you were here, General," he said, "and I was coming out to ask you to my den. What weather! It is very good of you and Lady Lucy to come out."

"I have come because I have news for you and your daughter," said Lady Lucy.

"News!" cried Marion wildly.

"Compose yourself! I believe it is good."

"If it is good——?" began the poor girl—and then she broke down, and burst into bitter weeping. "Father, God has forgiven us!" she sobbed out. "Our poor little Thekla is found."

Later, when she was more composed, and had heard exactly what Lady Lucy's news was, Marion, with her father's consent, told her and the General of the painful interview between herself and Thekla on the night before the mysterious disappearance. She did not spare herself. All through those bitter days and weeks, when the memory of her sister's white face and sad eyes had haunted her, those fatal words, spoken by her own lips, had been ringing in her ears. That they had driven the helpless girl to despair; that finding herself unloved, and thrust upon a fate which would have been worse to her than death, she had chosen to die, and thus be rid of her perplexities, Marion had come to believe. As for all this tangle of servants and jewellery and confessions and mutual accusations, she was only just beginning to understand it. She was guilty. If her little sister had died in her despair, it was she who, by her cruel words and base desertion, had driven her to her death. This was the mental agony which all these weeks had been torturing her, so that she was driven for rest to the potion that had so nearly been her ruin. But for some weeks now she had been forced to live without it, and her brain, for the first time since the evening when she and Thekla parted, was working clearly.

When Lady Lucy told her of Gopal's and Luchmee's confession—she had heard of it before, but she had never understood its import—she smiled incredulously. *They* take bribes to do Thekla an injury! It was impossible, absurd! Luchmee would have died rather than hurt her. "The poor little thing almost died when I took her away to Poonah with me," said Marion. And then she sprang up, and there came a sudden light into her eyes. "Let me see her! Let me see her!" she cried. "I understand it all now."

"You are the cleverest of us all," said the General rapturously. "What a pity someone hadn't the sense to speak plainly to you weeks ago! I knew there was some very easy solution of the mystery, if we could only find it."

So that evening, on the representation of Lady Lucy, who, if there was a trial, bound herself to produce Luchmee, she was released from prison, and she and Marion were brought face to face in the presence of Lady Lucy, who, being fluent in Hindustani, interpreted for them.

It was a painful interview, for Luchmee, who, as Lady Lucy could see, distrusted and disliked Marion, refused to speak plainly. Up to a certain point, indeed, she was clear enough. She had brought Kaisoo to the Ellerslies' bungalow in Bombay. Kaisoo, acting under her directions, had received and disposed of the jewels. Gopal, without whose assistance nothing could have been done, had favoured his entrance and covered his retreat; but after that, she became hopelessly mixed. It was something, however, that, under Lady Lucy's kind and skilful questioning, the wild original tale completely broke down. Driven into a corner, Luchmee confessed, with streaming eyes, that she would not for all the world have had her *chota Miss Sahib* hurt. But after she had said it, she wept as bitterly as one who has been guilty of a treachery.

"Thekla has gone away of her own accord; and these unfortunate, misguided people are sacrificing themselves to prevent her from being found," was Lady Lucy's comment on the interview. "There is nothing to be done now but to wait for letters."

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

LET us go back a few weeks and cross the sea, and look in at a well-known house in London. It is night, and the large reception-rooms which have been full all day of people who came and went, are silent and deserted. But up-stairs there is movement still. The

mistress of the house, an elderly woman whose face and figure are familiar in London society—she is the foster-mother and friend of half the forlorn hopes in the kingdom—has dismissed her maid, and with a disturbed look in her face, is pacing her room to and fro, and talking to herself. "I *can't* have it go on. Everyone says so. She must either go or speak. But where is she to go to? I don't see that I ought to concern myself about that. I have given her the alternative. She has only to confide in me—and surely that is not asking much, after all my kindness to her—and I will continue to befriend her. If she doesn't——" and there Mrs. Ogilvie pulls up, and her face changes. "Poor little Mary! I can't help trusting her. And what a strange sad look there is in her eyes! Sometimes I fancy that someone she loves has done her a great injury. If I let her go I am certain those eyes will haunt me. But I have spoken before others. The question is, can I draw back now?"

Poor, vacillating, kind-natured Mrs. Ogilvie! The decision of that question is already being taken out of your hands. In an upper room someone else is stirring—a girl with a beautiful pale face, lit up by large grey eyes that have in them a look of pain pitiful to behold in one so young, who is sitting before her writing-table with a pen in her hand. There are a number of sheets of manuscript before her. She adds a few words, which run as follows:—"And now I must go out again into the wide world. Mary Somers can no more find a home than Thekla Ellerslie. God knows how thankful I am for this little pause, and how grateful to my dear Mrs. Ogilvie for all her kindness to me. If it were not that I see I am becoming an embarrassment to her, I would stay with her always. But she has given me the alternative. I must say who I am—and that, for their sakes, I will never do—or I must go. So, as it will pain her kind heart to send me away, I will go of my own accord, and go at once. If I steal out of the house very early, without bidding her good-bye, she will be angry, most likely, and leave me to my fate, and I shall keep my secret."

It is yet some hours before the morning. Having nothing else to do, she turns over the sheets of manuscript, which are written in her own hand, and reads them rapidly.

We cannot give all that she read that night, for space would fail us; but the few pages which are necessary to complete our story we may fairly take, more especially as the day came when the contents of that sad little journal were widely known.

The preface, in which she gives her reasons for telling the story in writing, and the searchings of heart—the doubt as to whether, after all, she had done rightly—into which she was led when she took up her pen, we must leave, beginning with the plain narrative of what actually took place after the discovery of the jewels:—

"When I saw a strange man in my room," she wrote, "I was on the point of screaming out with terror, for I believed he had come to rob and murder me; but in the next instant I saw behind him my good Gopal, with my dinner-tray, and then I was quite reassured.

"The stranger was Kaisoo, my dear little Luchmee's brother. He brought with him her pearl earrings, and all her silver bangles, which, he said, I was to take and keep, and he offered himself to me, body and soul, to use as I pleased. I may be wrong, of course; but when Kaisoo came to me in this sudden way, a messenger from Luchmee, who believed I wanted to run away as she had done, I could not help feeling as if he had come in answer to my prayer. It was such a strange moment, too, just as I had found the jewels which my dear old Anna had given to me in case I should ever want a friend! So, whether it was right or not, the temptation was too strong to be resisted. My poor father was out, Gopal had sent his servants out of the way, my own ayah was asleep. They brought me a native dress, and I stained my hands and face and put it on, and slipped out of the compound, no one taking any notice of me. That night I slept in the hut of Kaisoo's wife, a kind little woman, who reminded me of Luchmee.

"I had given my dearest mother's jewels to Gopal and Kaisoo. They came back the next day bringing me money for them, and then a litter and bearers were engaged, and I was carried a long way into the country to a little village, where a hut was given to me, and there I lived, the good Kaisoo watching over me and doing my bidding, until Gopal had disposed of all my jewels and ordered the things that I required for my further flight.

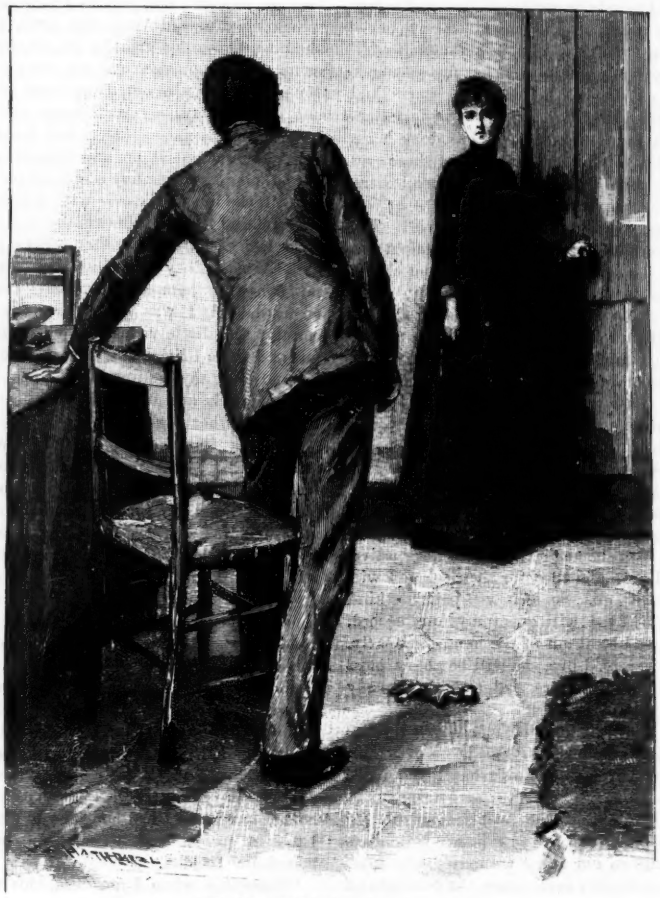
"By this time the first excitement was over. Gopal managed to see me from time to time, and I heard from him that my father and Marion had not fixed the blame of my disappearance upon any of the servants, and so I was at peace. They will search until they feel it is useless to search any longer, and then they will think I am dead, and forget me.

"In due time Gopal brought me the money. It seemed a large sum to me, I remember; but it has all gone now. He brought, too, at my request, two or three servants' dresses, and a dark travelling cloak and bonnet, and then one night late, when everyone in the village was asleep, I dressed myself as an English servant, and with the good Kaisoo still waiting upon me, I found my way to the nearest railway station, and took train to Calcutta. There I stayed for a few days as Mary Somers, an English servant on her way home; and when I had bought a few necessary things, I took a second-class passage on board a steamer bound for London.

"Some day, when I am dead, this account may be found, so I wish to leave it on record that Kaisoo, Luchmee's brother, was good and faithful to the very last. Not until I actually started would he leave me, and then it was only with great difficulty that I could persuade him to take the few rupees which he had so fully and nobly earned, and return to his own people. As for dear little Luchmee's ornaments, since Kaisoo would have thrown them into the sea rather than take them back, I have them still, and some day, if I can possibly manage it, she shall have them again."

So far we have given Thekla's story verbatim. An account of her voyage, her arrival, her first days in London, the slow but alarming waning of the sum of money she had considered so much more than sufficient

to keep her until she could find some remunerative work, and the despair which seized her when she found that no one would take her without a reference, or at least some statement from herself of what her antecedents had been, follows. She went at last into a governesses' home, where she lived at the very lowest rate possible; and finally, when she was at the end of her resources, the great Mrs. Ogilvie, one of whose forlorn hopes was a governesses' society, happened to see her at the Home, and engaged her on the spot as her secretary.



"Thekla stood before him."—*p.* 418.

At Mrs. Ogilvie's house Thekla spent a few pleasant weeks. She was brought into contact with some strange people, and her diary, which became tolerably diffuse, is full at this period of amusing and characteristic observations.

To her employer she was both charming and useful, and if only Mrs. Ogilvie could have been content to allow the relations between them to go on as they began, all would have been well. Unfortunately for herself, she conceived the idea of adopting the charming child who had fallen into her hands so strangely, and then, immediately, difficulties began.

Mrs. Ogilvie had friends and relatives. What rich woman is without them? These did not oppose her new whim. On the contrary, they entered into it most warmly. But they suggested that their good cousin should find out something about the girl's antecedents before she made a daughter of her.

This commended itself to Mrs. Ogilvie's good sense. Of course she must hear Mary Somers' history. How was it possible she could adopt her without knowing who she was? for Thekla had confessed already that she was living under a feigned name. Mary Somers was appealed to. Very sorrowfully she declined to speak. She was grateful for her kind friend's interest;

but she could not tell her story, and she did not wish to be adopted. Her persistency, which whetted Mrs. Ogilvie's curiosity, made her angry at last; and she said, in a hasty moment, before one of her cousins, that Mary must either consent to be frank with her, or seek another home.

Thekla could not be frank, and she made up her mind to go. Early, very early, on the morning that followed that sleepless night, she put a few necessaries and her diary in a small travelling bag, and stole out of the house.

CHAPTER XXIV.—AND SO THE TANGLE ENDS.

THERE was one person who had long since reached a solution of the mystery of Thekla's disappearance, so remarkably near to the actual facts of the case as we know them now, that one might almost have imagined him to be gifted with second sight. That person was Michael Grierson. So firmly convinced was he that she had escaped and left India for England, that he actually went himself to London, where he instituted a search for her. But while the Oriental mind was an open book to him, he failed to understand the intricacies of the search-agencies in London, and he lost time in following up many a false clue. What miseries he encountered, and what help he brought in that long and dreary search, is not for this history to record. There are one or two—honoured and useful members of society now—who will thank Heaven all their lives for the strange providence which brought them once under the light of those luminous eyes, and within sound of that spirit-stirring voice.

Michael had been in London for several weeks, when it occurred to him suddenly that Mrs. Ogilvie, the mother of forlorn hopes, might advise, if she could not help him, and, on one of these fair mornings in early summer, he went to call upon her.

It happened to be the morning of Mary Somers' flight, and she was so much disturbed that, instead of listening to his story, she began to pour out her own.

At first Michael listened with languid interest. Mrs. Ogilvie was always being disappointed in her pets, and always appealing to her friends for sympathy. All at once, however, his attention was aroused, and he asked, with extraordinary eagerness, what Mary Somers was like. The description still further exciting him, he asked if she had left anything behind her.

"Anything!" cried Mrs. Ogilvie indignantly. "She has left everything: all my presents—the dresses, and the jewellery, and the handsome plush mantle—she looked so well in it, poor little thing, that it was quite a pleasure to see her. And don't you call it ungrateful to throw back one's presents in one's face, just because one wanted to adopt her? I shall never want to adopt another girl—never!"

"Then you have looked over her room?" said Michael.

"Of course I have, and here is one of the things I found. I brought it down because I thought it might be a clue. You know I am certain that girl is not in her true position."

As she spoke, she took up from the table a silver bangle, such as Indian women wear. "If you take that to the light," she said, "you will see that there is writing on it—Oriental, I think. I meant to show it to one of my Indian friends, but you, I believe, are up in the Eastern languages."

Trying to keep calm, though his heart was beating wildly, Michael took the bangle to the window. There was one word on the silver, traced rudely in Hindi characters. The word was "Luchmee!"

"Well!" said Mrs. Ogilvie, who thought he was a long time making it out, "have you read it?"

"Yes," said Michael, turning round.

"Why! what a light there is in your face! Is it her name? Do you—can you know her? For pity's sake speak."

"I think I know her. I know something of her, at least," said Michael, trying to speak calmly.

"Where do you suppose she is?"

"Wherever she is, we must find her."

"Wait for one moment, and I will take you to the Governesses' Home, where I found her first," said Mrs. Ogilvie.

Left alone, Michael took up the paper, which, as it happened, he had not seen that morning, and one of the first pieces of intelligence that fell under his eyes was an extract from an Indian paper, concerning the *cause célèbre* which was agitating the whole of the English community in the East.

"I thought it would come. I am only just in time," he said to himself. As soon as Mrs. Ogilvie joined him, to say that she and her carriage were ready, he begged to be driven to the nearest telegraph office, whence he sent off the message which produced such a happy result in India.

"Go in alone, Michael," said Mrs. Ogilvie, when they reached the door of the Home. "I will wait here. Yes, do as I say. I believe I understand what it all means. So if she is your Mary, or Martha, or whatever her name may be, bring her out to me that I may scold her."

Before these words were well out of his kind friend's lips, Michael was standing in the doorway of the Home.

"Miss Somers here?" said the servant. "Yes, sir. Came in this morning. Step this way."

She showed him into a small, bare sitting-room on the ground floor. It was empty, and he waited with a beating heart. One minute, two minutes, three minutes. Did ever minutes pass so slowly before? He stood looking at the door, for his eyes were growing dim, and he feared he might not see her if she came in. He turned and watched the clock. That dreary little clock, how slowly, how mechanically it was moving—tick, tick, tick—the beats that wear the heart out! Would she never come? Perhaps he had been premature. That she had an Indian bangle in her possession, with the name of her ayah upon it, was no positive and certain reason that she was Thekla.

"Thekla!" He repeated the name to himself, and it throbbed through his heart like music. If she were here, and if—— The door was opening—slowly, very slowly, as if the hand that opened it were in doubt or dread; there was a startled cry, and then the door closed, and his little Thekla—the sweet and

true-hearted girl who for these many days and weeks had been a living presence in his heart—stood before him! He thought he had prepared himself; but when he saw her—alone, helpless, forsaken!—all his calmness fled.

"Thekla!" he said, in a broken voice. She did not speak; she gazed at him with dazed eyes, into which the light of a new and wonderful joy was dawning. "Thekla!" he repeated, holding out his two hands pleadingly, "I have found you at last!"

"Have you been looking for me?" she said, coming forward slowly.

"Yes, darling—all the world over!"

"Looking for me? You?" The large grey eyes were blazing with light. "Oh I am so glad! so glad!"

She had not intended it; but she had betrayed herself. In that cry of rapture, drawn from her by the fulness of her joy, her secret had gone from her for ever. In the next instant strong and loving arms were about her, and the tears which she could not keep back were being kissed from her eyes by the lips of her lover.

That evening Mary Somers—named by her own name now, for Michael had proved to her that further concealment would do no good, but only injury to her father and sister—went back to Mrs. Ogilvie's house; not to be adopted, said the mother of forlorn hopes, but to be given away.

The post, so eagerly waited for in India, which carried the news of Thekla's safety and health, with a full account of her adventures since she left her father's home, carried also a letter from Michael Grierson to Sir Richard Ellerslie, containing a proposal in due form for his younger daughter's hand. He had become rich; the arrangement he proposed was even more generous than that Isaacson had been ready to agree to, and the only condition he laid down was that they should not be kept in suspense.

The answer came by telegraph: then Mrs. Ogilvie and Thekla, with Mr. Harrington, the girl's relative and guardian, and several other friends, went to the beautiful old house in Kent where Thekla's mother had reigned in her girlhood. Thither in due time Michael came, and thence they were married, in the presence of the friends of both families, with old Anna, alternately blessing them and weeping, in the background.

In the autumn they returned to Bombay, where Sir Richard and Marion, who was now engaged to General Chesney, and Gopal and Luchmee and Sonya received them.

And so everything was settled to the satisfaction of all in whom we are interested, with one exception. That one was Ronald Hinton. But even his dissatisfaction was brief. "I shall see her again," he said to Lady Lucy, his friend and ally; "and I know I shall always have her friendship. But——" and he paused.

"Well?" said Lady Lucy. "Go on."

"I was only thinking that if on board the *Amazon* I had been a little more clear-sighted, I might have won her."

"No, Ronald, I scarcely think so. She was in love with Michael then. Looking back, with the light of the present to guide me, I am certain of it. And though I confess I never thought of it beforehand, I can see now that this is the best solution. They will make a grand pair. If I don't very much mistake, the world will be glad of them."

"That is very likely," said Ronald, smiling a little sadly. "And so our tangle ends."

"But not our alliance," said Lady Lucy. "Come and see the General and me in the English home which our friends are preparing for us, and we will find you a wife."

THE END.

LIGHT AND LIBERTY.

WHAT THE REFORMATION DID, AND WHAT IT DOES.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR ROBERT PENNINGTON, M.A., CANON OF LINCOLN CATHEDRAL, AND RECTOR OF UTTERBY, LINCOLNSHIRE; AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF WICLIF," "THE LIFE OF ERASMUS," "PRELUDES TO THE REFORMATION," ETC.



ONE of the greatest blessings obtained by the Reformation was the circulation of the Sacred Scriptures in a tongue understood by the people. The Church of Rome has always been wise in her generation. She well knew that when the Bible was sent forth the fabric which she had erected with so much industry and care would be shaken to its foundation. She therefore issued various decrees prohibiting the reading of the Sacred Scriptures by the laity in the vulgar tongue. But her efforts in the end failed of the wished-for success. The bright light which shines in God's Word has penetrated to every part of the building, exposing the hidden things of darkness, exhibiting those multiform delusions with which she had practised on the credulity of her followers, and enabling us to discover that she had corrupted and mutilated "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

We say that the study of the sacred Scriptures contributed at the time of the Reformation, and that it still contributes, to the enlightenment of the human race. Some have attributed this change to the revival of ancient learning. "It is now admitted," writes Mr. Lecky, "that the causes of the Reformation are to be found in the deep changes effected in the intellectual habits of Europe by that revival of learning which began about the twelfth century in the renewed study of the Latin classics, and reached

its climax after the fall of Constantinople in the diffusion of the knowledge of Greek, and of the philosophy of Plato, by the Greek exiles."*

But though the diffusion of ancient learning may lead to the discovery and removal of errors and abuses, it cannot, by itself, communicate the knowledge of that "wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The study of Homer and Virgil could never be the means of regenerating the world. The paganism of the poets taught men at the time of the Reformation that religion was a cunningly devised fable, and eternity a dream. To use the words of Lord Macaulay, the class just referred to consisted of men who "with the Latinity of the Augustan age had acquired its atheistical and scoffing spirit; who regarded those Christian mysteries of which they were stewards just as the augur Cicero and the High Pontiff Cæsar regarded the Sibylline Books and the pecking of the sacred chickens; and who, amongst themselves, spoke of the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and the Trinity in the same tone in which Cotta and Velleius talked of the oracle of Delphi, or the voice of Faunus among the mountains."†

Of what use is the knowledge of literature independently of religious truth in taming the passions, in quenching pride, in moderating ambition, in stifling envy and all the malignant feelings of the natural heart? This knowledge may shed a gleam of light over the dark and cloudy day of adversity, and possibly minister consolation during the weary moments of languor and disease, but it cannot cleanse men from moral pollution: it cannot deprive death of its sting and the grave of its victory, nor speak peace to a man who is troubled with a sense of his sinfulness; it cannot give us the assurance of pardon, nor ensure our approval hereafter; it cannot "minister unto us an entrance abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The moral and spiritual regeneration and enlightenment of Europe were effected at the time just referred to, and are still effected, because the Reformers brought forward truths which they have taught us to discover int he sacred volume; because they constantly exhibited Christ as the sole atonement for known and forsaken sin; because they declared the truth asserted in those words—"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, God saved us"; because they taught men that the love of Christ should constrain them, in dependence on God's Holy Spirit, to walk in the path of holy obedience.

The Bible, too—the unmutilated Bible, the Bible uncorrupted by the false interpretations of that Church which arrogates to itself the attributes and prerogatives of Deity—this is the moral lever by which the world is to be raised from its present state of degradation. We always recur with great delight to the testimony of a Deist, who, after having publicly laboured to disprove Christianity, and to bring Scripture into contempt as a forgery, was found instructing his child from the pages of the New Testament. When taxed with his flagrant inconsistency, his only reply was that it was necessary to teach the child morality, and that there was nowhere to be found such morality as in the Bible. We thank the Deist for this confession. If this be a certainty on the confession of its enemies, how great an advantage is there in the possession of the Scriptures, even if death were the termination of human existence. Let the Bible no longer circulate among the people, and we should quickly find, as during the dark ages of Europe, that honesty and integrity were no longer held in estimation, but had given place to fraud and extortion; that there was a universal enthronement of the idol of selfishness; that little or no sacredness was attached to domestic relationships, and that our firesides would soon lose all which gave them their attractiveness. Take away the Bible from a nation, so that there should no longer be the exhibition and inculcation of its precepts, and we should find that there would be a rapid introduction of false principles which would prepare the way for a total degeneracy of manners. Men would again be the slaves of evil habits and of vicious practices from which they were emancipated when they were brought into "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free."

> "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
> And all are slaves besides."

We do not, therefore, feel that we are giving an incorrect description of the blessings which flow from the circulation of the Scriptures when we say that by means of it the worst forms of evil are banished from a land, and its households obtain pure and invaluable blessings.

If we look at the Bible as an instrument of civilisation, we shall certainly see that in this sense also its circulation has been greatly advantageous to the nations of Europe. Which, I ask, are the countries where vice, ignorance, superstition, misery, and immorality reign triumphant? I answer, Italy and Spain, where the Bible does not circulate among the inhabitants. Which, again, are the countries whose fleets are on every sea, and pour into their laps the riches of the world; where even-handed justice is administered, and men have obtained that freedom which is their inalienable birthright? I answer, England, Scotland, and the United States. These countries enjoy all the higher blessings expressed in the words "Light and Liberty." The Bible, received and read by the inhabitants of those countries, because it contains whatever is requisite to correct the disorders of States, and to promote the happiness of families, has produced a revolution, including equally the cottage of the poor and the palace of the king, so that every rank, as though the wand of a magician had been waved over it, has been elevated in the social scale, and has been furnished with new sources of light, dignity, and happiness. If we, as Englishmen, continue in the course which God has marked with His approval, we need not fear that England's glory has reached its zenith: that we shall be called on to breathe a lamentation over her departed majesty. The land of Protestantism, the land the inhabitants of which labour for the circulation of the Scriptures, not only in England, but through the

* Lecky's "History of Rationalism in Europe" vol. i., p. 259.
† Essay on Ranke's "History of the Popes."

length and breadth of the world, shall continue the land of plenty, the land of peace. The sunshine of Heaven's favour shall sleep on her fields, and the blithe music of contentment shall be heard in her valleys. "The Lord of Hosts shall be with us; the God of Jacob shall be our refuge."

But we must look beneath the surface of society if we would have a full view of the blessings—of the light, the peace, the comfort, and the happiness—secured to us by the circulation of the Scriptures. We must go into families, and see how burdens are lightened and afflictions mitigated by the promises of Holy Writ. We must be with men in their struggles with poverty, and observe how contentment is engendered by the prospect of the riches which can never pass away. We must be with them in their retirements, and observe how they gather strength from the study of the sacred volume for the discharge of the various duties of life. We should thus see, for example, that the promises of the Gospel had nerved the arm and animated the heart of the heroic soldier amid the tumult of the battle-field; that they had supported the sailor on the wide waste of waters, when the storm was raging furiously around him. We must be with men and women on their death-beds, and observe how, animated by "the hope full of immortality," their spirits rise joyfully out of the ruins of the body, and wing their flight to the world of glory. We must be with them, too—if, indeed, we could accompany the spirit in its flight to heaven—as they enter the Divine presence, and prove, by taking possession of the promised inheritance, that they "have not followed cunningly devised fables." The amount of happiness conferred by the circulation of the Scriptures never can be known till God has laid open all secrets on the Day of Judgment. We must have access to the history of every individual, from his childhood to the time when he enters into his everlasting rest, before we can compute what the Scriptures have done for those who have received their truths into the heart, and are striving so to fashion their lives by them that hereafter they may not be ashamed before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.

In speaking of the circulation of the Bible, I must not omit to show that when distributed merely for private reading it may aid greatly in the evangelisation of a land. I believe, indeed, that ordinarily, through the simple proclamation of the message of the Gospel, God is pleased, in the first instance, to bring mankind to the saving knowledge of the truth, and afterwards to train them up for glory: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." But I wish to observe that the mere distribution is often the means of producing a blessed result. I may illustrate the truth of that assertion by a reference to the translation of Wiclif's Bible in the fourteenth century. Difficulties, apparently insurmountable, stood in the way of the execution of his design, which embraced not only the translation of the Bible, but also its circulation among all orders of his fellow-countrymen. Those difficulties were the slow process of transcription by which copies were produced, and the enormous cost of each copy—equal to about £40 of our present money. Wiclif knew also that the sword of the persecutor would be unsheathed against him. But he persevered in his allotted task. Trial did not daunt, difficulty did not discourage him. We may form some idea of the eagerness with which, after its completion, it was read, and of the large number of copies issued, when we hear that nearly 150 manuscripts, most of them written within forty years of its publication, were discovered at the time of the preparation of the Oxford edition in 1850; that the most powerful measures were taken to suppress the version; that copies were burnt or destroyed as productions of heretical depravity; that those who possessed them were exposed to severe persecution; and that in the course of four or five centuries many more manuscripts were destroyed through accident or negligence. We are told that so great was the eagerness to possess the Bible that those who could not procure the volume would give a few loads of hay for the possession of some favourite chapters. They would hide the forbidden treasure beneath the floors of their houses, and expose their lives to danger rather than surrender the book; they would sit up all night, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing others read the Word of God; they would bury themselves in the woods; they would converse with it in silence and solitude; they would, while tending their flocks in the fields, still steal an hour for meditating on the good tidings of grace and salvation.

This study of Wiclif's Bible, carried on in silence and solitude through the fifteenth century, contributed to the religious knowledge which prevailed at the beginning of the Reformation, and prepared his fellow-countrymen to cast off the yoke of the oppressor. We can trace only indistinctly this education of the English people by means of it for the Reformation, because, from fear of persecution, it was carried on in the secret chamber, or in the lonely valley among the hills, or around the pale watch-fire in the bosom of some large forest. Thus, like the fabled river of old, the stream rolled on, as it were, in a subterraneous course, until at length it burst forth into the full light of day, and poured its fertilising tide over a parched and barren soil so as to clothe it with rich vegetation. "Then was the sacred Bible sought out from dusty corners; the schools were opened; divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues; princes and cities trooped apace to the newly erected banner of salvation; martyrs, with the unresistible might of weakness, shook the powers of darkness, and scorned the fiery rage of the Old Red Dragon."*

We may give another and a modern illustration of the blessed results often produced by the mere distribution of the sacred volume. A servant at one of the mission stations in Africa, in a fit of anger, killed his wife. Immediately he fled, and took refuge in a desert solitude. His only companion in that solitude was a copy of the Gospel of St. Luke, which he had carried away with him. He was for a long time oppressed with a sense of his guilt. At length,

* Milton on "Reformation in England."



"They would hide the forbidden treasure beneath the floors of their houses."—*p.* 420.

through prayerful meditation on this Gospel, he seems to have received the assurance that God had been pleased for Christ's sake to blot out his iniquities. One day, as he was wandering in the forest where he had constructed a hut, he encountered an old friend from a neighbouring village. He instructed him and two others who subsequently joined them in the records of heavenly truth. The end was that he was induced to go to a neighbouring village, where he succeeded in converting the leading man of the village and thirty-five others to the Christian faith. That leading man became a zealous propagandist. We have since heard that the slave-dealers have exterminated the Church. But it has not been formed in vain. We may be encouraged to persevere in the prosecution of our work of faith and labour of love by the thought of that man who, having obtained his knowledge of Divine truth from the prayerful study of the sacred Scriptures, was afterwards enabled to induce others in an unknown village in a remote district, far removed from external influence, to cast in their lot with the followers of the Lord.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has been a very successful agent in the work which has come before us. The founders cast into the ground a seed which has sprung up, and flourished, and grown into a mighty tree, "the leaves of which have been for the healing of the nations," long after those who planted it were silent in the grave. We believe that the agents of that Society have shaken to its foundation the usurped dominion of Satan. We earnestly pray that this work may continue to be successful, and that they may hasten forward the coming of the time when a song of triumph shall ascend from every part of an emancipated world.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES — SECOND QUARTER.

April 20th.—Forgiveness and Love.

To read—St. Luke vii. 36—50. *Golden Text—1 John iv.* 19.

I.  HE PHARISEE. (36.) Christ came to call all men to Himself. All sorts and conditions welcomed by Him. To-day read of a Pharisee inviting Christ to his house. Who were the Pharisees?

A rich and influential party of the Jews. Attentive to outward religious observances.

Mostly proud and self-righteous.

Why did Simon invite Christ to his house?

Perhaps from curiosity, having heard of His miracles.

Perhaps to show respect to this wonderful Man.

What did he give to Jesus?

Admission to his *house*.

A feast of good things to eat and drink.

What did he *not* give Him?

Water to wash His feet. (Gen. xliii. 24.)

A kiss (verse 44). Admission to his *heart*.

Why did he not give these? Because had no real love for Christ, no sense of sin, no seeking for pardon. Christ the Saviour was near him, but he received no blessing.

II. The Woman. (37—39.) Who was she? and how came she there?

A sinner—probably well known to many present.

Came because heard Jesus was to be at feast.

(Explain Jewish custom of strangers being allowed admission at a feast as lookers-on.)

What did she do? Stood, listened, thought of her past life. Then wept, washed Christ's feet with tears, anointed Him with ointment, kissed His feet.

What did all this show on her part?

(*a*) *Repentance* for her past life of sin.

(*b*) *Faith* in Christ as her Saviour.

(*c*) *Love* and devotion to His service.

She gave Him her best. She did what she could to show her love to Him.

III. The Saviour. (40—50.) Knew all that was passing in Simon's heart.

Knew his pride—offended at Christ's notice of the woman.

Knew his want of love to Himself.

Knew also the woman's true repentance.

Tells Simon a parable—to be applied to himself.

What did Simon think of himself?

What did the woman think of herself?

Which was most forgiven? Which loved most?

What, then, was the blessing to the woman?

(*a*) *Pardon* for the past, because of her repentance.

(*b*) *Peace* for the future, because of her love.

Lessons. I. *What think ye of Christ?* With respect and admiration? or with love because of sin forgiven, grace received?

2. *What think ye of yourselves?* Good, upright, moral, respectable? or as sinners needing and seeking a Saviour? He came to seek the lost.

April 27th.—The Parable of the Sower.

To read—St. Luke viii. 4—15. *Golden Text—verse* 18.

I. The Parable. (4—8.) Find from St. Matt. xiii. 2, that Christ taught this parable while sitting in a boat on Lake of Galilee. Probably a sower came in view on the hill-side opposite. Notice:—

(*a*) The sower and seed the same.

(*b*) Three failures, one success.

(*c*) The success in three degrees.

What were the three failures?

On way-side, trodden down or picked up.

On rock, withered for lack of moisture.

On thorns, choked for want of good soil.

Notice also a certain apparent progress.

First sown did not spring up at all.

The second formed a small root but no fruit.

The third came to flowers but no fruit.

The last on good ground, carefully dug, cleared of weeds, well watered, produced good fruit.

II. The Meaning. (9—15.) Given by Christ.

The sower—Christ and all who teach of Him; *e.g.*, parents, ministers, teachers.

The seed—God's Holy Word, however taught; *e.g.*, classes, sermons, reading, etc.

The ground—Man's heart.

1. *The way-side*—the Word heard—makes no impression. Heart not prepared to receive it. No prayer, no attention, no wish to learn; in some cases Word caught away at once by devil.

2. *The rock*—the Word does make an impression—heard with joy. But no root, no steadfastness. Temptation comes, *e.g.*, ridicule, laziness, etc. Prayer, Bible-reading, good habits dropped. No fruit.

3. *The thorns*—the Word produces result. Profession made—God served for a time. But still failure. Why? Because other things mixed up with religion. What are they?

Cares, as with Martha. (Ch. x. 41.)

Riches, as with "rich fool." (Ch. xii. 20.)

Pleasures, as with Demas, who loved this present world. (2 Tim. iv. 10.) All these draw away the heart from God.

4. *The good ground, i.e.*, ground prepared. How?

By prayer for the hearing ear and tender heart.

By pains in checking all that may hinder, *e.g.*, bad habits, etc.

In such God's Word produces the fruit of good works, such as—

A character like Christ's—meek, forgiving.

A life given to God and His service.

Lesson. *Take heed how ye hear.*

May 4th.—The Ruler's Daughter.

To read—St. Luke viii. 41, 42; 49—56. *Golden Text—verse* 50.

I. A Child Dying. (41, 42.) All know something about sickness:—

It causes pain and suffering—hard to bear.

It comes to all alike—rich, poor; old, young.

Most sad to see a sick child—can do so little.

For such a child of 12 years Jairus came to Christ.

Notice—(*a*) He was an important man—a ruler of the Synagogue—churchwarden, as we should say.

(*b*) She was an only child—probably the sunshine of the house.

(*c*) She was very ill—dying.

No wonder her father implored Jesus to come. So Christ started at once for the ruler's house.

II. A Child Dead. (49—53.) A crowd of people accompany Christ. First they are stopped by a woman, who is healed of her disease. Then a servant from Jairus's house is seen hurrying to meet them. What is the news? Better or worse? Alas! the child is dead. No use now in troubling "the Master." Have never heard of a dead person being raised to life. Have forgotten the three risings in the Old Testament by—

Elijah—widow's son—after earnest prayer (1 Kings xvii. 22).

Elisha—Shunamite's son—ditto (2 Kings iv. 34).

Elisha's bones—after a year (2 Kings xiii. 21).

So all pass on to the ruler's house. What do they find?

Father and mother in great agitation.

Child dead in the house.

Hired mourners already raising their cries.

What did Christ *say?* "She is only asleep."

How is death like sleep?

The person is unconscious, but can be awoke.

What did Christ *do?*

Took three disciples and the child's parents.

Spoke to the child—took hold of her hand.

Her breath comes back—she sits up, speaks.

What did Christ do next?

Ordered food to be given the child.

Restored her to her parents and home.

Bade the story to be kept quiet for the present.

Lessons. 1. *Christ's sympathy.* With sorrowing parents then, and with all in sorrow still.

2. *Christ's tenderness.* Giving child food at once.

3. *Christ's power* even over death. Will at last raise all. (St. John v. 25.)

But how does this affect us now that Christ is in heaven? His religion teaches:—

1. *Sympathy* with all in sorrow. (James i. 27.)

2. *Help* to those in want or suffering (St. Matt. xxv. 40).

3. *Hope* to those dead in sin now (Eph. ii. 1), and of resurrection hereafter (1 Cor. xv. 22).

May 11th.—Feeding the Multitude.

To read—St. Luke ix. 10—17. *Golden Text—St. John vi.* 35.

Introduction. Last lesson told of three disciples witnessing a miracle.

After that, the twelve apostles sent out to prepare way for Christ.

Their *work* was to tell the people of Christ, His coming, His love, His salvation. Their *helps* were power of healing, etc.

Now they return after a few days' absence.

I. A Desert Talk. (10—12.) Christ took disciples into desert place.

They told Him all they had seen, said, and done.

He cheered, encouraged and exhorted them.

Probably prayed with them, and gave fresh directions.

Their intercourse interrupted by a crowd of people. Christ used every opportunity of doing good. What did He do to them?

Spake of the Kingdom of God, *i.e.*, of Himself and His work.

Healed all the sick among them.

The evening draws on. Notice three things:—

(*a*) *The people's* wants—food and shelter—are far from home.

(*b*) *The apostles'* unbelief—"it is a desert place."

(*c*) *The Saviour's* care—"Give ye them to eat."

II. A Desert Miracle. (13—17.) The story, being well known, can be briefly questioned on as follows:—

The time—evening—sun setting over the hills.

The place—unenclosed moor-land.

The people—five thousand men besides women and children.

The food—five loaves and two fishes prepared for apostles' meal.

The arrangement—fifty in a row, to prevent confusion.

The blessing on the food—said by Christ.

The distributors—the disciples, fellow-workers with Christ and ministers (or servants) of the people.

The supply—enough and to spare for all.

The fragments—gathered up that none should be wasted.

III. Lessons. (*a*) Natural. 1. All things to be done in orderly way.

2. God's blessing to be asked on food.

3. Waste always to be avoided.

(*b*) Spiritual. 1. Our souls also require food.

2. Christ gives, and is Himself the Bread of Life.

3. His ministers work with and for Him in giving that spiritual food.

4. Thanks be to God for *this* unspeakable gift.

5. This bread of life lasts unto life eternal.
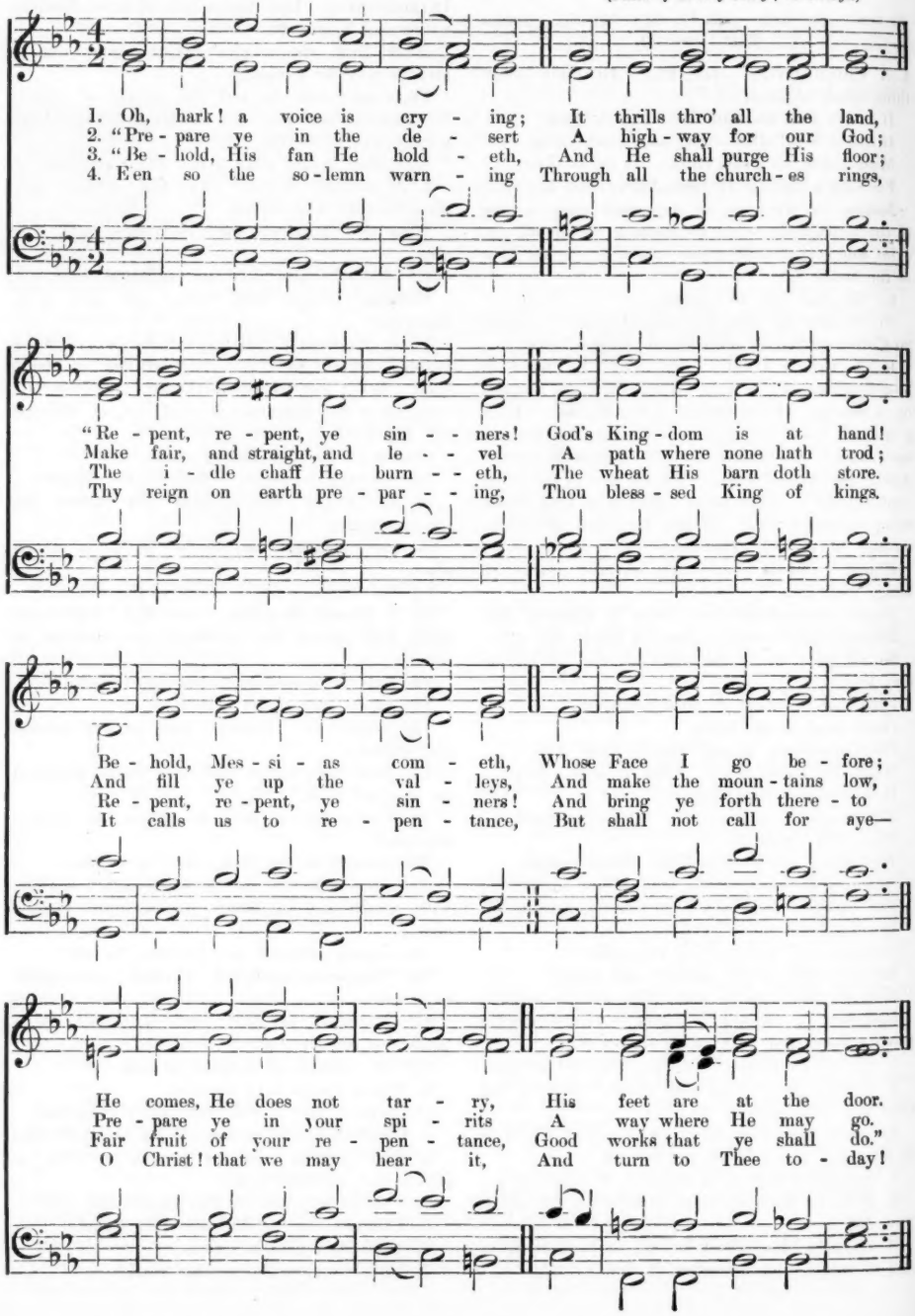
6. Shall God's gifts be wasted?

7. Lord, evermore give us this bread!

The Voice in the Wilderness.

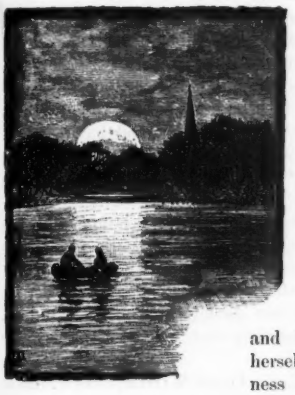
Words by the Rev. Frederick Langbridge, M.A.

Music by Gerard F. Cobb, M.A.
(*Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.*)



"GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE."

III. A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.



AND now, for a few days, things went on without a "sensation" of any kind. Mrs. Fiske was gratified by the success of her mission, for Bishopshaven is the "happy hunting-ground" of the itinerant public speaker; and Florida consoled herself for the tameness of old-fashioned hospitality by attiring herself in the most surprising toilettes, and flirting vigorously on every opportunity with Spencer Forwood. That youth was beginning to indulge in daring visions of throwing off the stern paternal yoke, to which he had so far submitted, not from principle, not even from necessity (for he had recently succeeded to a small fortune of his own), but from habit and moral timidity.

Mr. Stuyvesant had almost forgotten the little episode which cost Florida so much annoyance in the recollection; neither was he annoyed at the haughty, sullen manner which she invariably displayed towards him, considering it as the freak of a spoilt child. He was much occupied with election business, very happy in his love, thoroughly interested in his life. Is it not often at some such period of careless happiness that a man's self-forged destiny rises to confront him— "Speechless, with cold inexorable eyes"?

It was on the Monday following the events detailed in the last chapter that a shabby-looking individual accosted Stuyvesant as he was coming out of his committee-room, and "begged the favour of a word or two on pressing business."

In spite of his disreputable look, the fellow spoke with the accent of a man of education. His tone, too, suggested associations that were vaguely familiar. Harold led the way back into the room he had just quitted. It was now empty. He sat down, and pointed to a chair. The man took it, a rather sinister smile crinkling his unprepossessing features.

"I see you don't remember me," he said. "This is a little rough on an old pal."

"I don't know you," said Harold angrily, and not without a touch of uneasiness. "You are under some mistake."

"I?—never less so! I've knocked about the world, and lost my good looks, I suppose, and of course poor beggars like me must expect to be cut by their swell friends. But *you've* not altered since the time when we used to call you 'Handsome Harold,' at the old shop in the City—you'll remember it if you think a little. I should have known you anywhere."

At once the whole chain of circumstances connected with the man who was speaking to him rushed on Harold's mind. He blenched, and shrank back like one who has received a heavy blow, and, for a moment or two, found it physically impossible to speak. He had that hideous nightmare sense, so often accompanying the painful moments of life, of having lived through precisely the same experience before. He fought hard, with those scornful eyes upon him, for calm and self-possession, and at last said quietly —

"I know you now. You are George Moore."

"Come, come, my good fellow! a little more consideration. How do you know that there may not be painful associations connected with the old familiar name, for me as well as anybody else? You call yourself Stuyvesant, I notice. Well, I've nothing to say against that—at present."

"It is of no consequence to me what you choose to call yourself," Harold replied. "Perhaps you will kindly say at once what you want with me, as I am very busy."

"Well, you used to be a sharp youth. Unless you lost your 'cuteness' when you made your pile, you might have the sense to see that I've not been a fortunate man, like some I could name. No old buffer took a fancy to me when I came out of—I don't want to stir up painful memories: call it furnished lodgings, at Government expense—and took me into his family, and left me all his tin. I shouldn't have been down on my luck to-day, you may depend, if I'd had your chances."

"There's something in what you say," said Mr. Stuyvesant, who had now recovered his habitual calm, and was gravely scanning the inscrutably impudent face of his old acquaintance. The two were so different—he with his grave and graceful dignity of mien and person, the other marked from head to foot with the stamp of the gaol-bird—that it was difficult to imagine any tie of common memory or interest between them. "There's so much in it that if you want employment, although you have given me no cause to befriend you, I will see what I can do to help you."

"'Pon my word," said the other, with a sneer, "this is very kind. You'd exert yourself, perhaps, to the point of a fifty-pound clerkship, that I should have to slave ten hours a day in an office for. Come, be a little reasonable. I don't want to be disagreeable, but it wouldn't be quite nice for you if we didn't agree. You'd better make it worth my while to be obliging. What do you say to one hundred pounds

a year, or a lump sum down? You are as rich as a Jew; it would be nothing to you."

"I offered to help you to a decent living," said Harold, suppressing his rising anger with difficulty; "you have no claim on me for anything else."

"Oh! I've no claim, have I? Come, Mr.—whatever your *alias* is—you'd better be civil, and consider your own interests. I understand you're quite a shining light in this town—you go to church, don't you? and take the chair at temperance meetings; and you're standing as candidate for the ward, hey? Pretty well for a common felon! for that's what you are; and I'll take care that every soul in the town knows it, too, unless you mind what you're about."

"Then, I understand," Stuyvesant answered, still quietly, "that unless I pay you any sum that you may choose to demand, you will endeavour to damage my reputation in the town by bringing up what took place twenty years ago, before I left England?"

"Yes, Mr. Ticket-of-leave, that is exactly what I do mean; and, what is more, that is what I'll do. I should have no difficulty, I assure you. I've spoken within the last month with people who remember you, and the circumstances of your leaving England, and the old bloke who took you away."

"I don't for a moment doubt," returned Stuyvesant, "that you can make my position here a very painful one. I don't expect you to spare me. You didn't spare me as a boy, when you, a mature man, played on my ignorance and vanity and led me into crime, of which you took the profit and left me to bear the blame. I was your dupe then, but"—here he rose from his chair with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils—"I won't be your slave now. To pay for your silence, to live on your forbearance! Never! Go, and do your worst!"

He pointed to the door with a look and gesture of such supreme contempt as the accumulated impudence of a lifetime could hardly support. With one hand on the door-knob Moore made an effort to rally.

"You'll think better of this," he said. "I'll give you till six o'clock."

"Go!" repeated Stuyvesant, and made a step towards him, on which his unwelcome visitor fled precipitately.

Then, as if some inner spring of action had given way, he sank into a chair by the table and hid his face in his folded arms. "My little Annie!" he murmured. "It's hard! It's hard!"

That evening, at half-past seven, the Albert Hall was filled with what the Bishopshaven *Evening Mail* called "a highly representative gathering." It did not mention among the representatives present Mr. George Moore, who had posted himself near the platform entrance. When the chairman came in, he touched him on the arm to attract his attention. Stuyvesant turned round on him haughtily—

"You have had my last word to you," he said, and passed on.

After a few minutes appeared the white head and tall, stooping figure of Mr. Edwin Prothero, escorting the lecturer; then followed two ladies, the one a magnificent brunette, the other fair and dainty, with clear-cut features and bright grey eyes.

"Which of them is Miss Prothero?" asked Moore of a man who stood near him. The answer was either indistinctly given or imperfectly heard, in consequence of which Moore slipped the piece of crumpled paper which he intended for Miss Prothero into the hand of Florida Challis, and having, as he thought, accomplished his purpose, and being quite disinclined to sit out a temperance meeting, he withdrew.

Miss Challis's hand closed over the note with the ease of long habit. Her experience in such matters dated back to her early boarding-school days. But no previous episode in her life had prepared her for what she read, when during Mrs. Fiske's address she found an opportunity to glance over the writing. It ran thus:—

"MISS PROTHERO,—DEAR MADAM,—As a sincere well-wisher, I write to warn you that the man you are engaged to marry is a common felon, who was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for embezzling his master's goods. What I say I can prove to the satisfaction of yourself or any of your friends, if you call or send to-morrow, between 10 a.m. and 1, to Guy's Hotel, and ask for Mr. William Baker."

She crumpled up the note in her hand, and grasped it with a sense of triumph. What a talisman she held! What a means of humiliating those who, as she thought, had humiliated her, if this should turn out to be true! She looked at Mr. Stuyvesant, and noticed that he seemed *distrait* and fatigued, and certainly was going through the duties of the evening with much less zest and geniality than usual. Nancy too had noticed it, for she watched him with some anxiety.

The light of half-suppressed elation in Florida's eyes made her handsomer than ever, and Spencer Forwood, who, with his father, accompanied the Protheros and their guests home, devoted himself to her under the very nose of his astonished parent. In the drawing-room after supper the two slipped away into the conservatory, while Josiah was deep in a political argument with his partner.

"How did you like the lecture?" said Florida.

"I know nothing about it," Spencer replied, gazing at this siren with a look that was meant to convey unspeakable things; "I was absorbed in looking at you."

"Don't be silly," she said. "There is something better for you to look at. What do you think of that?" she said, placing the note in his hand and watching him while he read it.

"Where did you get this?" he asked. "It is for Nancy. Has she seen it?"

"No," she replied, answering the latter query; "I don't think she had better at present. It was

given me in mistake for her—very fortunately, I think; for I presume she and her friends would want to hush it up, and it seems to me it ought to be looked into."

"You don't think there 's anything in it?" said Spencer—not, however, with very sincere conviction, for the references that Mr. Stuyvesant had made to his own history in their last private conversation seemed to connect strangely well with this new information.

"I should like to know, anyhow," Miss Challis replied, "and I want you to find out."

"Well, it seems a pity," he said. "If it should be true it 's an old story; it must have happened ages ago. What is the use of raking it up, and making everybody uncomfortable?"

"I didn't know you were such a devotee of Stuyvesant. I know most people here don't call their souls their own when he 's around, and they would rather black his boots than not; but I didn't know you were one of that sort."

"I don't care for Stuyvesant," he protested. "I think he 's a prig. But I don't see the use of raking up old stories, and making a row."

"You think it is fair to Miss Prothero to let her marry such a man?"

"You might give her the note," he replied, "and let her do as she liked about it."

"Very well, Mr. Forwood," Florida answered, turning from him with a haughty bend of her swan's neck; "since you won't oblige me in such a trifle, I shall have to go myself." The dispute ended, of course, in Spencer making a humble submission, and promising to oblige his goddess anywhere or in anything.

"If there turns out to be anything in it," she said, just before they separated, "you had better put it into your father's hands."

"My father hates Stuyvesant," said young Forwood.

"Exactly!" she answered, smiling; "so do I!" And she sailed back into the drawing-room, whither he followed her, sore perplexed in mind, and more than half disposed to tell her that he would have nothing to do with her commission. But the grace and witchery of her beauty—that sumptuous tropical beauty of which one sees so few examples in lands where life is sharp and strenuous—bewildered his judgment and overpowered his will. Miss Hardinge was quite distressed at his obvious subjugation by this modern Calypso. "A loud, over-dressed girl," she said to Nancy, "ill-tempered, ill-mannered, half-educated. What can he see in her?"

"It is what he sees in herself, I think," returned Nancy, laughing. "You must admit she is worth looking at."

The upshot of the matter was that on the following afternoon, as Mr. Forwood, senior, sat in his private room at the bank, meditating a serious "opportunity" with his son on the subject of his attentions to the undesirable young woman at Edwin Prothero's, the youth appeared with papers and information concerning the candidate for the —— Ward, which drove everything else out of his head for the time being.

After this—but it would, perhaps, be unkind to infer connection, as Mr. Forwood always declared that he had acted with the greatest reticence in this painful matter—there appeared paragraphs in the local papers, and placards on the hoardings, referring sometimes jocularly to skilly and ticket-of-leave men, sometimes in accents of virtuous indignation to stained characters and public scandals. Finally, Mr. Stuyvesant, who, rather to the surprise of his friends, had initiated no action, received an invitation to attend a meeting with the object of deciding what was to be done with regard to the scandalous insinuations made by the opposite party, which no one on his own side had received authority to contradict.

IV.

IT was growing dusk, on the evening of the meeting, as Stuyvesant walked up the beech-tree avenue to the banker's house, slowly, with bent head and stooping shoulders, and the air of a man who is forcing himself to a hateful task; for that task must be hateful, the fear of which could so nearly efface the memory of what he had just come through. He had met his friends and supporters of three years' standing, most of them sure of his honour, and eager for his reputation. He had found that the only doubtful question with them was (as Edwin Prothero put it) whether he should trouble himself to expose, as he doubtless could most easily, these futile slanders, or whether they should be left to perish of their own rottenness. In spite of the banker's opinion, the sense of the meeting seemed to be that something must be done to stop the circulation of the falsehoods, when right athwart their preconceptions came the sad avowal, "I cannot contradict the statements. I cannot disprove them. In point of fact, they are absolutely true;" and then, without waiting to see the effect of this communication on the committee, he had left the room.

There was something, as we have said, harder than this before him. He had to make his confession to the girl whose love he had won, and who believed him the worthy object of her maiden fancy and her innocent pride. What would Anne Prothero, with her high sense of family credit and honour, "that felt a stain like a wound," her enthusiasm for whatever was honest and true, "lovely, and of good report"—what could she think of a man with a record like his? Then, when he remembered that next morning his miserable story would be the town's talk, and imagined how the secret envy which had followed him in his prosperity would gloat over the stain on his name, a sudden sense of help and healing came with the thought of Nancy's tenderness, Nancy's generosity, to be as quickly repulsed.

"I've done her harm enough," he thought. "I won't spoil her life. She couldn't love a man who has been—what I've been; and I won't take her pity. I'm not come to that!"

So on he went, and into the drawing-room, where the gas was lit, but lowered, so that the room lay in dusk shadow broken by fitful gleams of light from the fire, which played about the coils of Nancy's fair hair as she bent over it—for April evenings are cold in Bishopshaven. She was considering how to account for the fact that Harold had not been to the house for three days, and devising all manner of pretty scoldings for him; occupied also with thoughts of the infamous calumnies (so she called them in her heart) of which some vague echo, in spite of her uncle's thoughtful precautions, had come to her ears.

He paused in the doorway. She turned, rose quickly, and hurried to him, with a cry of surprise and joy. He had meant never to take her in his arms again, but now he held her close and kissed her passionately, saying in his heart, over and over, "For the last time, my love! for the last time!"

Something in the silent passion of his manner surprised the girl; she drew away, and turned up one of the gas-brackets, looking at him with an anxious tenderness.

"You are worried," she said; "you look wretched. What is it? You can't possibly be troubling about that nonsense in the *Evening Mail?*"

She came to him again, and put her hand upon his arm. He was standing with his back to the light, but at her touch he shrank away and turned round, and the look on his face terrified her.



"She caught his reluctant hands, as he spoke."—*p.* 432.

"Don't come near me!" he cried. She stepped back a pace or two, astonished and pained. He turned away from the look in her eyes; resting his elbows on the mantelpiece, he hid his face in his hands. "My love! how shall I tell her?" he groaned.

The "calumnies" of the *Evening Mail* again occurred to Nancy as the only possible explanation of his conduct.

"Listen, Harold," she said, touching his arm again, but timidly. "I know what people have dared to say about you; I don't wonder it distresses you. But never mind, for no one believes it." She paused, and her voice rang with scorn as she went on. "I can't see how you can condescend to care for such a

thing. No one who knew you could fancy that you could *ever* have been dishonourable or dishonest."

She threw back her fine little head; her face was lit up with the proud trust in him which it was his business to destroy. Stuyvesant felt as he listened that the whole world held nothing so terrible for him as the judgment he was to read in those clear eyes. He was ready to cry out, in the bitterness of his misery and humiliation, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Yet, after all, he was too much of a man to cower or hesitate long before an inevitable trial. He lifted his head, and met her questioning look with one of sad, unflinching purpose.

"Annie," he said, "I have been a villain to you. I let you think of me, I let you become engaged to me in ignorance of facts about my life, which, if you had known them, would have kept us apart. The *Evening Mail* is right in its facts. I have been a convicted felon. I served a term of imprisonment."

Her eyes dilated, her lips parted, she grew red and then pale while he was speaking.

"I can't believe it, Harold!" she said; "I won't believe it!"

The words broke from her instinctively, the expression, not of reason, but of the revolt of her whole nature against a hateful idea.

"Ah, Annie," he said, very sadly, "you must believe it, for it is so."

She stood by the fire, nervously twisting and untwisting her fingers, her brows knit, her firm lips set, her eyes fixed on the ground. He waited for a moment or two, but the suspense was too unbearable; he spoke again.

"Have you nothing to say to me, Annie?"

"What can I say to you?" she answered passionately. "You came here on false pretences—you deceived me. Am I to tell you it doesn't matter? What am I to say?"

Had she attempted to pity or excuse him, he must have cowered like a culprit before her, but her angry, reproachful words awoke an impulse of self-assertion within him.

"I won't ask you to think less hardly of me," he said. "It is some consolation to me now to see that I have not injured you as deeply as I had feared. But this I will say—that if twenty years of honest effort can atone for a crime, I have atoned. And as for deceiving you, why, when I came among you was I bound to publish my own disgrace, and tell strangers the story that I had spent the best years of my life in living down? Ask anyone in this town, ask the folks who knew me in America, if they ever observed anything in me inconsistent with the character in which I came among you."

He paused, but Nancy did not answer. She had sunk into a chair, and covered her eyes with her hand. He went on—

"All this does not excuse me to you, I admit. Nothing excuses me. I owed you my full confidence, and I withheld it because I knew your horror of disgrace, and I was afraid to risk my happiness. It is right that you should hate me for it. Some day, perhaps, when you are happy with someone worthy of you, you will think of me, and try to forgive me."

Then, as she sat with head bent and covered eyes, she felt his breath stir the hair upon her forehead as he bent over her. "God bless and keep you, Annie!" he said, and was gone.

As he went down-stairs, smarting in every fibre at the scene through which he had passed, Florida Challis met him. He passed her with blank, unseeing eyes; there was room just then for nothing in his mind but the figure he had left, the resentful attitude, the averted face. Florida had looked at him at first with hard curiosity, but the stony misery of his face awed her, and she crept up-stairs to her own room in a very subdued frame of mind—for her.

In the hall a familiar voice broke in upon his abstraction: it was Mr. Prothero, just coming in.

"Ah, Harold," he said, "I want thee. Come into the library."

The familiar name, the gentle friendly tone, conquered Stuyvesant's first impulse to break away. He followed the banker into the library, but refused the seat that was offered him.

"You want to tell me about the committee," he said. "Don't spare me. Nothing matters much now."

The old man laid one hand on his shoulder with great gentleness, and looked into the bitter, miserable face.

"Thou must not take this matter so much to heart," he said. "*I* think no less of thee, for one. It will make a talk, but thou wilt live it down."

The set face quivered at these generous words. "I don't deserve this from you," he said. "If I've injured anybody in the town by coming here under false colours, it's you and Annie. I feel your great goodness, but my mind is made up. I leave here to-night by the last train, and I shall not come back."

"That would be very ill-advised. I meant to tell thee the committee have decided to accept thy withdrawal; but as to leaving the town, even for a time, I think such a step would be ill-judged. There are many of us who feel that a man should not be brought into judgment for the errors of his youth, when he has given proof of sincere repentance and amendment, and we would all stand by thee. It would be difficult for thee, at first; but I am convinced it would be best."

"Mr. Prothero," said Harold simply; "I don't know how to thank you. I had one friend like you before; he came to see me after my trial, when I was disgraced and broken-hearted, and when my time was up he took me away."

"Was that Mr. Stuyvesant?" Edwin Prothero asked.

"Yes. I remember he spoke to me pretty much as you are doing. He did all for me that a man could do. He took me with him into a new country.

He took me into his counting-house; he gave me his name, and left me his money. You see what it has ended in. My comfort to-day is the hope that he knows nothing of this."

"My poor lad," said the old man, "it's a hard case."

"Ah, no! I can't let you say that. What criminal in a hundred had such a chance? No, I deserve all I got. As I sowed, so am I reaping. But, Mr. Prothero, I can't stay here."

"Why not? Have you seen Annie?"

"Yes," he answered. "She thinks of me as—as I deserve. I am glad of it. She will suffer less."

He took the old man's hands, and grasped them hard. "Good-bye," he said. "Heaven reward you for your goodness to me."

Mr. Prothero went to the door, and watched him as he hurried down the drive. Then he went slowly up-stairs to the room where Nancy was still sitting.

"Annie," he said, "did Harold tell thee he was leaving us?"

She looked up with a startled face. "No," she said. "When?"

"To-night, by the last train to London. He is very much broken down."

She made no answer to this, and was going out of the room when he called her.

"Thou wouldn't like me to send him a word?" he asked her, tentatively.

She shook her head, and went away.

In effective contrast—had she but known it—to the turmoil of spirit that was agitating the heads of the household, Mrs. Olinthus Fiske was sitting before a good fire in her own room, refreshing her mind before her evening address by a perusal of her favourite paper. At the sound of an opening door she remarked, without changing her attitude—

"I'm reading such a lovely address by dear Dr. T——. He does show so conclusively——"

"I presume you think it's Miss Prothero," Florida's voice broke in. She never used any ceremony in interrupting her mother.

"Oh, is it you, sweetest? I thought it was dear Annie. She promised to let me know when it was time to get ready."

"I guess it's about time now. Is Miss Prothero going with you?"

"She told me so."

"Well, I can't go around to-night, anyway."

"I didn't expect it, my love," said the mother, resignedly.

The absolute mutual independence of these two relatives was apt to amuse outsiders. Mrs. Fiske had long abdicated any pretence at control. She turned, however, with renewed interest at certain sounds which made her suspect that Florida was making a raid on her repositories.

"What are you doing at my drawers, dearest?" she demanded.

"Looking for your sal volatile. I've such a splitting headache."

"Oh, take a dose, and go and lie down at once. Promise me you'll lie down at once, darling!" ejaculated Mrs. Fiske.

"All right—don't excite yourself! I'd get ready if I were you."

And then she turned to go away, but paused and hung about the door a little, in a manner unusual for her.

"What is it, sweet?" asked Mrs. Fiske, in a preoccupied manner, getting out her best bonnet. "Try some of my eau-de-Cologne."

"Oh, it isn't that. Never mind," she answered; and muttering to herself, "What would be the use?" she went back to her room, not to lie down, as her fond parent had suggested, but to tax her ingenuity in getting as many things as possible into a small travelling-bag.

Mrs Fiske received a message while she was dressing to the effect that Miss Prothero had a headache, and could not go out, but that Miss Hardinge would accompany her. Florida's packing took her a long time for such a simple operation. She left it every now and then to walk distractedly about the room, with her hands pressed against her throbbing forehead.

"At any rate, he is miserable enough," she said to herself. "If that is any satisfaction, I have it. She has given him up—I feel sure of it. Cold, proper, formal, hateful, she never appreciated him—she hadn't the heart. If I felt that she would suffer—— She won't, though; it will be he and I. And he thinks nothing of me—nothing. I saw it in his face. O me! what a fool, what a fool I have been! As if that mattered, as if anything mattered now!"

She walked about her room so for a long time, tormented by a mixture of feelings which she would have found impossible to analyse; and then, driven, as usual, by a strong sudden impulse, she went along the passage and knocked at the door of Nancy's room.

Miss Prothero raised her head from her sofa-pillow at the summons. "Come in!" she said, sitting up. She had put on a blue wrapper, and unfastened her beautiful hair. She looked pathetically small and young, with the traces of trouble on her face, and for a moment Florida felt disposed to be sorry for her.

"What is it, Miss Challis?" she asked, in the tone of one who feels, but can hardly resent, an intrusion.

"I came to see if you could give me anything for my head-ache," Florida replied. She had just manufactured this excuse for coming in, and thought it a neat one.

Nancy got up at once to look for the remedy. While her back was turned, as she stood at the cupboard, Miss Challis opened fire.

"I suppose Mr. Stuyvesant thinks of leaving the town after this?" she said, with studied carelessness.

Nancy turned round with her face aglow. She

felt that such an allusion at the moment was impertinent and unfeeling; but her self-respect did not allow her to say so to her guest.

"I believe so," she answered. "Here is what you want!"

"And you are letting him go?" asked Florida, ignoring the latter part of Miss Prothero's answer.

"I had rather not speak of it," said Nancy decidedly, sitting down again.

"But I will speak of it!" cried the girl, who had now lost all control over the passion that swept her into fiery speech. She towered above her hearer, in her superb young beauty, as she went on rapidly—

"I've held myself in too long. I must speak now, if I were to die for it. You thought it was good fun, I suppose, to laugh over me with your friends, but I wouldn't change with you now. I'm not ashamed—however good a joke it may seem to you—I'm not ashamed of having cared for Harold Stuyvesant. If he isn't the man I took him for, if he told you about me, so much the worse for him. And I've paid him out. I've driven him out of the town. If he is ashamed to show his face here, that is my doing."

Annie Prothero had sat, while this avalanche of words descended upon her, with an air half of bewilderment and half of scorn for any girl who could be so wanting in measure and reticence. The look in her face irritated the excited girl still further. She went on—

"You think this isn't ladylike, I daresay. I don't suppose it is. All the same, I wouldn't be you, Annie Prothero, with your reserves and your proprieties. There's one comfort—he knows you now. I saw by his face, when he came away from you, that you had broken his heart. To care for a man when he is well thought of, and to cast him away when he is in trouble and disgrace, that may be your idea of love. It isn't mine."

She stopped, exhausted with her vehemence. Nancy's face was hidden in the sofa-cushions. She was not given to crying, but the first tears that she had shed since she had heard Harold's confession rushed uncontrollably from her eyes. Florida looked down at her rival's bowed head, with something like compunction, and then turned to go.

"Wait a moment!" cried Nancy, sitting up and tossing back her fair hair. "What did you say that Harold had told me about you?"

"You know," said the girl sullenly.

"I assure you," said Annie, rising and speaking, "whatever you may have felt for him, or said to him, I have never heard of it till now. You are under some great mistake. You should know that he has too much honour to tell a girl's secret."

It is superfluous to say that clearness of perception and a fine sense of probity were not Miss Challis's most striking qualities; but a person must have been very dull, or very dishonest, not to recognise the transparent sincerity of Annie Prothero. Florida felt suddenly convicted of an egregious blunder. Annie went on, facing her with the same clear gaze—

"And if, under a wrong impression, you have done anything to bring this trouble on Mr. Stuyvesant and me, I think, when you consider it, you will see that we have given you no cause."

Florida hung her head and turned away.

"Here is the medicine," Nancy said. "I hope it will do your head good. Good-night."

But as she closed the door against the baffled intruder, she did not tell herself that she had come off conqueror. She was thinking of Harold as he had gone away from her that evening, looking as though his heart was broken.

V.

MRS. FISKE'S meeting was over at nine, and by eleven the sober household at Beech Hill had composed itself to rest. The two young ladies had not appeared at all during the evening, and Mrs. Fiske was left to the somewhat absent-minded attentions of Mr. Prothero and Miss Hardinge. The latter lady had just retired to her room, and was wondering whether Nancy would care to see her, when Nancy herself, in her fur cap and mantle, suddenly appeared. Her eyes shone like stars, her face was tense with excited resolution.

"Louisa, I want thy help," she said. "I am going to the station to see Harold before he goes away."

"Art thou out of thy wits, Annie?" said the other. "The house is shut up. Thou can't go now."

"I must go, and I will," she answered. "I can get out of the house without disturbing anyone; but I don't want to go alone so late. I want thee to come with me, Louisa."

Miss Hardinge stared at the idea that anyone should wish to involve her mature prudence in such an adventure. "But if thou wants to say anything to him," she said, very naturally, "why not write?"

"I haven't his address," said Nancy; "and it would be ever so long before he got it, and I simply can't let him go away without seeing him. I treated him shamefully to-day, Louisa. I said the most cruel things to him. I've failed him when he needed me most. And if we part like this, and there should be an accident on the line, or anything should happen to him—oh! it would break my heart!" she said, bursting into tears. "I must see him. I must ask him to forgive me! Do, Louisa, be good to me, and come."

Miss Hardinge was very soft-hearted where her young friend was concerned. She had also, like many other maiden ladies, a fondness for the romantic. The matter ended in her putting on her walking things, and stealing down-stairs after Nancy through the silent house, with the most curious sense of walking in her sleep.

A low-silled drawing-room window, easily unfastened, let them out on the lawn. The night was brilliantly fine—hardly a breath of wind stirred in the beech-trees over their heads. As they passed

the lodge and came out upon the road, a cab stopped a few yards off, and someone got out and waited in the shadow. Miss Hardinge observed it; Nancy noticed nothing, as she walked forward, swiftly and silently.

They were not long in reaching the station, where Miss Hardinge broke the silence they had hitherto maintained.

"Will they let us go down on the platform?" she said.

Nancy went at once to the ticket-office, and took two tickets for the next station. Miss Hardinge, as she waited for her, suffered torments of fear lest they should be seen by someone she knew. She need not have troubled. They were not in the least danger of recognition.

It appeared that not many people were going to town by the late train. Four or five passengers paced up and down the illuminated space where the train stops; one more was walking in the outer darkness close to the end of the platform.

"There he is!" Nancy whispered, and for the first time her companion felt her trembling.

They went towards him in the dark, and he was about to pass them without recognition.

"Speak to him," whispered Nancy.

"Mr. Stuyvesant," said Miss Hardinge.

He stopped short, with a startled exclamation.

"Hush! I have brought Nancy. She would speak to you."

"Ah! Why have you come, Annie?" he said. "Haven't I done you harm enough?"

She caught his reluctant hands as he spoke.

"Oh, try and forgive me, Harold! Why didn't you wait a little? It was so sudden; but I know better now. I am so sorry, Harold—Harold!"

The words came brokenly, in a childlike abandonment of penitence.

Miss Hardinge did not hear what followed. She discreetly withdrew to a bench and sat down.

With a sudden rush and a shrill scream the London train panted into the station. There was the usual skirmishing hither and thither of guards, porters, and passengers. In the hurry two familiar forms seemed to pass her—a tall girl in a veil and a youth with a head of light hair that suggested nobody but Spencer Forwood. It must, she decided, be her fancy or an accidental resemblance.

In a few minutes the bustle was over and the platform deserted, save for a porter or two and for the two figures that were still walking up and down in the shadows.

Miss Hardinge was not in love, she was no longer very young, and may therefore be excused for feeling her position, in spite of the romance of it, decidedly irksome. Relief came at last, however, as Stuyvesant approached her with Nancy.

"Miss Hardinge," he began, with the abruptness of deep feeling, "you're a good woman; you're her friend; I'll go by what you say. She says she'll take me with my disgrace. What am I to do?"

"I think," said Miss Hardinge, with great embarrassment, "that Nancy should judge what is best for her own happiness."

"I have judged," said Nancy. "I have told him. What does it matter about the past? I trust him, and I honour him for what he is; and if he sent me away it would kill me. But you won't," she added, looking up at him.

Stuyvesant sighed like a man who yields against his will to a bitter-sweet compulsion.

"To give you a name that has been dragged through the mud, my darling——"

"Hush, Harold!" she interrupted. "I can bear anything but losing you."

The world of Bishopshaven was not as much startled as might have been expected by the new light thrown on the past history of its adopted townsman. Another even fresher and more startling sensation was dividing public attention—namely, Miss Challis's elopement and clandestine marriage with Spencer Forwood, which was discovered the morning after Mr. Stuyvesant's intended departure.

Of course, a great many people were found to be wise after the event. "What else could you expect," said some, "of a youth so tied down by a straitlaced old father? He was bound to break loose one time or another." "And what else could you expect," cried others, "of a girl who was allowed to run absolutely wild, while her mother was starring it on public platforms?" In the midst of this confusion of opinion and talk, the affairs of Annie and Stuyvesant escaped with less comment than they would otherwise have received.

Mrs. Fiske's "mission" was brought to a slightly premature close by this occurrence. The shock affected the poor lady's health to a serious extent. She had a sharp illness, through which Nancy nursed her with great kindness, and as soon as she was convalescent she returned to the States.

Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Forwood settled near London, and tried to amuse themselves with fancy farming. Its rural pleasures began to pall upon them; they sold their farm, and went abroad. Josiah Forwood still declares his determination never to receive his son, but Mr. Prothero's idea is that that determination will yield to time. He himself has lost nothing in the public eye by his niece's marriage and his own close friendship with Stuyvesant. The position of the best-loved man in Bishopshaven, which is his without a doubt, carries with it certain privileges.

Stuyvesant himself has retired from all public duties. The feeling against him is still strong in certain quarters, but it is gradually yielding to the persuasive influence of a quiet, useful, and beneficent life. And Nancy loves him none the less that she has had something to sacrifice for him. Taking his lot all in all, chequered as it is by an abiding shadow, it can hardly be said that his is—what he himself has never called it—"a hard case."

D. M. JONES.



BABY HÉLÈNE

[The child alluded to in the following lines—and who was subsequently received into the English and American Orphanage in Paris—"was found sleeping peacefully upon the cold body of her dead mother, herself a gentlewoman by birth, and a deserted wife."]

TWO lie wrapped in the stillness deep—
The hush of a quiet dreamless sleep,
One to waken and wail and weep,
Baby Hélène.
Calm and chill is thy place of rest,
The calm of a dear dead mother's breast,
By whose kind arms thou shalt be caressed
Never again!

Cling not close to the broken heart—
God has stilled it and healed its smart;
Man had forsaken: thou too must part,
Lonely Hélène!
Poor little hands must their clasp unfold,
Poor wailing voice—all its woes untold—
Cannot call back the life that is cold—
Back to its pain.

Helpless, "*forsaken*"—terrible word!
Who can hear it with soul unstirred?
O hearts so cold that cannot be spurred
Such lives to win!
What is the fate in a callous world
Of desolate waifs on its mercies hurled,
In a city where flaunt the banners unfurled
Of gorgeous sin?

* * * * * *

Art thou so lonely? *Nay!* Christ reigns
In stately streets and in sordid lanes;
Still by the hands of His messengers deigns
His love to show.
Friends are around thee, little Hélène,
To tend and bless; as the sad days wane—
To teach thee to smile and gladden again—
New joy to know.

O English hearts, if 'tis good to relieve
The bodies that perish, the spirits that grieve,
O English hands, if ye "freely receive,"
Then "*freely give!*"
For Christ's sake give of your best, and earn
The joy of giving; by sympathy learn
The grim truth taught by poverty stern—
How hard to live.

Aye, hard to live when the courage dies,
And harder still under "alien skies"—
Strangers and pilgrims, sick, starving eyes
Homeward to strain. . . .
Yea, we will open unstinting hands,
Unstinting hearts drawn by love's rich bands
To our flesh and blood in the stranger-lands,
Nor give in vain!

IDA CHRISTIAN.

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST AS A WORKER.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S, AND VICAR OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, CANONBURY.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." St. John ii. 11.

IT appears, from the narrative of St. Luke, that after the forty days of temptation had ended, Jesus returned, "in the power of the Spirit," into Galilee. Whilst there, He encountered John, who had previously baptised Him, and John seized the opportunity of bearing witness to Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. (St. John i. 29.)

The result was that certain of the Baptist's disciples, together with some of their friends (about five or six men in all), attached themselves to the ministry of Jesus, and thus practically laid the foundation of the Christian Church.

Everything, as you have probably noticed, was very quietly done—done without parade and ostentation, and in the most natural and simple manner possible. Two young men follow Jesus, in the hope of engaging Him in conversation, and the interview which He grants them decides their future career. They then go out and bring others in, and a little company is soon gathered together, and the Saviour becomes a recognised religious Teacher—a Rabbi with His following—although no one but Himself really understands the true significance of what has taken place.

It may be supposed, however, that, quiet as the proceeding was, these new converts would expect some manifestation of supernatural power on the part of their Master, for they believed Him to be Messiah, and the prophets had spoken of wonders that Messiah should work: how that the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. It was almost inevitable, then, that some manifestation should be looked for. But *what* manifestation? Probably one on a grand scale, such as the raising of a four-days' buried corpse from the dead, or the casting out of an obstinate devil from some poor oppressed demoniac, or the feeding of five thousand men with a handful of food. Such miracles would have seemed quite in accordance with the dignity of Him who had come for the purpose of overthrowing the dominion of evil, and of establishing in its stead the Kingdom of truth and righteousness upon earth.

But it was by a very different manifestation—by one much more simple and homely than might have been anticipated—that Jesus saw fit to strike the keynote of the coming strain, and to indicate the nature and character of His future ministry. He began His Messianic work by changing a certain quantity of water into wine at a simple marriage feast of peasants in a little village in the province of Galilee.

I. Let me just remind you of the circumstance. We suppose that Jesus had come with His disciples to pay a visit to Nathanael, "the Israelite indeed," whose home, as we know, was in Cana of Galilee. He has just arrived at the house when He receives an invitation to the wedding festivities of which we have just spoken. His mother, Mary—either as a near relative or as a very intimate friend—is present among the guests, and obviously occupying a post of honour, and Jesus determines to accept the invitation and to join the company. After a while, from some unexplained cause (for it can hardly be supposed that the accession to the guests of half a dozen such men as Jesus and His disciples could have made any perceptible difference in the drinking), the supply of wine begins to fail. There has been some mismanagement, some miscalculation, and it seems only too likely that the young couple will be placed in the painful and embarrassing position of hosts who have invited their friends and neighbours to an important entertainment, and then have neglected to secure a suitable and sufficient provision for them. The state of things is mentioned to Mary, and she sympathising, womanlike, with the trouble of her relatives—or with what would be their trouble, did they come to know of the circumstances—conceives the idea of extricating them from the difficulty by the help of her Divine Son. Two feelings—probably more—actuated her at this moment. There was the sympathy with the young couple, of which I have just spoken. Then, it may be—for one must not venture to speak too positively—there was the natural motherly pride in her wonderful Son, and the wish to see Him recognised and valued as He ought to be by the world at large. And, certainly—because she partook in the belief of His Messiahship, and knew that He had just entered upon the work of His life, there was the strong desire that He should announce Himself to the nation, and mark the opening of His ministry by some display of the power which God by His Spirit had just conferred upon Him. "Thou art the Messiah," we may suppose her saying, "and Thou must show Thyself. And who so fit to give the signal for the decisive act which shall make Thee known, as she who alone is cognisant of the secret of Thy mysterious birth, the mother who bore Thee—the mother who has watched Thy career from the first moment of Thine earthly existence even until now?"

Under the impulse of these feelings Mary speaks

to Jesus: not dictating to Him, it is true, but simply mentioning the fact—"They have no wine." But although she does not presume to dictate to her Divine Son, she hints at what she wishes Him to do; and Jesus, reading the thoughts of her heart, is not altogether satisfied with her. *Why not?* it may be asked. Because Mary, good and holy woman as she is, has for the moment forgotten the true relation between her and her Son. She is thinking of the thirty years of duteous submission, of tender compliance with her every wish; she is expecting that state of things to continue. But—*it is ended now;* Jesus is engaged in His mighty Messianic work; He is about His Father's business; He is acting under the direction of His Father in everything, and He cannot allow of the interference of anyone—not even of the mother He loves, and not even in the way of a simple suggestion, because it is virtually an interference between Himself and His Father, and an attempt to set aside, or (as in this case) to precipitate, the Divine arrangements. Accordingly, he speaks in a tone of gentle, but still decided rebuke. That rebuke is not, of course, conveyed in the address "Woman!" which is, in the original Greek, or in the language used by Him, a term of profound respect; but it is conveyed in His repudiation of the relation which the virgin-mother has ventured to assume as established between them. In matters like these, He tells her, she has no hold upon Him now: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" And yet, as if He shrank—as, of course, He did—from at all wounding her feelings, He intimates that the time may arrive when He shall feel at liberty to comply with her request: "Mine hour is not yet come."

This is enough for Mary. She humbly accepts the rebuke—which it must have been more painful for Jesus to administer than it was for her to receive—and accepts with it the latent promise that in some way or other, at some time or other (He Himself being left to judge of what is best) Jesus will display the power with which He has been Divinely endowed.

What followed you will, of course, remember; and yet perhaps I may as well recall it and comment upon it for a moment or two. There stood, probably in the vestibule of the room in which the banquet was going on, or it may be against the wall of the room itself, six water-pots of stone partially filled with water. The purifying ceremonies of the Jews on such an occasion as this were very numerous and complicated, and a considerable amount of water was required for them; so that, in all probability, these stone jars were the largest that could be procured in the neighbourhood, and must have held—judging from the statement of the Evangelist—about eighteen gallons of liquid apiece. Jesus directs the attendants to fill the vessels with water, and they obey, filling them up to the brim. When the water is drawn out for the consumption of the guests, it is found to be wine, and wine of so excellent a quality as to attract the attention of the man who is called the "governor of the feast." Whether this man was one of the guests, selected for the purpose of directing the proceedings, or a hired official, does not appear. His coarseness, however, points to the latter supposition; for he calls the bridegroom up, and compliments him upon the unusual liberality which he has displayed towards the guests. Other hosts, he says, are in the habit of giving their best wine first; and when the guests, by undue indulgence, have muddled their senses and blunted their palates—for that is clearly the meaning of his language—then the entertainer craftily produces the inferior vintage, and sets it before them, knowing that they have now lost the power to distinguish the quality of the wine. "But thou hast acted otherwise; thou hast kept the best wine back until now." With this rather vulgar jest, uttered, we suppose, to the bridegroom alone, and out of the hearing of the company, the narrative terminates.

You will observe, before we turn to another part of our subject, that the language of the ruler of the feast implies the intoxicating quality of the wine consumed on these occasions; but, at the same time, that it does *not* imply that there had been, or was likely to be, any excessive indulgence or any unseemly behaviour on the part of the guests at this particular banquet. Had there been a tendency in such a direction, the presence of Jesus amongst them would assuredly have checked it at once. The man simply alludes, in his rough jocular way, to what he knew to be the general practice at similar entertainments. He has nothing to say against the guests at the table before him.

II. Let me now pass on to consider some thoughts suggested by the narrative. We may notice, then, that by the miracle of the turning of water into wine the Lord Jesus is said to have "manifested forth His glory;" and by means of that manifestation to have confirmed the faith of the little band of young men who had already attached themselves to His person and His ministry. It was a true instinct which led the disciples—independently, perhaps, of the prophetic utterances of Isaiah—to anticipate that the works of the Messiah would be signalised by acts of supernatural power. That at this time they understood His real character, and knew Him to be very God of very God, the only-begotten of the Father, is not, of course, to be supposed. They arrived at the conception of His Godhead by slow degrees, as the result of a long and laborious training. But they knew enough to know that there would be an uniqueness about the person of Messiah, and that He would lodge and settle Himself in the world as a sort of central and controlling influence, subduing all that was evil and developing all that was good; and, knowing this, they could not but expect to witness some gleams, some coruscations of a Divine authority befitting the peculiarity of the mission which He had come to fulfil—in other words, they *looked for miracles;* and a Messiah without miracles would have

been to them a Messiah to be suspected as not being adequately supplied with the requisite credentials. When, therefore, their Master put forth His power, they were strengthened and encouraged. They felt that they had made no mistake. It is true that they had not been attracted to Him by miracles. No; the Lord Jesus, to them, was His own attraction. His person, His manner, His words, His teaching, were enough; and this was as it should be. Christ had no need to say to them, "If ye believe not me, believe the works"—for they did believe Him. But, at the same time, their confidence in Him was not a little deepened—their attachment to Him was not a little confirmed—when they witnessed this manifestation of His glory at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee.

But this turning of the water into wine was not only a miracle, but it was also, as we read, "the beginning of miracles:" the words implying, we suppose, that the disciples were directed to gather from it what the nature of the Saviour's work on earth would be. Now, if we are justified in adopting such an interpretation, let us consider what, in all probability, the narrative is intended to teach us. We may suppose it intended to show that the Lord Jesus Christ made it His business to elevate our human existence, and to fill it with joy. From the water to the wine was an upward step. And Christ came to replace the Law by the Gospel, and to lift men from the bondage of service into the freedom and privilege of sons of the living God. And then, as to the "joy." We do not, of course, refer to the carnal and worldly joy—the joy of success and prosperity—far less to the joy of pleasure and surfeiting, but we mean the "new wine of the Spirit"—the joy and peace in believing which Christ has purchased for all those who serve Him and love Him. There is a stern side to our holy religion: no doubt about it. We have to deny ourselves; we have to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; we have to be vigilant and self-controlling; we have to be on our guard against formidable perils—formidable because unseen. More or less, in fact, we have to be upon the strain—to keep ourselves up to the mark, as the runner does who presses towards the goal at which he hopes to receive the prize; as the soldier does who stands fully armed upon the battle-field, and dares not quit his post until the conflict is over, and the captain has given permission to him to return to his tent. But for all that, the prevailing characteristic of the Christian life is joy—joy in the Lord. Even our sorrow is turned into joy, as the water was turned into wine. And the Lord Himself and His apostles aim, as they tell us, at the "fulfilling of the joy" of the disciples. These things writes he unto you "that your joy may be full." Yes, brightness and buoyancy—a brightness and a buoyancy, not of animal spirits, but of spiritual feeling—and with these things a delight in the service of Christ, and an evident enjoyment of religion—are what ought to be found in the true followers and disciples of the Lord; for Jesus came for the purpose of making the position of His people—even in this world, to say nothing of the world of the hereafter—a happy and a blessed one.

We may gather another lesson as to the mission of Christ in the world. He came, if I may so speak, to work up already-existing material into better and nobler forms. In the miracle before us, He can hardly be said to have created—at least, not if we mean by "creation" making out of nothing. The water was there already. He turned it into another liquid. He re-modelled, re-formed, re-constituted it. It was really a new thing made out of an old. And have we not here an illustration of His work amongst us in spiritual things? The change which takes place in a man when he becomes a living member of the mystical body of Christ is a tremendous one, and Scripture employs the most striking and picturesque language wherewith to describe it. The man who has been converted; has been born again; has been made a new creature in Jesus Christ; has passed from darkness to light—"from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God." Before, he was like a dead body—dead in trespasses and sins; now, he is a living man, alive unto God. What forcible expressions these are! The sacred writers labour, if I may say so, to set before us the greatness, and the extent, and the importance, and the far-reaching issues of the spiritual event that has occurred. And more than this, they trace up the bestowal of the blessing to the secret counsels of the Most High. The children of God are "born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And, yet again, they represent the work as the work of Omnipotence, and tell us that none can communicate spiritual life but the Lord, the Giver of Life, God the Holy Ghost Himself. But is it wrong to say that the man who is the subject of the change is the same man throughout? Paul, after his conversion, does not cease to be Paul. He is Paul—I would not say "reformed," for the word is inadequate, if not misleading—but I would say "re-cast." He is not put away, and another person substituted in his place, as would be the case if a work of new creation—in the *literal* sense of the word "creation"—had been accomplished. He is Paul still, but Paul with the whole current of his being turned round and flowing in a new channel; Paul, with every feeling and affection directed to God, instead of to self; Paul, with every faculty, and power, and capacity of his grand nature devoted, by one supreme and absorbing act of self-consecration, to his God and Father, in the Gospel of the Eternal Son. And what is true of Paul becomes equally true of everyone who by grace is led to quit the world, and to join himself in sincerity and in truth to the Church of the living God.

With one thought more I conclude. Fault has been found by unbelievers with the Saviour on account of the very considerable quantity of wine

produced on this occasion. Now, we know nothing about the number of the guests who had to consume it; and this we may be perfectly sure of—that had the wine thus made been in any way a temptation to the assembled company, the miracle would never have been wrought. But this we may say, I think, with almost equal confidence — that the bounty of the Saviour is in perfect keeping with what we know of the Divine character and dealings. Not stintedness, but profusion—is what we behold in nature: flowers bloom in unseen and desert places; fruit drops in ripe abundance from the bough where there is none to gather it. And not stintedness, but profusion, is what we behold in Grace. We have not only what we need provided for us, but more than we need, and enough and more than enough for all. "God is able," says the Apostle, "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

We have then here another of the manifestations of Christ—His manifestation as a Worker for the Kingdom—as we have had already His manifestation to the Gentiles, His manifestation to Himself, and His manifestation to John the Baptist.

CONCERNING SOME OF OUR MOST ANCIENT CHURCHES.



AMONG the ancient churches we still possess are some that were already ancient when William the Conqueror landed on our shores with his martial following; for we have still edifices in which there are portions of the simple, massy buildings that were reared by pious Saxon masons long before it came into his heart to win England. Alterations and extensions made since those old hoary days have given several later features to the buildings; but they yet possess some of the first massive work, standing as the Saxons placed it stone by stone. Saxon chroniclers, too, have handed down to us mention of several buildings that were esteemed wonders in those dim and distant times. The examples we possess corroborate their accounts; and looking first to one and then to the other, we are able to put together a fair presentment of the earliest stone churches that sparsely studded the country before the Norman Conquest.

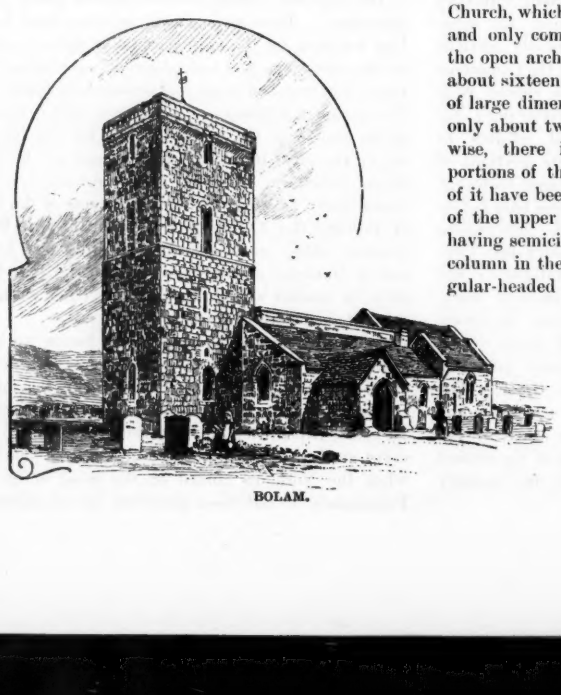
The vigorous, earnest Saxons founded many of our cathedrals. Their strong work in these chief buildings has been for the most part taken down to admit of the extensions and splendours of succeeding centuries, but traces of it are still occasionally found. In Peterborough Cathedral, for instance, quite recently, in the course of the works needed for the rebuilding of the great tower, the foundations of the early Saxon cruciform building were uncovered. And about thirty years ago various fragments of the work of Edward the Confessor were identified in Westminster Abbey, such as columns three feet and a half in diameter, and walled-up windows. It is, however, in smaller structures that our chief examples of their skill may be seen.

Some very interesting instances of Saxon work are underground, in crypts. We may almost assume that these receptacles were usual features in the largest Saxon churches. We know they were formed at Hexham, Ripon, Repton, Canterbury, and York. The crypt at Hexham was nearly four hundred years old when the Normans landed on the coast of Sussex. Fortunately, it has been preserved for us exactly as

the Saxon masons left it. We may see for ourselves they took such stones as were ready to their hands for its formation, for several of them are of Roman fashioning. A Roman tablet which is built into the roof of one of the entrance-ways has an inscription upon it that sets forth that it was dedicated by certain Roman soldiers to certain Roman emperors ; and another inscribed stone built into the vaulted cell records that a legate of Augustus erected it as an altar to his divinity, in performance of his vow. The Saxon masons took no account of these relics of their predecessors, except to gather them together and stolidly build them up as wall-stones, with other fragments of Roman work. The Ripon crypt, familiarly known as St. Wilfred's Needle, is very similar in size and construction, and is as plain and massy. Some steps in the nave of the cathedral lead downwards to a passage forty-five feet long, which leads to the chapel, or oratory, which measures rather more than eleven feet in length, and is seven feet nine inches wide. The Repton crypt, in Derbyshire, is somewhat lighter in character, and much larger. As in that at Hexham, and as is usual in these subterranean chapels, there are three entrances to it. It is about seventeen feet square ; and the vaulted roof is supported by four columns, the shafts of which are ornamented with wreaths, while the caps and bases are plain. As is the case at Canterbury, the York crypt has been disturbed, but in the herring-bone work there we may believe, without much fear of error, that we see some of the stones of the building in which Paulinus baptised King Edwin and two of his children, or of the structure erected on the spot immediately after that ceremonial.

We have several church towers that are of unmistakable Saxon workmanship. Saxon masons had peculiar modes of building that are easily recognised. They gave their corner-stones the first consideration, as a rule. These were about two feet in length, and they placed them alternately longways and shortways ; first a long stone placed as if in its natural bed, and then one above it placed on end, and on the top of that another longways, as in its natural bed again, and then another endways till the full height they desired was attained. In a tower this "long and short work," as it is designated, is generally seen at each angle, and the wide wall-spaces between them are filled up with rough rubble-work, or much smaller stones placed as they came to hand, without any particular lines or courses being aimed at. Occasionally we find a building that is authoritatively recognised as Saxon without this long and short work, but only very rarely. Instead of it, there may be courses of another disposition of stones, called "herring-bone work," in which a row of stones is placed aslant in one direction, with another inclining the contrary way above it.

Another peculiarity is shown in the tower of Earl Barton's church, in Northamptonshire, where long thin stones are so placed as to project slightly from the face of the rest of the masonry in long, straight, perpendicular lines. The tower of St. Peter's church, Barton-upon-Humber, is built in a somewhat similar manner, with the difference that the rubble-work is let in a framework of freestone arranged in compartments. There are Saxon towers at Bolam, Brigstock, Barnack, Brixworth, Bywell, Billingham, Corbridge, Ovingham, Wearmouth, Whittingham, and other places, with either one or another of these characteristics. The early writers mention porches of entrance, which it is supposed, from examinations of the remains handed down to us, were formed by four doorways in the lowermost stages of the towers. Wearmouth Tower has four such openings ; and the tower of Jarrow church had the same. Brixworth tower had also four openings in it on the ground-floor, before the Normans touched it. Some towers had no external entrance, as in the tower of Whittingham Church, which is built with the long and short work, and only communicates with the edifice by means of the open arch on the eastern side. This example is about sixteen feet square ; and but few of them are of large dimensions. The tower of Bolam church is only about twelve feet square. In this edifice, likewise, there is no external entrance. The lower portions of the window-openings of the lowest stage of it have been enlarged to give more light, but those of the upper stages are untouched, the belfry stage having semicircular headed couplets with a recessed column in the centre, and the uppermost stage triangular-headed single lights. There is no long and short work, but at the top of the tower is a course of herring-bone work. In Plantagenet times a projecting parapet has been added. Neither is there any external entrance to the tower of Woodhorn church, the Saxon piers and arch and turret stair of which are still remaining, though the three outer



BOLAM.

walls have been replaced. The doorway to the winding staircase, which opens into the nave, is only eighteen inches across, and the steps are in the thickness of the northernmost pier. These sturdy, hoary relics are full of associations for us. They bring before us the brave, hardy, blue-eyed people whose singers spoke of the sea as the swan's path, the gannet's bath, and the water-street; who called themselves battle-smiths, war-wolves, and war-smiths; whose kings gave bracelets to those they would honour, and in one instance placed bracelets along the roads with the certainty that none of their subjects would appropriate them. We can realise how simply, how solemnly, they worshipped, how their battle-axes and other war-gear, their mead-halls and sea-ships, their ravages, pillages, reprisals, their carousals and ale-revels, gradually became as naught compared to the worship of God and the duty of loving their neighbours as themselves.



BARTON-UPON-HUMBER.



DOORWAY IN BARTON CHURCH.

Among the Saxons whose names have come down to us are two ecclesiastics whose zeal found special outlet in the building of churches. One of these was Wilfred, Bishop of York, who so built Hexham church that it was allowed to be the finest structure on this side of the Alps. The walls were three tiers in height, supported by columns, and below was the crypt just mentioned, with its approaches. Wilfred also built two other churches in Hexham, one of which, the chronicler tells us, was round; and he founded Ripon Cathedral, as well as several other ecclesiastical fabrics in other parts of the country. The other Saxon church-builder of whom we have special mention is Benedict Biscop, who built, first, Wearmouth church, and then that at Jarrow. He founded the first about A.D. 675.

Of some of the old lowly thick-walled churches reared by the vigorous Saxons, only the tower arches are left, and in some others only the chancel arches, all the walls of nave, chancel, and tower alike having been taken down—perhaps at different times—that new ones might be built on a larger scale covering the same site. At Kilpeck Church, in Herefordshire, Norman masons seem to have spared some Saxon work in the lower part of the tower. At Whalton, in Northumberland, the whole of a Saxon church, built there more than a thousand years ago, has been taken down in the passing centuries, save the tall, narrow, semicircular tower arch. In the church of St. Peter, Long Houghton, in the same county, the Saxon edifice has been effaced in the same manner, with the exception of the tower arch, with its strong square piers, and the chancel arch. As these two have been left untouched, they give us the length of the Saxon nave, which did not exceed forty-two feet. In some instances even these venerable relics are lost to us, every stone, down to the level of the ground, having been removed; and yet below the floor-line still lie all the primitive reliable foundations, solidly intact. This was found to be the case in Warkworth church a few years ago, when the floor of the Norman church was taken up. There, low within, lay the old Saxon foundations of the church that was built when Ceolwulph, King of Northumbria, to whom the Venerable Bede dedicated his history, retired to the monastery on Holy Island, and gave Werceworde, among other possessions, to the fraternity. There was the foundation-stone hollowed out for the reception of a record or for coins, which previous explorers had duly removed, and there were the lines of stones marking a smaller site than that which the Normans had covered. The greatest of the Saxon kings, Alfred the Truth-teller, wrote: "True nobility is in the mind, not in the flesh. I wished to live honourably whilst I lived, and after my life to leave to the men who were after me my memory in good works." And as we examine the old works in masonry that the Saxon masons have left us, we can only conclude they shared these noble sentiments.

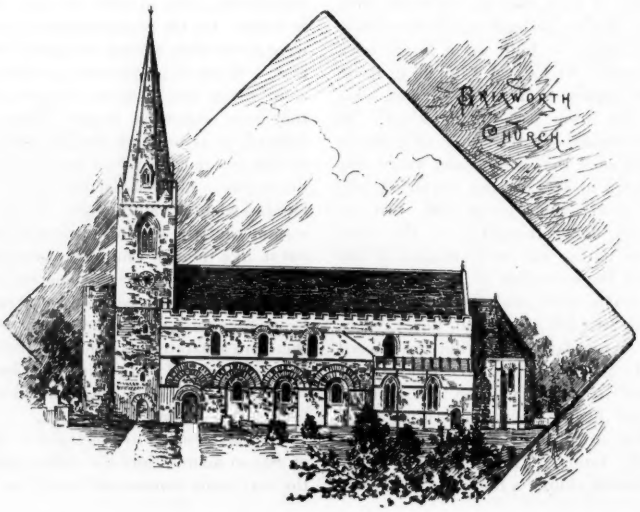
The windows of these old times were of the smallest dimensions, some of them not more than six inches in width. On the ground storey, we may be sure, they were never wide enough to admit the entrance of a man. When in an elevated position, where defence from attack would not be so much of a consideration, they were somewhat larger. They were all deeply splayed, so as to admit the greatest amount of light to the interior that was possible to their external limitations. As Benedict Biscop was the first church-builder who introduced the use of glass, we must assume that the windows before his time were without it, like those of Continental countries at the same period. The headings of some are semicircular, and of others triangular, as though two stones were placed to rest against each other, edge to edge. Most of them are separated by a small baluster-like shaft into two divisions. Two, about six inches in width, were recently uncovered by the removal of plaster in the tower of Embleton church.

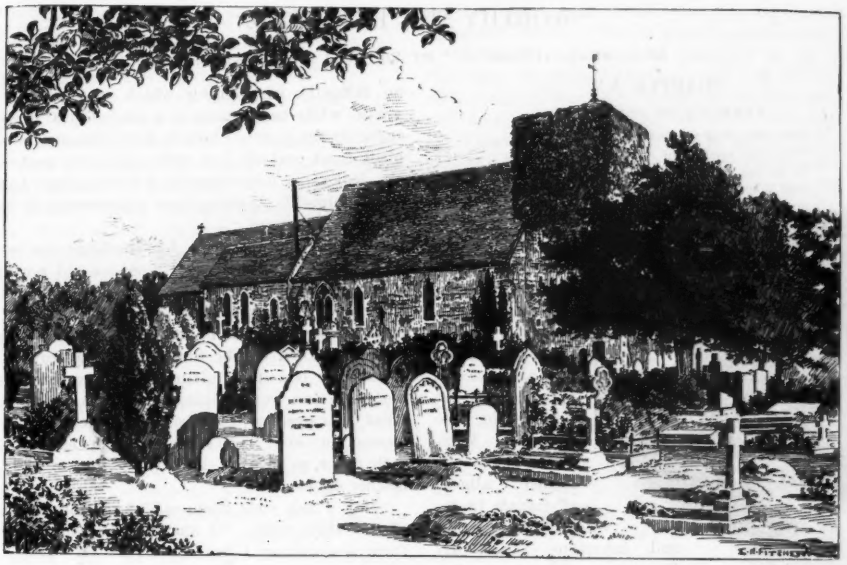
The Saxon doorways pictured in the illuminations of Saxon manuscripts are sometimes enriched with the very same ornamental work we may see in the

rare ancient examples left to us, such as conventional lines representing foliage, and intertwining lines representing intricate knots. Some doorways have also representations of angelic figures, and sometimes of grotesque figures, carved on the semicircular spaces in the heading. One at Barton-on-Humber has a triangular heading. The caps of the columns on either side of the doorway of Water-Stratford, Bucks, have the intertwined work always found on crosses of Saxon workmanship, though the rest of the entrance has a later character. In Charney Chapel there is a curious bas-relief carved in the form of a tympanum, which has a semicircular contour of the foliage-like ornamentation mentioned, encompassing a crowned figure between two bird-headed winged quadrupeds, the beaks of which are holding its arms as its hands rest on their necks.

The walls were sometimes more than three feet thick, as may be seen in Brixworth church. In the very heart of the sumptuous remains of the priory church which the Normans built upon the site of the ancient Saxon edifice on Holy Island, may still be seen two lengths of walling differing from the rest. These are the north and south walls of the old Saxon church the Normans found in ruins. Instead of pulling them down, they preserved these lengths of solid masonry, made with flattish slab-like stones, three feet in length here and there, and built extensions in length and additions in height to them. They are about twenty feet long and six feet in height, without break for doorways or windows, but with a recess for an aumbry; and above them and adjoining them eastwards are the smaller, squarer stones of the Normans, with their windows and enrichments. And just as they handed down to us these ancient Saxon fragments, Plantagenet masons, coming after them with intent to enlarge their sombre work, left us one of their round-headed windows on either side of their masonry over the old Saxon walling, though they broke out the rest into larger openings with Pointed arches, to get more light. Here, then, in this semi-island—for twice a day the so-called island is connected with the land by three miles of low flat sands from which the sea has receded—is a veritable relic of the days of the Anglo-Saxons, and perhaps of the Heptarchy, firm still, compact, solid, and unmistakable.

The ancient chroniclers mention Christian churches that were in use by the ancient Britons before the conversion of the Saxons. Of these structures we have no identified remains. They may have been built of wood, or the stones of which they were built may have been used again on enlargements and alterations by the Saxons, just as we know they used Roman stones that they found ready hewn at Hexham and Jarrow. We have wo.d that when Augustine and his associates arrived at Canterbury for the purpose of converting the Saxons, the queen had prepared for them the ancient church of St. Martin, which had originally belonged to the Britons, and had been recently repaired; and again, when King Ethelbert was baptised, he retired to the city of Reculver, and gave Canterbury to the missionaries, when the church of St. Saviour, originally built by the Britons, was repaired and made into a residence for them. It has been suggested that ancient British churches may have been round, either as assisting continuity of idea by preserving the association of sanctity with circles of stones, as in the old Druidical temples, or as a faithful though remote approach to the form of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. We learn from the chronicles that some of the earliest Anglo-Saxon churches were round, as in the second church Wilfred built at





ST. MARTIN'S, CANTERBURY.

Hexham, and the second church Benedict Biscop built at Wearmouth. All traces of these are obliterated. But we may note, too, that a large number of the churches the Normans erected all over the land had semicircular apses as terminations to the chancels and aisles, as in the priory church just mentioned on Holy Island; and smaller structures without aisles had apsidal terminations to the chancels, as at the beautiful little chapel at the foot of the Bewick hills in North Northumberland, and the chancels of the churches at Padworth, Finchampstead and Remenham, in Berkshire; which feature might be regarded as a modification of the same structural arrangement.

A close scrutiny of our old churches would doubtless result in the disclosure that the fragments of Saxon architecture that have been preserved in them are much more numerous than we now know. At present they exceed a hundred in number, counting from Kent to Cornwall in one direction, and from the same starting-point to Northumberland in another. In Sir Walter Scott's time all Norman architecture was ascribed to the Saxons; even Holy Island Priory, in his rich and mellow wording, frowned "in Saxon strength, with massive arches broad and low"; and in the restitution made by public opinion the other extreme has been fallen into of assigning too much to the Normans, and many fragments of the work of the brave battle-smiths and war-wolves have been accounted "Early Norman," and "very early Norman." We know of the strength, hardihood, energy, enthusiasm, and piety of the Saxons, their baptisms in great crowds; and we have their copies of the Gospels and other manuscripts written with a perfection we cannot exceed, and enriched with illuminations that have not yet faded; and bearing in mind the natural result of this combination of power and facility, it would be wonderful indeed if all structural tokens of it had disappeared.

The very words have been passed on to us that threw the requisite balance into the scale when the question of the adoption or rejection of the Christian faith was before an assembly convened by King Edwin of Northumbria for decision. We are told a Saxon Ealdorman arose and spoke these persuasive words:—"Thus seemeth to me, O King, this present life of man upon earth, compared with the time which is unknown to us; even as if you were sitting at a feast, amid your Ealdormen and Thegns in winter time. And the fire is lighted, and the hall warmed, and it rains, and snows, and storms without. Then cometh a sparrow, and flieth about the hall. It cometh in at one door, and goeth out at another. While it is within, it is not touched by the winter's storm; but that is only for a moment, only for the least space. Out of the winter it cometh, to return again into the winter left soon. So also this life of man endureth for a little space. What goeth before it and what followeth after, we know not. Wherefore, if this new lore bring aught more certain and more advantageous, then is it worthy that we should follow it."

Whether further identifications of Saxon work are in store for us or not, it is pleasant to find here and there, through the length and breadth of the land, traces of structures the national conversion called into requisition so long before the days of William the Conqueror. S. W.

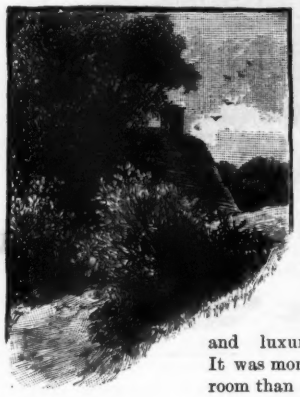
WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XX.

VEREKER OF VERECROFT.

"Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Prive and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedës that he can,
And take him for the gretest gentilman."—CHAUCER.



SIR RAYMOND'S room was one of the most luxurious in Verecroft. Austerity in any shape or form was alien to his nature, and at first sight the heir of Verecroft's apartment looked almost effeminate in its lavish decoration and luxurious furnishing. It was more like a woman's room than a man's, Lancelot often said, with the affectionate banter that hid so much real admiration. There were, indeed, whips, and guns, and foils, to bear witness to masculine ownership, but they were almost lost amongst the pictures that adorned the delicately tinted walls. The pictures were all good of their kind, but they were not the kind affected by the neighbouring squires. The customary hunting scenes, with horses and hounds streaming across green down or fallow field, with brown woods in the distance, and pink coats for effective touches of colour, were conspicuous by their absence. Landscapes by Cooper or Cuyp, figures by Millais or Leighton, replaced the conventional sport; and amongst them were one or two gems of historic fame and fabulous cost. Art was a passion, not a taste, with this latest Vereker of Verecroft, and he spared neither money nor pains for its gratification. There was only one inartistic painting in the room, and no one could blame the filial piety which condoned the execution for the sake of the subject. A half-length portrait of the late Sir Raymond hung over the fireplace, and bad as the painting was, there was no doubt it was an excellent likeness. The blonde debonair youth, with his honest grey eyes and wholesome English colouring, lived again on the canvas, and Dr. Fletcher recognised him at once. "Poor fellow, poor fellow!" he said, "how little he thought who would reign here in his stead! Well, I wish the young man would appear, and let us get it all over. I'm sorry for him; for, after all, it is probably no fault of his."

And then the door opened, and Lancelot came in, and looked inquiringly at the two unexpected guests. That one was a doctor, and the other a minister of some kind or other, he already knew, and there was no difficulty in deciding which was which. The gentle, white-haired man, in a semi-clerical dress, was certainly the *pasteur;* and the Englishman, who wore a black frock-coat and had such a distinctly professional air, looked so unmistakably a doctor, that Lancelot found himself thinking how unnecessary it was to put it on his card.

"We have to apologise for troubling you so late in the day," said the doctor; "but we did not understand that Verecroft was so far from Warwick, and the drive took us longer than we expected. Our business is urgent, as I am unfortunately obliged to return to town by the first train to-morrow."

Lancelot bowed inquiringly. He wondered why both the men were looking at him so curiously, and what their business could be. Whatever it was, neither seemed very anxious to enter upon it. They looked at each other, as if each desired the other to begin, and neither spoke.

"May I ask your business?" Lancelot said, as he offered them seats. "I am quite at your service, if there is anything I can do."

In his own mind, Mr. Vereker had decided that it was probably a begging affair. The little *pasteur* looked as if he might be a deputation from some religious society; though what the English doctor had to do with it remained to be seen.

"Sir Raymond Vereker will understand," the little minister said at last, "that only a quite strong sense of ze duty have brought us to hereward. We make our apologies *en avant*—what you call before ze hand—for the so painful nature of our coming, and desire his good forgiveness when we shall find ourselves compelled an innocent man to all unwillingly offend."

"If you mean me, I am not likely to take offence without cause," said Lancelot. "Be kind enough to explain what it is you want."

He could not help liking the kind-faced little man who was evidently so proud of his English, but there was something in the doctor's manner which he did not like at all.

"You don't remember me, of course," Dr. Fletcher said now, "but I wonder if you have ever heard my name?"

"Never to my knowledge, certainly."

"I was at Chamounix when the late Sir Raymond Vereker met his untimely fate, and I attended Lady Vereker when her son was born. I may as well explain at once that circumstances which then took place have recently come to my knowledge, and that I conceive it to be my duty—as it would be the duty of any other honest man—to make you acquainted with them, supposing that you are really in ignorance of what so nearly concerns yourself."

The doctor's quick eyes rested on the young man's face with a suspicious scrutiny that would certainly have set Sir Raymond's temper in a blaze, but his cousin had more self-control.

"I know nothing of the time you speak of," he said quietly. "But I cannot imagine that you should be

better informed than myself of any circumstances it really concerned me to know."

The little *pasteur* looked at him with a friendly, and even compassionate glance.

"I think well he nothing knows," he said to his companion, who assented with a nod.

"Our business is all the more unpleasant," said the doctor, turning to Lancelot, whose surprise increased with every word. "I must ask you to understand that we make no charge against yourself. It is quite possible—it is, indeed, extremely probable—that the facts of the case have never been confided to you. Mrs. Kenyon arranged everything. Mrs. Kenyon——"

"Mrs. Kenyon is dead," said Lancelot repressively.

"So I am aware, or I should have asked for her instead of for the young man who is called Sir Raymond Vereker," said Dr. Fletcher, in a tone whose significance could not escape notice.

"*Who is called!*" ejaculated Lancelot. He sprang to his feet, and looked at the two men with a sudden recollection of Mrs. Kenyon's will, and the terms in which her grandson had been mentioned in it, and felt as if the room were whirling round. What did it all mean, and why were they both looking at him with such unmistakable sympathy and pity?

"I assure you, Sir Raymond——" Dr. Fletcher began, but Lancelot interrupted.

"I am not Sir Raymond," he exclaimed. "I am his cousin, Lancelot Vereker."

"Lanzelot! Ze next heir?" cried the *pasteur*, in great excitement, while Dr. Fletcher exclaimed with hardly less interest—

"The next-of-kin! And we were wondering how we should find you out!"

"Verily," cried the little *pasteur*, "the ways of God are wonderful! It is He, O mine friend, that has our steps hitherward directed, and this young man unto us sent. It is to the heir himself, see you, that our proofs shall be given. That poor boy, Sir Raymond you call, it was too much to ask of any man. But, sare, the proofs with your own eyes shall you see!"

He unbuttoned a pocket inside his coat, and took from it a tiny bundle of papers, but Dr. Fletcher laid his hand restrainingly upon them.

"Let me explain," he said. "He will not understand them till he knows all about them, and how they came into our possession. If you will kindly give me your attention, Sir Lancelot——"

"It is my cousin who is the baronet," interrupted Lance. "I am plain Lancelot Vereker, as I told you just now."

"So you think, we are aware. When you have read M. Martel's papers you will understand that—if you are really the next-of-kin—you are Sir Lancelot Vereker of Verecroft."

"But my cousin—Sir Raymond," stammered Lancelot, too surprised to say more.

"Your cousin Sir Raymond is neither cousin, nor Sir, nor Raymond," said Dr. Fletcher. "The young man who has borne those names is not even a Vereker at all. He is Giuseppe Balmano, an Italian singer's son, as these papers will abundantly prove."

"Let me see them," said Lancelot. "Your proofs had need to be ample to support such an assertion! If they are insufficient, I can assure you that my cousin, Sir Raymond, will know how to punish his calumniators."

He looked very tall and dignified as he stood regarding the imperturbable doctor and the gentle, mild-faced old man, with something between defiance and unwilling belief. He owned to himself, as Dr. Fletcher bowed gravely and M. Martel spread his papers eagerly out, that at least they believed their own tale, impossible as it sounded.

And then he remembered Mrs. Kenyon's will, and the terms of the bequest to himself. "And if, through the accruing of other moneys, these moneys of mine should be no longer needed. . . ." He remembered that, and how she had provided that if the "young man known as Sir Raymond Vereker of Verecroft should be in need or want," her money was to pass from Lancelot to him, "by whatever name he might be known!" It *was* true, he felt, and Mrs. Kenyon had known the truth!

He went to the door and locked it; for might not Sir Raymond return, and come all unprepared amongst them? Then he came back to his chair, and sat down to listen with the crushed, hopeless feeling of a man who strives against his fate. He had said once that he would rather be Vereker of Verecroft than King of England, but as he thought of the man he still called his cousin, he felt that he would rather have been the meanest hind in the village than this that they said he was.

And then, while Lancelot listened, dumb with surprise and pain, Dr. Fletcher related how he had been present at the birth of Lady Vereker's son, how delicate the child had been, and how he had engaged the services of Louise Balmano as nurse. He spoke of the contrast between the nurse's healthy babe and the frail little baronet, of his own conviction that when he left Chamounix the infant Sir Raymond had only a few hours to live, and of his surprise when he heard afterwards that the child he left *in extremis* had actually recovered.

"The thought of foul play never even crossed my mind," said Dr. Fletcher. "I was a young man then, and I felt an unlimited admiration and respect for the doctor who had effected the all but miraculous cure; and there, as far as I was concerned, the matter might have ended. It is M. Martel who must tell you the rest. He came to see me two days ago, and I felt the matter important enough to come down with him, and add my testimony to the truth of his account."

"It was the mother who the extraordinary but quite-to-be-believed story told me," said the little *pasteur*, looking sympathetically at Lancelot's troubled face. "You are *ému*, my young friend, and it seems to me it does you honour! But the facts, the facts are as I say. Madame Caillot sent for me on her bed of death."

"Madame Caillot?" said Lancelot inquiringly.

"Louise Balmano—her husband died, and she espoused Gustave Caillot, a Swiss guide of Chamounix, but he treat her not well, and she die, poor soul, it is a week ago. She knew that in this world she would well never again be, and she begged me her son to find, and tell him who he was. Here are her words, by me attested, and by my own hand taken down."

"Do you mean that the woman had been wicked enough to substitute her own child?"

"Wicked, or weak? we cannot tell," said the gentle *pasteur*. "No doubt she thought she was doing well for her child, and a bribe was offered that to her simple peasant mind truly enormous seemed."

"There is no doubt that Mrs. Kenyon was at the bottom of it all," said Dr. Fletcher. "What her motive was I cannot pretend to say, nor whether she ever repented of the wrong she had certainly done you; but there is no doubt, from Louise's confession, that Mrs. Kenyon arranged the whole business."

"She did repent—she tried to tell me—I see it all now," Lancelot said, in a broken voice.

The remembrance of that terrible death-bed almost overcame him. "*Not Raymond—Lancelot!*"—what significance there seemed in the rambling, disjointed words now! what meaning in the agonised attempts at utterance! what pathos in the prayer for his own forgiveness!

"Do you think that Lady Vereker knows?" Dr. Fletcher asked suddenly.

"No—oh, no!—I am sure she does not," answered Lancelot. He spoke with quick conviction, but reflection only assured him that he was right. Only to her own child, or to one that she at least believed to be her own, could Lady Vereker have poured forth that wealth of maternal devotion that seemed the very flower and crown of her life. How would she feel when she knew that her own child was lying in the little Alpine graveyard, that the love that should have been buried with it had been lavished on a peasant-woman's son?

"It will kill her!" he said in his heart, as Mrs. Kenyon had said before him, and he felt very tenderly of the sorely tempted mother who had sinned for her daughter's sake. He understood how Lady Vereker's passionate devotion to the child she deemed her own had sealed her mother's lips, even when she would fain have repaired the wrong she had done. She had borne her burden of unconfessed guilt even to the grave rather than destroy the fond illusion that made the happiness of her daughter's life; and it was left to him—to the boy Lady Vereker had loved only next to him she deemed her son, to the youth she had loaded with benefits, to the man who had told himself he would count no sacrifice too great for her sweet sake, who had only to-day proved his words by the surrender of his love—it was left to him to bring this great sorrow upon her by the assertion of his rights. He looked at the two men who were watching him so closely with a trouble in the brave brown eyes they could not understand. How were they to guess that he was asking himself, "Need she ever know?" He took the papers, and read them carefully through. One was a deed of gift by which Mrs. Kenyon made over two thousand pounds to Louise Balmano for her life, with reversion to Sir Raymond Vereker at her death; the other was a circumstantial account of the exchange of the living child for the dead one in the interval that elapsed between the departure of Dr. Fletcher and the arrival of Dr. Overton. It was written in M. Martel's faint, precise handwriting, and witnessed by himself. The dying woman's illiterate signature struck Lancelot with a sort of grotesque pathos. Was this the mother of the man whom Lady Vereker called her son, who was to himself all that a brother could be, who was the betrothed husband of Avice Meredith!

"You say that this woman is dead?" he said to M. Martel.

"Yes," said the kindly little man with a sigh. "She longed to see her son, to clasp him once more in her arms, but she lived not her wish to gain. I hurry from her side, with ze proofs, as you see—I find ze good docteur—and yesterday we hear of her death."

"Who else knows?" asked Lancelot.

"Knows? Who should know? No one *could* know but the two women who have gone to their account," said Dr. Fletcher. "But, Sir Lancelot, there is surely proof enough——"

"More than enough," said Lancelot, "since I do not mean to use it. I am obliged to you both for the trouble you have taken, but I am sure it will be best to leave things as they are."

"As they are?" ejaculated Dr. Fletcher. "Do you mean that you will not claim your rights—that you will let a fine property and an honourable title slip through your fingers for want of the spirit to fight it out? I tell you this fellow hasn't a leg to stand on. Ask any lawyer you please——"

"You do not understand," interrupted Lancelot, smiling a little at the other's heat. "It is not that I think I could not make good my claim. I have no doubt at all that it is exactly as you say—that I am Vereker of Verecroft, and that Sir Raymond is Giuseppe Balmano—but it would do more harm than good to make it known. Lady Vereker knows nothing, and Sir Raymond is as innocent as herself. They have done me no intentional wrong, and all I have I owe to them. I will not requite their kindness by bringing such sorrow upon them."

"Heaven bless you, my son!" said the little *pasteur* solemnly; but Dr. Fletcher shrugged his shoulders.

"It is an amiable intention," he observed, "but you will probably change your mind when you come to think things over. However, we have done our duty in the matter, and it is for you to decide what course you will take."

"I have decided," said Lancelot gravely. "If the —the mother had lived, it would have been more difficult to see what was right, but now I have no doubt at all."

"Well," said Dr. Fletcher, getting up, "we will leave you the proofs, and you must forgive me if I say that I shall look in the law reports for Vereker *v.* Vereker, and I don't think I shall be disappointed."

"I trust you will give me your word to say nothing on the subject till you do," said Lancelot earnestly.

"With all my heart," said the doctor, shaking his hand.

M. Martel gave his promise too, and Lancelot saw them into the dog-cart they had driven over in, with feelings of inexpressible relief.

"Mind you take care of the papers," Dr. Fletcher called out as they drove away. "Remember, they are all the proofs you have, and some day you may want them."

XUM

Lancelot looked after the cynical doctor and the white-haired minister with a curious, doubtful smile.

"The only proofs," he repeated slowly. Then he decided—rightly or wrongly let the reader judge—what he would do.

He went back to Sir Raymond's room, and took the papers to his own. A few minutes he stood looking at them with a very grave face, and then he laid them in the empty grate, lit a match, and stood by till only a little black film remained.

"Five minutes ago I was Vereker of Verecroft," he thought, with a sigh that was full of pain. "There is nothing hard in *this*—but oh! Avice, my love, my love!"



"He stood by till only a little black film remained."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "BEST GOLD."

"'Tis gold
Which buys admittance."—Shakespeare.

"My dear Hilda," cried Lady Rosalie the next morning, looking up from the depths of an ample easy-chair as Hilda came into the room after her morning walk, "what do you think is the latest piece of news? Guess! I never *was* so delighted in my life."

"I suppose, as you 're so ridiculously excited about it, there 's a wedding on the carpet," said Miss Jackson, sinking into a companion lounge on the opposite side of the fireplace and looking supremely scornful. "Really, Rosalie, what is there to be so

delighted about? I'm thankful to say I don't waste my emotions like that."

"But this is too delightful. I have just been in to the Hermitage, and they tell me Avice is engaged to Sir Raymond Vereker! And oh! my dear, her ring is something past belief."

"A ring already? He must have made pretty sure of her consent!"

"Well—I dare say. He could not help knowing no girl in her senses would refuse a chance like that. But the ring is something magnificent—it couldn't have cost less than three hundred pounds, if I'm any judge of diamonds. I suppose after twenty-one years' minority he has more money than he knows what to do with."

"What does the lady-mother say to it all?"

"Oh, she's all that's sweet, they say. It seems she sent Avice a letter—or a message, I'm not clear which—which really settled it, and Avice and Daisy are going over to spend a week at Verecroft."

"There's promotion for your *protégées!* I wonder if they'll marry Daisy to your friend Lancelot?" said Hilda, with a faint, bitter sneer.

Lady Rosalie sat up and looked at her friend earnestly.

"Hilda, should you mind if I said something—really for your good?"

"Most certainly I should! Never mind my good, please. That's how people always begin to say the most disagreeable things they can think of."

"But do let me, because when people care about anyone, you know, they are so often blind. And since that night at Lord Blackstone's, I have been quite sure that Philip Hallam is in love with Daisy Meredith!"

Hilda flushed darkly.

"He is quite welcome to be, so long as he doesn't marry her, and I don't think he will do that."

"Don't you?"—very doubtfully. "He has money enough for both, I should think, and, though you are always saying no one knows who the Mereditha are, I don't think he's the sort of man to care about that sort of thing."

"He's goose enough for anything, if that's what you mean. But I don't *think* he'll ask Daisy to marry him—and, if he does, I believe she'll refuse."

Lady Rosalie shook her head over her friend's blind infatuation, but Hilda did not attempt to justify her opinion. She had never told Lady Rosalie the story Lord Blackstone had related at Avonmead, or hinted at the explanation it afforded of her own discoveries at the Hermitage. She did not intend to tell it to anyone *yet*. It could do no good, she argued, and would only make Philip Hallam her enemy, while to keep Daisy's unhappy secret would be a claim on his friendship he was not likely to dispute. She had taken care that he should know that Daisy Meredith was Daisy Dalrymple, the forger's daughter, and she thought it quite possible that, in spite of his assertions, he would sacrifice love to pride. It was quite possible that he might not propose to her, and if he did—well! if he did, she had taken measures which she believed would insure the refusal of his offer.

The anonymous letter that had brought such desolation to Daisy's tender heart had been written by Hilda's hand, and she had not miscalculated its effect. She understood that, whatever Captain Hallam might do or say, Daisy would refuse to bring to the man she loved a stained, dishonoured name. She knew, though Lady Rosalie did not, the meaning of Daisy's white, piteous face, of Daisy's sad eyes and vanished smile. She could even afford to pity the suffering she had caused, for she knew that her end was gained.

Lady Rosalie looked at her as she sat thoughtful and silent, and felt very pitiful and sympathetic.

"If you take my advice, Hilda," she said earnestly, "you'll just put Captain Hallam out of your head. He's a flirt, like all those army men——"

"I know, I know," said Hilda impatiently. She knew that Lady Rosalie was thinking of the various captains and lieutenants, and even of a stray colonel or two, who had fallen victims to Hilda's maturing charms, who had ridden and talked and walked with her, and done nothing more. They had cooled off, or gone away, or married someone else; and now Philip Hallam was going to do the same!

"But I did think *he* meant it," said Hilda, forlornly. "I did think I should pull it off this time; and I should, if it hadn't been for that baby-faced chit."

A few slow tears rolled down, and though Hilda would have been the first to sneer at anyone who made a *confidante* of Lady Rosalie, she felt so secure of her sympathy and silence, that she did not even try to hide them.

"Oh, Hilda, you'll be ill!" exclaimed her warm-hearted friend. "I never saw you cry before, and I can't bear to see it. I'll see Captain Hallam—I'll give him a hint——"

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said Miss Jackson, sitting up with great energy. "I won't have you interfering, and spoiling everything with your blunders. If he's really gone, do you think *you* could bring him back?"

"You used to think I was useful," said poor Lady Rosalie, who looked ready to cry herself at this reception of her well-meant offers.

"So you were, to play propriety. I couldn't have walked all the miles I've tramped on the Warwick Road with Captain Hallam alone. I couldn't have gone there continually if you hadn't been so anxious to sketch the Castle, and so interested in that horrid old pensioner's grandchildren—wretched little slobbery things! My velvet mantle will never recover from their sticky paws—and to think that it's all for nothing! The walks we've had, when it was horses' work to keep him good-tempered and amused, the hours we've sat together on those dull, stupid seats, and now to be thrown over like this! I do hate a flirt!"

Lady Rosalie refrained from reminding her friend that it had always been Hilda herself, and not Captain Hallam, who had proposed the walks, and suggested the virtual appointments, and lingered perseveringly on the wayside seats. She was very sorry for Hilda's disappointment, but she was quite aware how much she had brought it upon herself, though she was too good-natured to say so.

"I quite forgot to tell you that I saw the 'Best

Gold' yesterday," she observed irrelevantly. "I met him on the Parade, and he asked as anxiously after your health as if you were a chronic sufferer from a hopeless complication of incurable diseases."

"'The Best Gold?'" said Miss Jackson disdainfully. "Why should you tell *me* that you met him? And why should you call him by that ridiculous name, now we know what his own name is?"

But Lady Rosalie noticed that her friend dried her eyes and listened, in spite of her scornful tones, and launched into details of the meeting in hopes of diverting Hilda's thoughts from the recalcitrant captain.

The "Best Gold" was a tall, fairly good-looking man, with a face as weak as his arms were strong, who appeared in Leamington every year at the annual archery meeting, and distanced all competitors in that once fashionable sport. He had won the prize for the Best Gold so often that Lady Rosalie had dubbed him by that name; but she had known nothing of him personally till last year, when an arrow of his, flying far beyond its mark, had transfixed a little dog of Miss Jackson's that had strayed on to the course, and the Best Gold's regret had been so sincere, and his sympathy so respectfully effusive, that a sort of acquaintance had arisen. His name, he told the ladies of the Rosery, was Ruggles, and he further informed them that he was in the Commissariat Department, and had a house and grounds at Clapham. He had a slight tendency to lengthen his vowels and clip the ends of his words, but his manners were better than his accent, and he sent Miss Jackson a dog, who was as famous at dog-shows as his master was at archery meetings, to console her for the loss of her own. The fair Hilda had been graciously pleased to accept it, and on his next arrival in Leamington, Mr. Ruggles had called at the Rosery to inquire after the welfare of his canine friend, and had displayed a praiseworthy appreciation of its new owner's charms. But if Mr. Ruggles was an admirer, he was much too conscious of his own deficiencies to offer more than a silent and respectful worship. He gazed on Hilda with lack-lustre eyes, and sighed like a veritable furnace; but it was Lady Rosalie he talked to, and though it had become a joke at the Rosery to allude to him as "Hilda's latest," there was enough suspicion of social inferiority to make it the emptiest of jests. That he should be seriously brought forward as a consolation for Captain Hallam's defection was trying to Miss Jackson's temper and exasperating to her pride, and when it was evident that Lady Rosalie had nothing more to tell, she fell upon her for having told anything at all.

"But you never have any proper pride," she said, in an injured tone. "You are always so ready to take people up without knowing anything about them. Look at those Meredith girls! And now, I suppose, you want to send a card to this Ruggles for your musical on Tuesday, though you know he'll sit like a dummy all the evening, and everyone will wonder where you picked him up."

To do Lady Rosalie justice, the idea of inviting Mr. Ruggles for Tuesday had never entered her head; but now she looked at her friend's inscrutable face inquiringly. Some experience of Hilda's little ways had shown her that it was not safe to accept her remarks too literally.

"I can ask him, of course, if you like."

"If *I* like!" cried Miss Jackson. "Don't make me the screen for your own absurdities, if you please. You've evidently taken a fancy to the man, though I believe he never had a grandfather, and isn't even steady on his h's, and it isn't for me to interfere. All I say is, ask him if you choose; but don't mix *me* up in the matter."

Hilda sailed away majestically, and Lady Rosalie looked after her with a very puzzled expression. Then she went to her davenport, and took out a card announcing that Lady Rosalie Finch would be "at home" on Tuesday, July 11th, from 8 to 11 o'clock, and inscribed Mr. Ruggles' name upon it, addressing the envelope to "— Ruggles, Esq., Clarendon Hotel."

It was a very ornamental card, with finches perched upon rosebuds outlined in gold upon it, and in one corner it bore the word "Music" on a rose carried in a finch's beak, and in the other the letters "R.S.V.P."

Mr. Ruggles was pleased to respond immediately, and when the 11th arrived, he appeared at the Rosery as the clock struck eight. He was the first arrival, and was shown into an empty drawing-room, where the lamps burnt dimly under their rose-coloured shades, and the pink candles, held by quite an aviary of ormolu finches, were not even lit.

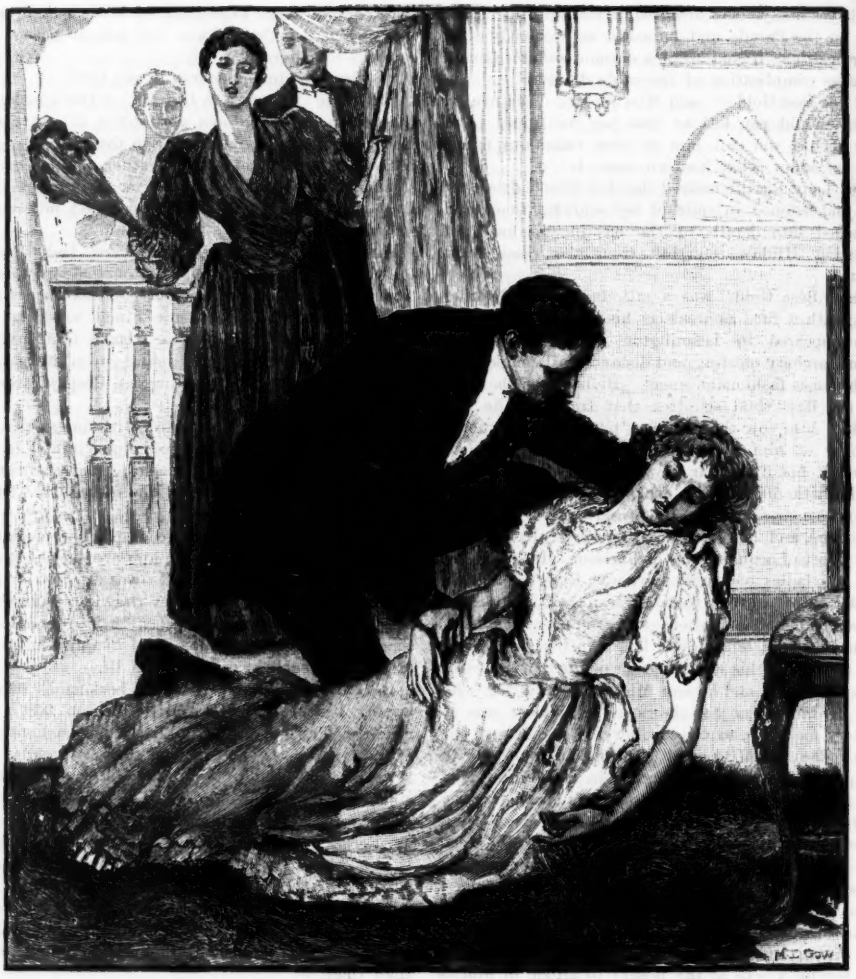
Lady Rosalie was not dressed, her maid's services having been required by Miss Jackson till a few minutes ago; but Hilda presently appeared with her friend's apologies, and as she lit the candles and turned up the lamps, she reduced Mr. Ruggles to abject despair by the elegance of her costume and the hauteur of her manner.

"For if I don't take care," thought Miss Jackson, with a shudder, as she felt the rapturous pressure of Mr. Ruggles' huge hand, "he'll be proposing to me before the evening's over. It's all very well to let him come, and there's the off-chance of making Philip Hallam jealous, but it mustn't go any further than that."

If Captain Hallam had been inclined to be jealous of another aspirant to Miss Jackson's favour, he had certainly every excuse for being so to-night. The party from Avonmead arrived before Lady Rosalie had scrambled into her gown, and found Hilda and Mr. Ruggles *tête-à-tête* in the drawing-room, while Mr. Ruggles' manifest confusion as he was introduced to them, suggested the possibility that they had interrupted a conversation of more than usual interest.

That the worthy man's embarrassment was due entirely to shyness and *gaucherie* was not likely to strike those who saw the tall and stalwart Ruggles for the first time; but, indeed, Captain Hallam did not trouble himself to seek for an explanation.

Hilda Jackson was at liberty to grant *tête-à-têtes* to whomsoever she would, as far as he was concerned. He was not even thinking about her; he was looking impatiently at the door, and wondering when Daisy Meredith would come in.



"Found Daisy in a dead faint on the floor, and Captain Hallam bending over her."—*p.* 450.

CHAPTER XXII.

DAISY.

"Of all the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures white and rede,
Soch that men callen daisies in our toun."—CHAUCER.

LADY ROSALIE'S musicals were generally a success. Her bright audacity carried her through difficulties that appalled other hostesses, and enabled her to say things to touchy amateurs for the merest hinting of which by anyone else they would have cut their nearest and dearest friends.

"*Seven* minutes," she said appealingly to the double-bass, a little man who seemed a sort of adjunct to his own enormous fiddle, and who, when he once got the bow in his hand, never let anyone off under a quarter of an hour. "*Seven* minutes, my dear Mr. Weber, is as much as anyone will stand in social little evenings like mine. Whatever you play will be delightful, I know, and Hilda and I will enjoy it thoroughly, but strings are *caviare* to so many people. A ballad that makes them cry, or a waltz they can beat time to, is what goes down best. You must come in some night when we're alone, and give Hilda and me a *real* treat; but seven minutes must really be the limit to-night."

Mr. Weber sighed and laid down the Adagio in E, which always took twelve minutes, even when the *tempo* was hurried a little, as it was apt to be at the finish. People *would* talk, and by the time ten minutes had elapsed there was generally a babel of

voices, which made Mr. Weber as anxious to reach the end as his audience was for him to do so. But to-night Lady Rosalie prevailed, and Mr. Weber played a gavotte that kept well within the allotted time, to Mr. Ruggles' great relief.

"I couldn't have stood it another minute," he said to Miss Jackson in a loud aside. "It was nearly as bad as bagpipes, wasn't it?"

"You don't appreciate the double-bass, I 'm afraid?"

"No, I don't! If people want to make a noise of that sort, I think they ought to go into an empty room and do it. I felt like the Northern Farmer when he heard the parson 'a-bummin' away' over his head. It was all very fine, I dare say, but you see it went over mine."

"Oh, hush!" said Hilda imploringly. "Miss Meredith is going to sing now, and I 'm sure you 'll like that."

Avice and Daisy had come in during the "bummin'" of the double-bass, and sat down by Lady Rosalie. The Verekers were not going out at present, so Sir Raymond was not with them; but everyone knew of the engagement, and looked with more or less interest at Avice as she stood up to sing.

"A fine haughty madam she 'll be when she 's 'my lady,'" Mr. Ruggles opined; but there was something in the proud beautiful face that went to kind Lord Blackstone's heart.

"What has that girl been doing to herself?" muttered the old man. "She looks—*where* have I seen a look like that before?"

"I don't know—but I know where *I* have," said his son. "There was a poor young sub at Isandula who was shot, standing next to me. The bullet hit some vital part, and the wound scarcely bled—but it killed him for all that. I don't know where the likeness comes in, but it 's there."

"Ah, I can understand what you mean. And I remember what I was thinking of myself—I suppose from talking of it the other night—and that was the face of a man named Dalrymple whom I tried for forgery when you were a bit of a lad. She 's been hard hit somehow or other, you may depend."

Captain Hallam did not answer. He had said nothing to his father of the identity of the Merediths with the Dalrymples, and the reference to the likeness struck him with additional force. Somehow he felt that it would be more difficult than ever to tell him that he meant to marry the forger's daughter. He said nothing, but he looked across at the corner where Daisy was sitting by Lady Rosalie's side.

She was looking prettier and more like a daisy than ever, he thought; but what a pensive, white little daisy it was! How low she hung her head, how pale she was, how persistently she kept her eyes upon the ground. Just once she looked up and encountered his, and Captain Hallam felt that the sudden colour in her cheeks was the prettiest thing he had ever seen.

"Wee, modest crimson-tippéd flower!" The enraptured young man quoted the words to himself, and wished that Lady Rosalie would not crowd her rooms so ridiculously, or that Daisy would have chosen a reasonable seat, instead of getting into a corner where it was impossible to get near her without disarranging half a dozen dowagers, and upsetting as many more.

But at last there was a move in the direction of the dining-room—where ices, and elegant sandwiches no bigger than a good-sized domino, and delicate whips and creams, and subtly flavoured jellies, were set out on finely broidered napery, with sparkle and glitter of silver and softened glimmer of richly chased glass—and Philip seized his opportunity, and, making his way to Daisy, offered her his arm. But to his surprise, she half shrank back.

"What is the matter?" he asked bluntly. "You are not well to-night, I am sure."

"Yes, oh yes!" faltered Daisy. "I 'm quite well, but I don't think I want any supper, thank you."

"Nonsense! You must come and have a sandwich, and some of the famous jelly. Lady Rosalie always has wonderful jelly, and you 'll feel twice as fit after it."

She stood up obediently, but she looked so white and trembling, he suddenly changed his mind.

"Sit down again," he ordered her. "I 'll bring you something here."

He came back with his hands full, and as Daisy saw the pains he had taken to choose whatever he thought she would like best, she had much ado to keep the tears from her voice and eyes.

"Why did you take so much trouble?" she said reproachfully. Would he have done it, she wondered, if he had known who she was?

"Why?" he said gravely. "Don't you know why, Daisy? Trouble! I wish I could take trouble for you—that I could take all your troubles on my own shoulders, and come between you and sorrow all your life. Won't you let me try, dear? I 'm only a rough sort of a fellow, but I love you dearly, and I 'd do my very best——"

She put out her hand with a strange shrinking he never forgot.

"I know," she gasped, "but, Captain Hallam, you mustn't talk like that. I can't hear you—I *mustn't* —and it would be no use, indeed."

"No use?" said the captain blankly. "Do you mean that—that you can't like me, Daisy? Oh, my little girl——"

"Don't!" said Daisy piteously; "*please* don't say any more. I 'm very sorry to vex you, when you 've always been so kind; but I can't help it, indeed."

The blue eyes were welling over with tears, and the trembling fingers were tearing a lace handkerchief to pieces, in evident unconsciousness of the mischief they were doing. If it were not for the bracing consciousness of neighbouring eyes, Daisy would have wept outright; but she glanced at the hall, where people were sitting about, eating ices and cakes, and forced back her tears. Philip stood looking down at her in utter perplexity. He had not thought that when he tried to tell his love, she would meet him like this.

Suddenly it flashed into his mind that perhaps Hilda Jackson had told her the hideous story of her father's sin and shame. It would account, he felt, for her sister's altered looks as well as for her own —only could Hilda, could any woman, be so cruel and so base?

"Has Miss Jackson been talking to you?" he asked, feeling that he must be wronging Hilda by the suspicion, but unable to rest without knowing all he could. "Has she told you—has she said anything that has made you alter your mind?"

He did not think, in his simplicity, how clearly he was showing that he had expected a different answer; and Daisy, simple and earnest as himself, never even noticed the bearing of his words.

"I have not seen Hilda since that night," she said. To both of them there was only one night in their thoughts, the night when they had stood together under the trees at Avonmead. How sure Philip had been then that his love was returned—how inexplicable it seemed to find that it was not!

"It is not Miss Jackson, then?" he said slowly. "Would you mind telling me what it is, and why I am refused?"

She looked at him earnestly. "I can never tell you that," she said, in low, troubled tones. "Please do not ask me any more."

"Is it that you do not care for me?"

Daisy looked at him despairingly, but it was evident he meant to have a reply.

"I—I suppose so," she said desperately, feeling that only so could she silence him, and that she could not bear much more. He drew back, with a bow whose coldness cut her to the heart, and Daisy stood up trembling like a leaf.

"I must go home," she said, going to the window that opened on to the verandah. "Don't come, please; it is only a step."

But it was a step she had not strength to take. The people just then flocking in from supper found Daisy in a dead faint on the floor, and Captain Hallam bending over her with a distracted face that was almost as white as her own.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I PROMESSI SPOSI.

"I cannot love him;
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth."

SHAKESPEARE.

"WELCOME to Verecroft!" said Lady Vereker, as Sir Raymond handed his *fiancée* from the carriage, and put her into his mother's arms, while he turned to assist Daisy to descend.

"Jump out, Daisy," he cried gaily.—"Here, mother, is a little white morsel who is to get quite fat and rosy with your good country cream. She looks like a 'snow-wreath in thaw,' doesn't she? but we'll soon have her roses back."

"I hope so, indeed," said Lady Vereker, kissing her pale little guest, and leading the way to the house.

But Sir Raymond hurried on first, and stood just inside the great door of the hall to receive them.

"Welcome to Verecroft!" he said in his turn, doffing his hat, and bending low to kiss Avice's hand. "My Avice. I never knew how proud I was to be Vereker of Verecroft till now that I bid you welcome here."

"Don't," she said faintly—"don't be too kind. I feel sometimes as if I could not bear it."

He looked at her with a proud, fond glance she did not know how to meet.

"Too kind! How could anyone be that to *you*? —Mother, do you hear the treason she is talking? Come and scold her for me, and bring her to repentance."

"Do you think I could scold anything so much taller than myself?" said Lady Vereker, smiling. "I'm afraid you will have to do that yourself, Ray, if —if Avice ever wants it."

She brought out the Christian name a little shyly, glancing up at the tall fair-haired girl, whose head was so nearly on a level with Raymond's own, and whose silence seemed a little chilling to the gentle, effusive woman who would have liked to pet and fondle her, and perhaps to weep a few happy tears over the girl her Raymond loved.

"Will you come and have some tea before you go up to your rooms?" Lady Vereker asked, moving towards the beautiful carved mantelpiece, under which, in winter, huge fires roared and blazed, but that was now a miniature conservatory of choice flowers and delicate foreign ferns. A Japanese screen, gorgeous with heavy gold dragons and impossible birds, worked on a background of dull black satin, shut off the corner of the hall where the little bamboo tea-table stood, and three or four low and luxurious chairs were placed invitingly round it.

Avice sat down and looked round her like one in a dream. It was not the unaccustomed splendour that oppressed her, it was the thought that this was her future home, that the young man beside her was the lord of her life and being, her husband that was to be. Would she, *could* she ever love him as she ought? If she had doubted it before, how could she help doubting it now, when every feeling seemed concentrated in the thought that this was Lancelot's home also, and every sense absorbed in listening for the step that did not come? If once the meeting was over, she could bear it better, she thought; and then she despised herself for owning, even to herself, that there could be anything to bear. What was Lancelot Vereker to her, but a man who had proved his indifference by pleading his cousin's cause? Why could she not forget him and be satisfied with the love that was poured so freely at her feet?

"And I will, God helping me!" she thought reverently, and lifting her eyes to Raymond's with a look so humble and pleading and sweet that Lady Vereker decided she had been quite mistaken in thinking her future daughter-in-law was proud and cold.

The hall at Verecroft was the favourite family gathering-place, and very bright and pleasant it looked this afternoon, with the cozy little party gathered round the tea-table, and the sunbeams pouring in at the open door and shining on the polished oaken floor, on the burnished shields and ancient weapons on the walls, and on the figures clad in panoply of plate-armour and coats of mail that lined the sides of the hall and seemed to guard the door.

"I must show you all these things to-morrow," Sir Raymond said eagerly. "There's the armour a Vereker wore at Flodden; and do you see that inlaid suit on the

right of the door? A Vereker fought and fell in that at Naseby, and I dare say little thought a degenerate descendant would stick it up as an ornament in the old home."

"Which Vereker was that?"

"He was Lancelot Vereker, a Gentleman Usher at Court, and as like our Lance as one man can be like another. If Lance put himself in hose and doublet and got a big-plumed Cavalier hat, you 'd think he had walked straight out of the picture-frame in the Gallery.—By the way, mother, where is Lance? I thought he always turned up to put the sugar in your tea."

"Lance is my right hand," explained Lady Vereker to Avice, "and Ray is just a wee bit jealous, I believe. He need not be," she added, with a tender smile. "If Lance is my right hand, Ray is the very core of my heart."

Lance was coming in as she spoke, and the last words reached his ear as he approached the corner shut off by the flying dragons and open-mouthed birds. He knew how true they were; how, even with Lady Vereker, his must always be the second place. To her he was only her right hand; the "core of her heart" was Giuseppe Balmano, the peasant-woman's son. The core of her heart! If anything was needed to justify the decision he had made, it was this involuntary proof how entirely the heart of the woman who had been as a mother to him was bound up in the man she believed to be her son. Lancelot vowed again as he came across the pleasant, sunny hall, where his own forefathers had feasted and made merry, and passed in and out to field or foray or hunt, that she should never know her Raymond was neither kith nor kin of theirs.

But, as he had said, this was not the hardest thing. It was not difficult, with that tender unconscious pleading in his ears, to renew the vow that cut him off from his fathers' heritage, even in this their hall; what was difficult, what tried his manhood and brought an almost audible prayer for help and strength to his lips, was the sight of Avice sitting by his cousin's side, of Raymond bending towards her with the air of proud proprietorship that marks the happy lover. No one saw him for a moment, but Avice heard his step and turned her head.

"Lance at last!" Sir Raymond cried, looking in the direction of her glance. "Here he is, Avice—the best and dearest cousin and friend a man ever had! You must love him, for my sake, as we all do here."

He was so radiant with happiness, he wanted to include his cousin in it, to win for him some portion of Avice's regard, to make her understand that this was no ordinary cousin, but a man to be loved as a brother by them all. He was a little disappointed that she only shook hands with grave formality, and turned away with a face from which the light and colour seemed to have faded together.

"How cold it is!" she said with a little shiver, and Lady Vereker began to inquire anxiously if she had been wrapped up for the drive, and insisted on her having another cup of tea.

There was a little desultory talk, and then Lady Vereker took her guests to their room, and left them together, telling them they both looked tired, and would be the better for a rest before they began to dress for dinner.

"I have asked no one to meet you," she said. "Our mourning prevents that; and, besides, I wanted to have you to ourselves. We have to learn to know each other, have we not, my dear? But that will not be difficult, with Ray for our interpreter."

Perhaps Lady Vereker spoke a little more confidently than she felt. There was something about Avice—a pensiveness in the deep grey eyes, a mournful droop in the beautiful mouth—that she felt she did not understand, that seemed incongruous in the first flush of a girl's engagement to the man of her choice. That he was not the man of her choice was an idea that could not possibly present itself to Lady Vereker. She fell back on the shyness of first coming, and perhaps some natural anxiety on her sister's account, in which she was not far wrong. For Daisy was manifestly ailing, if she was not ill. She had given no explanation of her fainting-fit at Lady Rosalie's; but Avice could not help connecting it with Captain Hallam, and felt sure that some great sorrow had fallen on her sister's life. Was it, could it be possible, that Daisy also had loved without a return? The remembrance of Philip Hallam's unmistakable attentions seemed to contradict the thought; but Avice could not forget that he had the reputation of being a flirt, and admitted that Lancelot was perhaps mistaken.

She spoke of him no more to Lancelot, whom, indeed, she never saw except when others were by; but she told Sir Raymond all about it, and was comforted that he seemed to think as highly of Daisy's hero as Lancelot had done.

"You may depend upon it, they've had a tiff," Sir Raymond said confidently. "If ever I saw a fellow in love, it was Hallam, and yet he's talking of going off to Egypt. If that doesn't mean a row of some sort, I don't know what does."

"Daisy would have told me. She never had a secret from me in her life."

"It doesn't follow she hasn't now. I wonder if you always told her everything about *me?*"

Avice's eyes fell. It was all so different, and it was so impossible to explain. She could not tell Sir Raymond that Love's sacred seal of silence had never been set upon his name, even though she knew that her silence now implied that it had; but the remembrance of the reticence that had closed her lips to the utterance of his cousin's made her feel that he was probably right about Daisy. It was difficult to think of Daisy as anything but a candid and artless child, but Avice owned, with a guilty flush, that if Daisy loved Captain Hallam, she was not likely to confess her feelings to her sister's ear.

It made the elder sister very tender to the younger, who seemed to droop from day to day. Daisy had none of the proud endurance which enabled Avice to hide her wounds beneath a cloak of indifference and even of gaiety. She had found strength to refuse her lover, but she could not find strength either to forget him or to bear the burden of life without him. She was distressed, too, by troubles at which Avice could not even guess. Was it, could it be right, for

Avice to marry Sir Raymond Vereker? Was not he as honourable a gentleman as Philip Hallam, with lineage as spotless and name as stainless and pure? If she had given up her own lover rather than bring to him their heritage of shame, ought she to stand by and see Avice—dear, unconscious Avice!—take it to this other man? Daisy would have liked to be able to tell him all, and she felt that if Avice only knew, that was what she would do. But her mother had decided otherwise, and Daisy was too obedient and too distrustful of her own judgment to do more than wonder and repine. She kept her dismal secret, but it weighed sorely on her spirits and her health. She thought of Philip Hallam through the long summer days, and wept for him in the silent watches of the night, and at the end of the week Sir Raymond was obliged to admit that Daisy was no rosier for Verecroft air and no fatter for Lady Vereker's famous cream.

Lady Vereker insisted on keeping her guests for another week. She had grown very fond of Daisy, and had an artless faith in country air, while she hoped, with almost pathetic hopefulness, that a longer stay would draw closer to her the heart of her future daughter. She would love the beautiful, incomprehensible girl, with her smiles and her jests and her great mournful eyes, so dearly, if she would only let her! It was no longer possible to think that the vague, intangible something that came between them was the shyness of first acquaintance. Avice was evidently quite at ease in her future home. She talked freely enough to Lady Vereker, and was so sweet and complaisant to Sir Raymond that even his mother could find no fault; and yet the poor lady felt in her heart that something was wanting, that something was amiss. Under all Avice's ready speech was a depth of reserve Lady Vereker found it impossible to penetrate. She had no suspicion of the truth. Avice and Lancelot seldom met except at meals, for Lancelot, on the plea of business, kept much in his own room, and when they were together each was distant and reserved. Lancelot was faithful to the resolution he had made, and Avice was only anxious to show him that she was as indifferent to him as he could possibly be to her.

"I wish you would be a little more cordial to Lance," Sir Raymond said one day, in quite a hurt tone. "He is such a good fellow, Avice—won't you try and like him for my sake?"

Avice promised with burning cheeks and a bitter feeling of humiliation in her heart, and began to talk of something else. She could not talk of Lancelot, and she knew it would not have been right or wise, even if she could have nerved herself to do so. She did not want to talk or to think about him, she only wanted to forget him, and to do her duty to the man whose wife she had promised to be. The daily strain of Lancelot's presence seemed intolerable. It was almost a relief to hear that he was going up to town for a few days; but when he had gone, she was frightened to feel how blank her life had suddenly become. Was this forgetting—and would she ever learn to forget?

(To be continued.)

THE HUGUENOT ADMIRAL.

ONE of the most remarkable instances of the growth of religious toleration in France is the monument to Coligny, lately erected in the heart of Paris.

Unveiled on the 17th of July, 1889, this statue is placed at the east end of the Church of the Oratoire, in the Rue de Rivoli, near the Louvre, and is one of the most artistic productions of modern times.

In 1884 a joint committee in Paris and London was formed to raise the needful funds, and many successful meetings were held in England—at Harrow, and in the Hall of Westminster School, with Lord Kinnaird and other friends interested in the movement. To these efforts, Pasteur Bersier, D.D.,* of Paris, lent his eloquent and powerful aid, and delivered an historical oration on the occasion above mentioned.

The French Government gave the site and permission to erect, and, as far as known, the monument stands on the spot where the Admiral fell wounded in the St. Bartholomew massacre of the 24th of August, 1572.

The elegant and striking composition of the group cannot fail to attract attention—at the base are two draped figures, Religion and Patriotism; between them, the open Bible—on the left-hand page of which is a part of the 6th verse of Psalm cxii.: "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance;" and on the other page a quotation from Hebrews xi. 27: "He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Beneath the base is an inscription copied from Coligny's will. The sculptor is M. Crauk, and the architect M. Scellier. The dates 1517–1572 indicate the birth and death of the Admiral.

An American writer, Dr. John Hall, of New York, who lately visited Paris, remarks:—"As one looks at the interesting groups who stop and study the figure and inscriptions, the wish cannot be repressed—'Oh, that fair France comprehended all that this suggests, and sought inspiration and stability from

* While writing this the news was received of the great loss by the death of this distinguished preacher.

"La Sainte Bible"!'" The historical associations of this monument are wide and various: in the relations of Admiral Coligny with England; his brother, Odet de Coligny, a resident here; in the warm reception given him by Queen Elizabeth; and in the close alliance then existing between English and French history.

Odet, Cardinal Châtillon, lived some years in this country, and received special marks of royal favour. Welcomed on his arrival by Sir Thomas Gresham (the founder of the old Royal Exchange destroyed in the fire of 1666), Cardinal Châtillon was much connected with the annals of London, and his position as ambassador contributed greatly to his popularity.

His death at Canterbury, suspected to be due to poisoning, leaves a sad memory of his residence; but at the east end of that glorious Minster, a small and unpretending brick tomb marks the resting-place of the brother of the good Admiral. Few of us, perhaps, have visited the town of Châtillon-sur-Loire, in Eastern France, whose feudal castle was the home of the patriot statesman Coligny. There, safe from the assaults of political and party strife, his leisure was spent, and we may judge from his biographer, Dr. Bersier, of its character, for he has said: "Coligny presented the noble example of a pure and beautiful home-life, in which austerity of purpose was blended with the utmost tenderness of heart—an example rare indeed in that dissolute age." His public life was full of eventful circumstances—the struggle of political factions, the rise of the Reformed faith, and other stirring incidents, crowded his chequered career.



THE COLIGNY MEMORIAL. CHURCH OF THE ORATOIRE, RUE DE RIVOLI, PARIS.)

(From a Photograph.)

Brought up in the midst of a Court headed by Margaret of Navarre and Jeanne d'Albret, true friends of Protestantism, it is not surprising to have from the pen of our well-known author, Walter Besant, the remark—

"Let it be remembered to the praise of Coligny, that he was one of the noble army of reformers who have toiled to remove from the neck of mankind the intolerable yoke of sacerdotalism."

In 1552 Coligny was made Admiral, and attained great favour at Court; he was also at one time Governor of Picardy, and had the charge of enterprises in Brazil and Florida, with a view to improve the condition of colonial France. In his own country he was engaged in several actions, and undertook the relief of St. Quentin in 1557.

By his adherence to the Protestant faith, he lost much of his earthly power and glory, but obtained for France religious liberty until the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The death of Coligny called forth in other lands an unveiled expression of horror. Queen Elizabeth received the news with the Court attired in mourning; while the University of Cambridge was roused to a greater spirit of Protestantism by the events of the St. Bartholomew ushered in by this tragic occurrence. Posterity has not yet, perhaps, judged his full merits, but even Bossuet said: "All the attempts made to decry the Admiral have only rendered his memory more illustrious." In the story of his changeful life are woven the most stirring scenes in French history, while the regard Coligny earned with other nations secured for him a widespread sympathy. "Englishmen came to fight under the banners of the man who most commanded the attention, the respect, and the admiration of the world. There was no one like him, not one—even among our Elizabethan heroes—so true and loyal, so religious and so steadfast, as the great Admiral. He has become a proverb for fidelity, honesty, and courage. His name has sunk into the hearts of Frenchmen more than that of any other man."

When the world's Universal Exhibition of 1889 shall have faded from the memories of Paris, there will still remain this beautiful monument as a cherished link between the past and present of Protestant France.

S. W. KERSHAW, F.S.A.

IN THE NIGHT WATCHES.

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



A PREACHER, taking for his text, "He giveth His beloved sleep," remarked that the blessing of this heavenly bestowment can only be fully realised by those who know what it means to crave for sleep in vain. Sleep, "the certain knot of peace, the balm of woe," is the Master's tender gift to mortal weariness; but sometimes He holds our eyes waking, and in the night watches we do more than listen to the striking of the hours, the baying of the watch-dogs—more than lie still and long for the morning. Whether quiet or restless, if our eyes be held wakeful, we can meditate on Him Who doth not slumber, Whose presence is with us though our dear ones are wrapped in sleep. "Jesus seems so near in the darkness, I am never alone," said an invalid girl who knows little of sleep. Her bright, sweet face, smiling like a white rose, witnessed that she heard the Master's voice and shared His benedictions even in the watches of the night.

A great many remedies are suggested for restlessness, which in many a case has been caused by giving way to anxious and foreboding thoughts, indulging in such mental worry by day that night is a time of tossing and unrest. While the night-dews fall and the stars are shining, let us in spirit steal amid the quietude to Him Who is Eternal Light, the Giver of calm, the Divine Comforter; let us remember the Lord in the stillness, and we shall prove it true that

> "Darkness shows us worlds of light
> We never saw by day."

Let us think, alone with Jesus, what He *is*, in Whom is all the fulness of God. "I will strip thee of all earthly comforts," said a persecutor once to a Christian martyr. "Christ is mine," was the answer, "you *cannot* strip me of Him." Christ is yours, friend, yours through the darkest shadow—Christ, Who is Rest and Refuge, the King of Kings, the great Physician. Money cannot purchase rest, but it comes to you with Jesus; there is no pillow so comforting as the Redeemer's love, and on this you may trustfully repose. Someone asked a poor infirm old man, "Do you think you can rest a little now?"—"It is *all* rest," he said, "because God's arms are beneath me." Soul, return unto thy rest in the power and mercy of thy Lord! let not worries for yourself and your dear ones, worries for to-morrow, worries as to basket and store, worries because laid by from work and Christian service outside, keep you fretful, uneasy, disturbed. If you cannot sleep, turn your thoughts from these matters to Jesus, the dark world's Light. "I will give you rest," He promises; then open wide your heart and let Him fill it with His bestowment of quietude, calming, consolation, rest. Think of the Master as your *Refuge*. Many troubles may beset you and more may seem to threaten you, but you can in quietness and confidence flee unto Him to hide you through every calamity; for the shadow of His wing is able to cover you in the hour that most you fear. Just as in the lighthouse-tower the men are safe though the billows roar around, just as those souls in the Ark were safe of old, though the floods overwhelmed the earth, so you are perfectly secure by day, by night, for time, for eternity, in Jesus, your Refuge and your Strength.

What comfort there is in thinking of Him also as the King of Kings, Sovereign over all, ruling all things, appointing all things, making all things work together for good to those that love Him! The Master's sceptre is over all—sunshine and shade obey His control, and His Kingdom is everlasting, so that nothing ever *can* occur to you, save by the will of that Good Shepherd Who can only lead your life aright. I read once of a dark room in which, inscribed in luminous paint, the words shone out gloriously, "*Trust in the Lord.*" Thinking of Jesus, do we not seem to catch that message of faith, even though the shades remain? Remember in the quietude how near is the Great Physician. Nothing seems closer to you perhaps than your pain, yet His sympathy is nearer still. Miss Havergal reminds us that sometimes it seems hard to make even the doctor understand just how we feel, for words cannot quite convey our infirmities. But the Great Physician is *touched with the feeling* of what we have to bear; we know *He* understands, cares for us, stands close beside us in His love and strength and helpfulness. Oh, Thou Physician of body and soul! hold my fevered hands, bedew my heart with Thy graciousness, whisper to me of Thy presence; so shall I even in darkness renew my strength, "when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches."

A BROKEN ENGAGEMENT.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT JANE'S NIECES," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.



"DON'T you think, Mrs. Grey, that the town ought to present a handsome testimonial to the Fairfax girls for giving us all something to talk about, this dull time of the year? They have been quite a boon—really most interesting! Now might not our gratitude take the form of a wedding-present to Cecilia, something graceful and appropriate—Fame with a trumpet, poised on the knob of a butter-dish lid, or——"

"I beg your pardon, Janet," said Mrs. Grey; "I did not hear the first part of your sentence—only something about Cecilia and a butter-dish! I couldn't give that, you know, dear; it is so hackneyed. When is it to be? Not before the end of October, I do hope, because I cannot get the girls' winter things till then, and Mr. Grey would not be able to take me up to London twice. Is crimson to be worn, Janet?—Thank you, Miss Marsden, I will take another cup; we cannot taste such delicious tea anywhere else, direct from China; and your nephew, of course, would see that what he sends you had none of those dreadful adulterations that Mr. Grey so frightens me with."

Reader, will you join the Misses Marsden's "few friends for afternoon tea, and a little music?" The French windows are wide open this warm September day, and if you find the chat a little too gossiping, or the music not classical enough for your correct ear, you can make your escape, and enjoy, undisturbed, the sweet old garden, and your own more congenial society. But let me introduce you first to the ladies in the drawing-room. Our hostesses are the daughters of the late Admiral Marsden, and to have the *entrée* to their house is, as no doubt Mrs. Ashby will tell you in a few minutes, to belong to the *élite* (a favourite word of hers) of Milltown society. This is Mrs. Scott, with her daughter Janet; Mrs. Grey, the banker's wife; those shy girls in the corner are Adela and Susan Ogden, from the rectory; Mrs. Ashby and Miss Browne complete the party. Ah! Mrs. Ashby knows you by name *so* well! Has so often heard you mentioned by Mrs. Granville, of "The Mount"! How very nice! Pray take that easy-chair, and a cup of Miss Marsden's famous tea. We are all ladies, you see: but then, as Miss Elizabeth has just been saying, that makes conversation so chatty and comfortable!

"I confess," Miss Elizabeth remarks, "that I was quite unprepared to hear of Cecilia's engagement to Maynard Williams. Sophia has so much more penetration. She said, directly, she had expected it months ago, though she had not mentioned it to me. Dear girl! she will make an excellent wife, I am sure!"

"Perhaps so," said Miss Browne, dubiously. "Her sister Kitty has far more style and elegance; though, of course, that would have been rather thrown away. Young Williams will not be able to entertain much! Very rash to think of marrying on such an income!"

"I cannot agree with you there," said Miss Elizabeth (she is a little sentimental). "Young people of this generation waste so many happy years. Our parents were satisfied with small incomes, love, and health. I never approve of long engagements; though of course, Janet, I should never sanction imprudence. Now will you give us a little music?"

"Adela and Susan have brought a lovely new duet," said Janet, who never played if she could help it. "I can make myself useful at the tea-table."

And when the Misses Ogden were fairly launched on the troubled waters of their sixteen-page duet, conversation went on more briskly than ever.

"A most extraordinary piece of good fortune," said Mrs. Ashby, "for Miss Gordon to get both those girls off her hands; though one questions if Mrs. Galbraith will be able to put up with Kitty's airs and conceit. *I* consider she *daubs*, and only wonder, Mrs. Grey, that you dared to entrust your sweet, talented little Elsie to her. A thorough foundation in drawing is everything, as Mrs. Granville says, and she is, as you know, an authority in art."

"And I am happy to tell you," put in Miss Marsden, breaking off her conversation with Mrs. Grey, "that Mrs. Granville only yesterday expressed herself as charmed with a sketch that I showed her—a picturesque old farmhouse with a pine wood in the background—Miss Fairfax's parting gift to me; I sent it this morning to be framed, or I should have asked for your valuable criticism," she added.

"Most likely Mr. Galbraith had touched it up before you had the sketch," returned Mrs. Ashby. "I have been thinking, Mrs. Scott, how your daughter Mary would have appreciated such a delightful trip as Kitty will have."

"Until a girl's mind is stored with fact and history, and matured by thought, Mrs. Ashby," said Mrs. Scott, "a visit to Italy is utterly wasted upon her."

"Poor Miss Gordon!" said Janet; "how dull she will be without Cecilia."

"She appealed to her in the most ridiculous way. Cecilia took the lead in everything; no doubt a little envy is mixed with regret—it must be trying to see her niece's engagement running so smoothly—such a contrast to her own!" said Mrs. Ashby.

"Was Miss Gordon once engaged to be married?" asked Mrs. Scott, drawing up her chair. Miss Browne set down her cup, and became all attention, as she said—"I constantly hinted that more inquiry should have been made about her, coming all the way from Edinburgh; though we all felt that if Miss Marsden was satisfied, we must be; but *you* knew nothing of this engagement, dear Miss Elizabeth?"

Miss Elizabeth blushed guiltily, and looked appealingly at her sister.

"Is it likely, Miss Browne, that an attractive young woman like Jane Gordon should have escaped all the worry of lovers and suitors? They say every woman, however plain, has at least one chance of making herself miserable, you know; but there may be an exception now and then, perhaps," said Miss Marsden, fixing her eyes absently on Miss Browne's new heliotrope bonnet.

"But Miss Gordon was jilted; of course I could not tell you all particulars, though it has been more than hinted to me," said Mrs. Ashby, pursing her thin lips, and leaning back in an emphatic way on her cushions.

A fearful duel of chromatic scales here took place on the piano. Miss Browne, who was a little deaf, tried in vain to catch Miss Marsden's indignant protest.

"Well," she heard Mrs. Ashby say spitefully, as Susan at last gave up the contest, and allowed her sister to run away alone, "Well, Miss Marsden, Mr. Malyon, who, from what I hear, could not be sufficiently thankful for his narrow escape, will be staying next week at Mrs. Granville's, and, I know on the best authority, is quite ignorant of Miss Gordon's whereabouts. A pic-nic to the Abbey ruins is talked of; how dreadfully embarrassing it would be for them to meet! Good-bye, Miss Marsden, I see Mrs. Grey is rising. Mrs. Scott, must you go? and Miss Browne, too! Don't let me break up the party—such a delightful afternoon! Miss Ogden, I must congratulate you and your sister on your charming rendering of that sweet air."

"I am so sorry we made such a muddle," said Susan humbly, as the ladies at last settled the question of precedence, and the door closed.

"Never mind; I am sure you did your best to give us pleasure, and we thank you heartily," said Miss Marsden. "Good-bye, my dears."

Janet, the last of the party, stood in the bay window, which commanded a view of the High Street, slowly drawing on her long gloves. "Here comes Miss Gordon! she is carrying some letters. May I stay and hear the news about Cecilia? I don't care what happens to Kitty. Mrs. Ashby calls her conceited—she is not that, certainly. There always seems a kind of pettiness about conceit, and Kitty has such a grand confidence in her own powers, she would never think it necessary to assert them—at least, that is what Tom says about her," concluded Janet.

"My dear Jane," cried Miss Elizabeth, "I was just coming in to see you."

"It's quite refreshing only to look at you, after having an afternoon of all those dreadful gossips!" said downright Miss Marsden.

"Hush—sh!" whispered her sister, with a glance at Janet.

"I've brought you three letters; I pray you, read one," said Jane, gaily. "The shortest first! Look, Janet!"

"Scented," said Janet, sniffing. "It's the Granville crest! Not an invitation to——" and she stopped.

"Why, you must be a witch! Yes, it's an invitation to a pic-nic, and I've positively accepted it, and now I wish I hadn't; but the page-boy was to wait for an answer, and his buttons must have frightened me. Cecilia always settles such things for me, and it really seemed easier to say yes than no. After the dissipation of our fortnight's holiday and visit to the Galbraiths, and then the bustle of getting Kitty ready for her Italian trip, and Cecilia for this long stay with Maynard's home people, I am left very flat and stupid, and shall be really glad to begin teaching again. You cannot imagine, Miss Marsden, how forlorn I feel without them."

"Did Cecilia find old Miss Williams very awful?" asked Janet. "I must hear that, and then run home by the garden and Green Lane, or I shall be frightfully late."

"She is as kind as possible," said Miss Gordon; "and Cecilia is full of remorse over her imaginary descriptions, and begs me to burn all those fancy sketches that she and Kitty composed between them. She has taken a great fancy to Cecilia, and hints that she intends to show her affection for Maynard in a very substantial way; and I shall lose my child even sooner than I expected."

"Then she will not be happy if you do not promise to live with them; and you will desert us, of course, like all the rest of the nice people, and Milltown won't be worth living in," said Janet, nodding her farewell.

"Ah!" she thought, as she took off her pretty hat in her own little room, "what would I give for the cap of invisibility—to have stopped and listened to the history of Jane Gordon's love affair. Miss Elizabeth is irresistible. I am not the least bit inquisitive, but I do like to know things. I daresay she is in the midst of the story this minute."

Perfectly true, Janet; and we will go and hear it, whilst you and Mary are privileged to have Mrs. Ashby's version of the matter.

XUM



"The last of the party."—*p.* 456

CHAPTER II.

"How could I let him be bound to me?" Miss Gordon is saying, with tearless eyes but a trembling lip, "when I found my poor sister just dead—Kitty down with diphtheria, too—and then Mr. Fairfax dying within a week of Catherine. His last words were to entrust them to me. All former pledges must give way to a dying wish like that!"

"No, I think not," said Miss Marsden. "You asked Mr. Malyon to wait a few years, I suppose, and he would not consent——"

"Oh, no! no!" said Jane. "I wrote to him at once, and broke off our engagement, telling him I must devote my life to those poor children."

"That was quite wrong of you, Jane," said Miss Marsden, without hesitation.

"But they were utterly destitute," said Jane, a deep flush coming to her pale cheeks. "We had to sell everything—all the pictures, even, except the 'St. Cecilia.' Kitty begged for that so earnestly. Mr. Fairfax was my trustee, and invested my money with his own in that unfortunate bank. Could I have done anything else, Miss Elizabeth?"

"No, my darling," said the kind creature, who was crying, of course; "it was most brave and beautiful of you."

"Extremely selfish, *I* should call it," said her sister, shortly. Jane started. "Yes, my dear, you were in love with a morbid self-sacrifice, instead of Mr. Malyon. The man who could win your heart, Jane, would have gladly shared such a burden with you. Didn't he ask you to let him?"

"I never heard from him again—never a line! I told him my decision was final, and he took me at my word!" and Jane vainly tried to stifle a sob as Miss Elizabeth tenderly drew her head on to her shoulder.

"I cannot understand it," said Miss Marsden, putting on her spectacles. "You mean to say, child, that he never sent you a word of sympathy and

comfort in all your trouble? Then he certainly wasn't worth loving, and there's an end of it."

"Oh, he was the best, the most faithful——" moaned Jane. "It was my letter; I don't know what I wrote—I was almost beside myself with grief and misery; it seemed as if Kitty would die too."

"You addressed the letter properly, dear?" asked Miss Elizabeth.

"Oh, yes," said Jane, sitting up now with a wan smile.

"Of course she did, Elizabeth," put in Sophia Marsden. "One would think you lived on milk-and-water novels."

"He was staying with his uncle, Sir Peter Malyon; he is very well connected, though our family is equally good, if we *are* poor," concluded Jane Gordon, with a touch of quiet dignity. "I sent back all his presents—at least, everything but a little bunch of harebells." There was a pause.

"You left Mr. Fairfax's house directly Kitty could be moved, didn't you? Of course you told Mr. Malyon where you were going?"

"We were moving about for Kitty's sake," Jane answered wearily. "We went first to the sea, and it was too cold for her, then to my old nurse near London, and then I heard of an opening for a school here, and you know the rest."

"Why, silly child!" cried Miss Marsden, "can't you see? Of course you never received his answer. You were too proud to write to any of his people, I daresay, and your only relatives, you told me, were travelling in the south of France. But surely you wrote to some of your friends?"

"No," said Jane, "I was too miserable; and—and I was afraid they might suppose I was asking for help."

"Oh, my dear!" said Miss Elizabeth, with mild reproof.

"Yes, Jane," said Miss Marsden, "there is a touch of your sinful Scotch pride again. And no doubt Mr. Malyon has *his* share, and when he found letter after letter brought no answer, the poor man naturally supposed——"

"Oh, do you think that is possible?" cried Jane, clasping her hands. "I never thought *he* could be suffering too! I don't mind pain for myself, but——"

Miss Elizabeth rose triumphantly. "You will neither of you suffer much longer," she said. "Sophia, William must be sent to order the carriage from the 'George.' I shall drive to Mrs. Granville's at once. To think that a few words will set two loving hearts beating in unison once more! Sophia, give me the key of your wardrobe, please; I put my best bonnet there last Sunday. You know I can be discretion itself, and will feel my way most carefully."

"Well, yes, Elizabeth," admitted her sister, "I confess I am too blunt. Come back as quickly as you can.—You may well look bewildered, child," turning to Jane. "But—don't tremble so—sit down here by the window; there—you would rather hear directly, of course," answering the dumb entreaty of Jane's eyes. "Well, love, you know Mrs. Granville is giving a pic-nic; it is in honour of some friends from Scotland—and—we only heard it this afternoon—Mr. Malyon is of the party!"

Jane was perfectly silent for some minutes, then—the blood rushing to her very hair—"Please stop Miss Elizabeth!" she gasped.

"No, Jane," said Miss Marsden with firmness. "In such a matter I have implicit confidence in Elizabeth. As she is not here, I will say I have often been quite surprised—she really has wonderful tact. And Mrs. Granville, though a woman of the world, has a kind heart. Jane, don't you think he has suffered long enough? There is the carriage already. Now we will walk in the garden for half an hour, and then I want to read you a most interesting article in the *English Quarterly*. Elizabeth will certainly be back by eight o'clock."

Those two dreadful hours! How long and dreary they seemed! Surely, the old church clock never chimed the quarters so slowly! They came to an end at last.

"There is Elizabeth!" said Miss Marsden, starting up. "Why is she stopping in the hall? Someone must be there——"

"Oh! perhaps——" whispered Jane.

"Nonsense, child! Mrs. Granville did not expect her guests till Thursday," and down went spectacles, magazine, and netting, and Miss Marsden hurriedly opened the door. "Come in directly!" she cried, and Miss Elizabeth appeared.

"Now—quick!" said her impatient sister. "I have shut the door, of course! Never mind all the ins and outs; get to the point!"

"Oh, Sophia! your spectacles on the floor!—and—and how did you like that interesting article, love? It is a little too learned for me!"

"Elizabeth, you would try the temper of an angel!" said Miss Marsden angrily.

"Jane, Jane! My poor darling; don't look at me like that! Oh, how shall I tell you? Try and bear it; we all love you so! Think of Cecilia!" cried Miss Elizabeth.

"He is dead!" said Jane, with a strange calmness.

"No, no! not that; but he is married, and coming to 'The Mount' with his bride!"

CHAPTER III.

JANET SCOTT TO CECILIA FAIRFAX.

MY OWN DEAREST FRIEND,—You haven't missed me a bit, of course. I can fancy you are perfectly happy, and riding about all day with Maynard in those lovely Hampshire lanes, and being introduced to cousins without end. But I have wanted you most awfully; I've been perfectly *hungry* to see you again! Now, you must promise to burn this letter the moment you've read it (I keep all yours, darling,

in the secret drawer of my desk!), because, as you will see, there are really private matters in it. I hardly know where to begin. I told you Mary and I, with mother, were asked to afternoon tea at Miss Marsden's last Tuesday. Of course, Mary was too busy to go. Mrs. Ashby naturally talked a *little* about you and Kitty. Then your aunt's turn came, and she had found out that she was once engaged to Mr. Malyon. You know, dear, that I never, even in my sleep, would have breathed a word of the secret you told me! Mrs. Ashby had the whole story upside down. Then she told us Mrs. Granville was to give a pic-nic on the Friday, and Mr. Malyon, she said, was coming, with some Scotch friends of Mrs. Granville. Miss Marsden snubbed her and Miss Browne, and I could have kissed her for it. I stayed behind, and your aunt came in so bright and happy. She had just had your letter, and an invitation to "The Mount," which she had accepted. She looked so young and pretty, Cecilia! I could see Miss Elizabeth meant to say something. What it was, I can't tell you; but Tom heard William order the carriage from the "George," and Miss Elizabeth was driven to "The Mount." Next morning I took some early peaches to your aunt, but I did not see her. She was packing, Kezia said, and going to Barmouth for a week or two with Miss Elizabeth, who was not at all well. They started at one o'clock, without saying good-bye to anybody. Mother called on Miss Marsden in the afternoon, but she only said that her sister was "suffering from nervous debility, and that Miss Gordon had kindly promised to go with her to Wales." But it was all explained on the way home. Mother met Mrs. Ashby, who told her Mr. and *Mrs.* Malyon were expected—that she was a lovely girl, very rich, most fascinating, etc. I felt as if I could not go to the wretched pic-nic; but, after all, I am glad I did, for I made him suffer a little, I really believe! If it hadn't been for thinking of dear Miss Gordon, and missing you, it was really a splendid party. Mrs. Granville always has such nice people, and manages everything so well, you know. The weather was perfect. The bride is just a merry girl, much younger than Mr. Malyon. Herbert Grey was enthusiastic about her, but Tom said he thought Kitty ever so much prettier, and so she is! Well, I was talking to Adela, when Mr. Eustace Granville came up, and said—

"Let me introduce you to Miss Janet Scott, Mr. Malyon," and then was off like a shot. I am certain he wanted to get rid of him, for Mr. Malyon laughed a little, and said—

"Ha-hum; Miss Scott, you would not like a stroll to the Abbey ruins?"

I can't tell *why*, Cecilia, but I really said I should like it, and off we went; he talking in a learned way about Dominicans and Franciscans. When we came to that Gothic arch, where you have the lovely view of the hills, I could bear his prosing no longer.

"How I wish a friend of mine, Miss Kitty Fairfax, was here," I remarked. He gave a little start, and said—

"I think I have heard your friend's name before."

"Mrs. Granville admires her paintings, and has mentioned her, no doubt," I replied, innocently; "she knows Kitty's aunt, Miss Jane Gordon, very intimately." It was wicked of me, and I was half-frightened directly I had said it. If you had seen his look!

"Is Miss Gordon living in Milltown," he asked, quite sharply.

"Yes, she has a school for little girls."

"A school! nonsense! I beg your pardon, but it is quite impossible that Jane Gordon should——" and then he stopped. "Is she poor?"

I hope, Cecilia, you will forgive me, but I felt so furious with him, that I drew a picture of some of your troubles when you first came to Milltown, and that day, never to be forgotten, when I saw you first. You were having a dinner of half a loaf and some blackberries. When I got as far as that, he started up, and went off, leaving me to take care of myself, and find my way out of the ruins as best I could. He and Mrs. Malyon went away the next morning, and I suppose, and sincerely hope, we shall never meet again. He is handsome; rather melancholy looking. Darling, Maria has been in twice to ask for letters. Don't let Maynard fill all your heart; leave one *little* corner of it for your ever faithful and loving

JANET.

CHAPTER IV.

"YOU are really a little stronger to-day, dear Miss Elizabeth," said Jane Gordon, arranging her friend's shawl with a tender solicitude, "and your appetite is improving, I think; or was it only to please me that you took my lemon-jelly? I am finding you out every day" (Miss Elizabeth gave a guilty start): "some thoughtful unselfishness coming straight from your loving heart."

"Oh, my dear, pray don't!" said Miss Elizabeth, looking quite uncomfortable. ("And I've just been eating those two large buns in my bed-room," was her thought. "This air makes me so terribly hungry.") "How could I fail to get better with such a good nurse?" she said, smiling. "And now that Sophia has arranged for the little girls to have an extra week's holiday, and I know that I can keep you here, I feel quite another thing. You see, dear, nervous debility is not like a positive *illness*. I have always been subject to little hysterical attacks, and then, we know, change is the very best remedy Shall we have some reading? Your voice is so soothing; I was so vexed I dropped off, this morning, but then—as Kitty is not here, I don't mind confessing—I never can quite follow new poetry. It was a beautiful poem, of course, love. I have brought my old volume of Cowper; I always enjoy his poetry, and never feel sleepy, the lines are so melodious.

Shall we have something from 'The Task?' What an extraordinary bonnet that lady is wearing, Jane, but really rather becoming, isn't it? she has a stylish figure! Yes, dear, begin at the postman coming at tea-time. How much nicer it is to have our letters in the morning; it gives such topics for conversation at the breakfast-table. I will close my eyes, if you don't mind; the glare of the sea is a little distressing."

And so dear Miss Elizabeth had a long, peaceful



"'Godfrey, don't grieve about it so.'"

sleep that warm afternoon, and dreamed that she was a girl again, sitting in the stuffy little village church, and sharing a hymn-book with her mischievous cousin George; and then the scene changed—dreams are unaccountable—and she saw Jane Gordon stretching out her hands in wild entreaty, and calling "Godfrey! Godfrey!" Then she opened her eyes, to find herself amongst fern and heather, a glimpse of the tranquil sea below. Jane was sitting at her side, and bending over her was a tall man, with worn, eager face—they both seemed perfectly unconscious of the existence of another creature in the universe. Jane was murmuring in a soft, low voice, "Godfrey, don't grieve about it so. Dearest, the privation was nothing, nothing; I could bear far more than that! But how I longed for a word from you—just a sign that you loved me still! And now I shall forget those sad days—everything is swallowed up in your love!"

Miss Elizabeth was quite awake by this time, and cold with horror.

"Miss Gordon," she said, "will you introduce me to your friend—to this gentleman?"

"Oh! dear Miss Elizabeth," said Jane, turning a sweet, tremulous face, with traces on it of happy tears, "I did not like to disturb you before."

"I have not been asleep more than two minutes," murmured Miss Elizabeth.

"It is Mr. Godfrey Malyon. His brother Henry has been staying at Mrs. Granville's, and wrote to him; for Miss Marsden was quite right, and no one was to blame but me."

"But I *was* to blame, Jeannie," said her lover. "I ought to have gone on searching for you."

"But he was so ill, and the doctors ordered him to the Cape, and—— Oh, how selfish I am! This excitement—when you want quiet and rest!"

"Thank you, love, I feel very little flurried," was the answer; "and am delighted to be introduced to Mr. Malyon, and I am sure Sophia will be too. You have been to Milltown, and had an interview? That explains your being here. Now, I think a cup of

tea will refresh us wonderfully, so I will walk on and order it, and you and Mr. Malyon can follow in half an hour or so. I really prefer to go back alone, my love. And you had not to suffer *much* longer, had you?" she whispered, kissing the dear, smiling lips.

"Ah, I see you have a fresh bunch of harebells. And a very pretty little piece of sentiment—isn't it wonderful what associations we all have with flowers!" thought Miss Elizabeth, as she walked briskly away, with her knitting and book. "How very, very glad I am for that dear girl! She could never have loved another; and I always felt she ought not to be an old maid! Not but what single ladies are very happy—I'm sure I am! But then Jane has no one like Sophia to lean upon, and talk things over with. The wedding shall be from our house, of course. Jane will look lovely in white! I do *not* like the custom of a bride wearing her travelling dress—it is *the* day of a woman's life, and should be kept as a festival. Mr. Malyon does not look robust—well, he will find his 'Jeannie' the tenderest and best of nurses! I can begin a letter to Sophia before they come in. I shall remind her of what I so often say—that most love affairs come all right in the end."

THE THREE CROWNS.

"The Crown of Righteousness."—2 Tim. iv. 8. "The Crown of Glory."—1 Peter v. 4.
"The Crown of Life."—Rev. ii. 10.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ALEXANDER ROBERTS, D.D.

I HAVE set these three passages together that we may perceive at one view the varied and most attractive character of that happiness which awaits God's people hereafter. Too often is it forgotten how much the Bible reveals which is fitted to excite our desire, as well as to sustain our faith, in the prospect of eternity. Ambition is deemed a principle which can be exercised only in reference to this present world. It limits itself to that narrow span which lies between us and death. Its eye is not lifted higher than to the honours and rewards of earth: its pulse is not quickened by any loftier aspirations than are drawn forth by those attainments which may be secured on this side the grave. But Revelation opens up something far grander to the view of man, something more akin to his own deathless nature—and something more worthy of his energies and efforts. It gives him a glimpse of a coming eternity. It shows him what a blessed portion will reward the faith and patience of God's people in the world to come. It takes that word *crown*, which comprises in itself the greatest dignity and honour of which we can at present form a conception, and then it qualifies the term by such adjuncts as are found in the passages before us—*righteousness, glory, life.* What a series of blessedness is this! and how impossible is it that human language could furnish another word that would add to, or intensify, the idea of perfection and enjoyment which is thus suggested to our minds! Come, then, and let us meditate for a little on the threefold aspect of the believer's future happiness which is thus set before us. Come, and let us rise upon the wings of faith above all those objects which can be presented to our ambition in this world, and, ascending to a height at which we can command a glance into eternity, let us seek fresh ardour for our hope, and new strength for our zeal, from the view which is here given us of the reward that is prepared for God's people hereafter.

We begin, as seems both the natural and the Scriptural order, by looking first at

"THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS."

IT is somewhat difficult to fix upon the exact idea which the Apostle intends to bring out by this expression. Several eminent expositors suppose that he simply refers to the general recompense which shall be given to the righteous, without meaning to specify any one of the elements of which it will consist. When he says—"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness," they imagine that he merely intends to declare that *he* would at last have a place among the righteous, and share in whatever reward was bestowed upon them. But this does not seem to me to exhaust the force of the words. It appears both more in harmony with the context, and more in accordance with those other passages in which an analogous form of expression occurs, to believe that when the Apostle speaks of "the crown of *righteousness*," he refers to a special blessing which shall be conferred on him and all true believers hereafter. And, if so, there can be no doubt as to what allusion is made. St. Paul anticipated that blessed day on which—body, soul, and spirit—he should be pure, even as Christ is pure; when his whole complex nature should be perfectly holy; and when, as the result of all that Divine Grace had done in his behalf—as the consummation of all his most earnest efforts

and prayers in this world, there should be set upon his brows that "crown of righteousness," the immaculate purity of which shall endure for ever.

Now, we know how earnestly the Apostle longed for this, and how diligently he laboured to secure it. With respect to its attainment, he might have been described as the most ambitious man of the age in which he lived. True, we hear him declaring—"I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." And, when we see him so patiently submitting to privation and suffering, seeking no more than necessary "food and raiment," and casting no glance of envy at those equipages of the rich and powerful which swept past him, as, footsore and weary, he travelled from city to city, we might suppose that the principle of ambition was extinct in his heart. Yet there burned a fire in that man's bosom which could not be quenched; there dwelt within him an ardour for acquisition as intense as ever lived in the heart of any human being. Offer him not, however, any worldly object with which to appease that insatiable hunger which exists in his soul. Princely dignity and priestly authority—the imperial diadem itself, with a world under its sway—might have been set before him, and he would have turned from the whole as worthless baubles, which excited no feeling of desire in his heart. But tell him of perfect *righteousness*, and his eye glistens with delight: reveal that attainment as ultimately lying before him, and his looks are fixed upon it with the most eager and rapturous anticipation. He could never satisfy himself with the progress which he had made in the divine life, but panted incessantly after a greater conformity to God's holy image. The miser might at last be contented with the vast amount of wealth which he had hoarded; the voluptuary might, by-and-bye, weary in the pursuit of pleasure; the aspirant after greatness might, in course of time, flag in his efforts, and stop short at the point of elevation which he had reached—but never could the Apostle pause in his zealous endeavours to advance in holiness. In this respect he was ever "forgetting the things which were behind, and reaching forth unto those that were before." With his utmost efforts, however, he could not, so long as he was in this world, lay hold of the one great prize he coveted. "I have not yet attained," he ever felt reason to exclaim; "but I follow after," he added, as, with fresh enthusiasm and rekindled zeal, he "pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Such being the feelings and desires which glowed in the heart of the Apostle, we can conceive with what a fervour of eagerness he would look forward to the day on which his fondest wishes should be fulfilled. "It shall be mine at last," he thought—"that crown of righteousness—that diadem of perfect purity which glitters before me now, but which still eludes my grasp—it shall descend and rest upon my brows, never to be tarnished or lost—and mine shall be the possession of undimmed holiness, yea, of Christlike perfection for ever and ever." Ours be it to cherish like desires and feelings, and ours, too, through Divine Grace and power, shall at last be the same glorious attainment; for, says St. Paul, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and *not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.*"

"THE CROWN OF GLORY."—1 PETER v. 4.

THIS word *glory* has a strange power over the human heart. Its very utterance is like a trumpet-tongue, which rouses the energies and excites the aspirations of every soul. We look back upon the past, and we see how great is the influence which it has exerted. It has proved itself one of the most potent words in human speech. To it have been due all the most brilliant deeds in the annals of our world. It has nerved the soldier to many an act of daring; it has impelled him forward on many a hard-fought field; it has given him a sense of conquest even when he fell, for he knows that his prowess will be remembered, and that his name will be held in lasting honour.

But it is not in the department of military effort and achievement alone that the thought of glory has had a most powerful influence over human conduct. Everywhere, and in all professions, may its effect be traced. From the lowest to the highest grades of society, from the village-green on which the stripling contends for the distinction of superior dexterity or strength, to the arena of Courts and Cabinets, in which the competition is for the highest power in a nation, Glory is the enchantress who lays her spell upon the heart and prompts to such earnest and persevering efforts.

Nor can I agree with those stern moralists who would frown upon the operation of this motive, and, if possible, root it out of the human heart. We are frequently told that, unless a man loves knowledge for its own sake, or art for its own sake, independently of the fame which great erudition or artistic eminence may gain him, he is untrue to the pursuit in which he engages, and need never hope to reach its highest summit of excellence. But this is to run counter to human nature, and to set up a factitious standard which mankind at large will never acknowledge. The desire of approbation, the pursuit of fame, is a perfectly legitimate motive in animating our conduct. God has Himself implanted this desire in our moral nature, and it is idle to ignore or suppress it. The statesman should, no doubt, be influenced by patriotism in the measures which he adopts, but he may also very properly have regard to the honour which they will bring him. The scholar should doubtless love knowledge for its own sake, but none the less may he be supported in his

arduous studies by the renown which in consequence of his learning he will secure. The artist should, it is true, be so wedded to his profession that he will pursue it independently of the fame which he may acquire by means of it, but it would be very hard were we to interdict him, amid years of obscurity and neglect, from cheering his heart by a sanguine expectation of that honour which his works will ultimately procure him.

Now, in this, as in other respects, the Bible is true to the inherent principles of human nature. There have been theologians who insisted that what they called a "disinterested love of God"—that is, a love which has no regard to our own interests—was absolutely necessary to salvation. But the Scriptures set up no such impracticable ideal as this. On the contrary, they continually bring before us the thought of *personal* happiness hereafter, as a great motive which should induce us to love and serve God in this present world. They emphatically commend those who by a "patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality." They set forth all that is alluring and attractive in the descriptions which they give of those rewards which await the righteous in a future world. They fully acknowledge, conserve, and sanctify that desire for our own honour and happiness which exists in each of our hearts; and, laying hold of the most pleasing and significant words in human speech, they seek by means of these to paint for us the blessed effects which will flow from a life of faith and godliness upon earth. Feeble indeed are all the conceptions which even the language of inspired writers can convey to us of the happiness of God's servants hereafter; but the vision, though undefined, is of the fairest and most fascinating character; while amid its golden hues, its pure and dazzling radiance, there is one object which is seen standing forth in bold relief as prepared for every saint, and that is "a crown of glory."

On considering this expression, we are led at once to the reflection that the happiness of God's people hereafter will partake of the nature of a *recompense.* Glory, in every idea which we can form of it, suggests the concomitant thought of previous effort in order to its attainment. No one can gain the glory of a warrior without exposing himself to the dangers and privations of a military life. No one can obtain the glory of a discoverer, without the trouble of arduous, and perhaps long-continued, researches. No one can procure the glory of the philanthropist, without devoting himself, at much personal sacrifice, to the welfare of humanity. In every case, in short, the acquisition of glory implies antecedent effort or endurance. It is a recompense for toil which has been borne, or self-denial which has been practised. And so will it be with the happiness enjoyed by the redeemed in heaven. The glory which they then possess will be a reward for what they did and endured on earth. It is true that, looked at in another light, all will be of *Grace.* It is utterly beyond our power to explain how the happiness of the saints hereafter can be all due to God's sovereign mercy, and yet will possess the nature of a reward for their own doings upon earth. But the one fact is as clearly revealed as the other. Not only do we read that "by Grace are we saved through faith; and that not of ourselves—it is the gift of God;" but we are also repeatedly told that God "will render unto everyone according to his deeds." There is the strict relation of cause and effect between a holy, devoted life upon earth, and the attainment of happiness in heaven. Nothing of an arbitrary or capricious character enters into God's allotment of that crown to which the Apostle points. It is in every case a reward—a recompense for faithful and persevering service:—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Again, we are led by the previous course of reflection to observe that there will be various *degrees* of glory among God's people hereafter. This necessarily follows from the fact that their happiness will partake of the nature of a reward. For, if so, it must be proportioned to the different degrees of excellence which they attained on earth. This does not imply that there will be a feeling of want or imperfection among any of the inhabitants of heaven. According to their capacity all will be filled, and all will feel perfectly happy. But, while this is the case, we can easily understand what an infinite gradation there may be in the compass, so to speak, of that felicity which they severally possess. And thus, as we learn from the whole tenor of Scripture, it will be—"He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." The more love towards God and man we display, the more personal sacrifices we make to aid in any good work; the more earnestly and successfully we struggle against besetting temptations, the more we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the more shall we secure for ourselves a high place in God's Kingdom above, and the brighter will be that "crown of glory" which we shall wear for ever and ever.

"THE CROWN OF LIFE."—Rev. ii. 10.

THE words—"I will give thee the crown of life"—manifestly form a climax to all that has yet been said. Life is essential to our enjoyment of any other blessing. Let a man be the occupant of a palace; let his fame be upon every lip; let wealth surround him with the greatest luxury and comfort; and then, let death but touch him, and what matter all the means of happiness which he possessed? You look

round the room in which he lies; you mark the elegance and costliness of its adornments; you see the insignia of his greatness which it contains; you can read perhaps the poem which was dedicated to his honour—all that ministered to his glory remains the same as before—but when you look at himself you perceive that a vast change has occurred, life has deserted his frame, and he is now utterly insensible to all the evidences of grandeur, and all the means of gratification, which exist around him! And so it would be little even to secure "the crown of righteousness," or to be rewarded with "the crown of glory," were not these accompanied by "the crown of life," which gives permanence to the happiness they impart. What, then, let us inquire, are any of the thoughts suggested by the promise of this best and most blessed of all boons?

It sets before us, first of all, the prospect of a *true* life.

Never shall we know what it is really to live, until the crown here spoken of is bestowed upon us. For, life—what is it? Can that be called *physical* life which is attended by such frequent sufferings, and which evinces such an irresistible tendency towards dissolution? In every human body upon earth, however strong and healthy it may appear, there lurk the seeds of death, so that, in a few brief years, it must lie down and moulder in the grave. Or, can that be called *intellectual* life which is mixed up with so much ignorance and error, and which constantly feels itself crippled in its efforts after development and growth? In every human mind upon earth, however powerful it may seem, there exists many a hindrance to the full attainment of truth, while but a few years impair its faculties, and bring upon them all a dark eclipse. Or, again, can that be called *spiritual* life which is so enfeebled by the remains of sin, and has often such a struggle to maintain its very existence? In every human soul upon earth, however holy it may appear, there is still to be found a deep-seated depravity, which sometimes threatens to conquer altogether the spiritual vitality which God has imparted.

It will only, therefore, be when "the crown of *life*" spoken of in Scripture has been bestowed, that we shall know what it is really to live. For then shall our bodies be endowed with imperishable vigour and immortal youth: then shall our minds be freed from all perversity, and rendered capable of seeing life clearly in God's light; then shall our souls be perfectly delivered from sin, and conformed, in all their tendencies and feelings, to the glorious image of our God and Saviour.

Again, this expression, "a crown of life," suggests to us the sublime and enrapturing thought of *never-ending existence.*

When we begin to meditate upon this point, we are speedily lost in the grandeur of the subject. To think that we shall never—never—die; that it shall be ours to participate in the very loftiest attribute of God—eternity; that, after myriads and millions of years have passed, we shall still be in the possession of unspeakable felicity and glory—this seems almost more than it is possible to believe, and may well lead us to exclaim—

> "Immortal! ages passed, yet nothing gone!
> Morn without eve! a race without a goal!
> Unshortened by progression infinite!
> Futurity for ever future! Life
> Beginning still where computation ends!
> 'T is the description of a deity!
> And can eternity belong to me,
> Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?"

Yes! marvellous though it appears, let but that "crown of life" spoken of in Scripture be once set upon our brows, and we share in the grand prerogative of God, who is ever "the same," and whose "years shall not fail."

Once more, we have suggested to us by this expression, "a crown of life," some idea of what will be *the nature of our happiness for ever.*

Life implies *activity*, and thus we are reminded that heaven will be no place of mere quiescence, but that every power which we possess will be called into active operation, and so contribute to entire and perfect satisfaction. Rest is, indeed, to many, as it was to Robert Hall, a most attractive feature of the world to come. There are, perhaps, few earnest Christians but feel at times that one of the most precious declarations of Scripture is contained in the beautiful words—"There remaineth therefore a rest"—a Sabbath rest—"to the people of God." That rest will undoubtedly be enjoyed in the calm, undisturbed repose—so different from the unceasing turmoil of earth—which shall endure for ever. But we are not to think of this rest as excluding activity and effort, but should rather conceive of it as waiting upon these, no fatigue being then felt as the result of either bodily, mental, or spiritual exertion. New enjoyment will, in truth, ever flow from the calm, unagitating exercise of all those faculties which the redeemed shall possess throughout eternity.

And then, too, life suggests the thought of *growth*, of progress in knowledge and happiness and glory for ever. Soon, indeed, is the limit to development reached in this world. Maturity, such as it is, having been attained, there is then a speedy and sure decay. But no such thing will enter into the experience of God's people hereafter. Their unending life will be a course of uninterrupted progress. Height after height will be gained, glory after glory will burst upon their view. Ever will their minds be expanding: ever will the circle of their knowledge and happiness be widening; nearer and nearer to their God will they approach; and, with infinitude before them from which to derive continually fresh and satisfying enjoyment—with *righteousness* as the characteristic of their whole nature, with *glory* as the bright crown upon their brows, with *life*, even life eternal, as their noble and unassailable possession—so shall they—"so shall *we*—ever be with the Lord."



WHITE WINGS AND SILVER SCALES.

BY ALFRED J. BAMFORD, B.A., AUTHOR OF "TURBANS AND TAILS; OR, SKETCHES IN THE UNROMANTIC EAST," ETC.

IN the corner of my garden there is a summer-house, as pretty and as comfortable as any-one could wish to have. And the other day when I was sitting there, I either fell asleep and dreamed, or else I became very much more wide-awake than I had ever been before. Which of these it was, I am not sure, but as I watched a couple of butterflies dancing in the sunlight, it seemed to me that I could hear them talking and could understand what they said. One of them had only become a butterfly that morning, and the other not more than two or three days before, and they were talking together about the great change from a caterpillar's life to a butter-fly's.

Now just at the moment I discovered that I could understand them, the young one—whose name I found to be Silver Scales—was saying: "You cannot think how strange I felt for some little time before I left the cabbage-leaf on which I had lived all my life. I used to be considered good-tempered, but for some days I believe every-body would have thought me very bad-tempered if it had not been that I felt too weak and ill to show it. I did not know what to do with myself. At last, though I wanted to stay on the leaf, an impulse within me, which I could not resist, compelled me to crawl off it, and presently I found myself climbing up the grey oak palings. I was feeling dreadfully ill, and thought I was going to die. Perhaps I did die; for what else

was it when I lost sight of and forgot everything until I found—how long afterwards I do not know—that I was a butterfly? Between my losing sight of myself and all my surroundings and my awakening to find myself a butterfly might have been a minute, or it might have been years; I have no means of telling which. But I remember a great change suddenly coming over me just before I lost my consciousness, and my brother, who was slowly climbing up behind me, must have seen it, for, though I was losing my power of hearing, with my other powers, I can distinctly recollect hearing him say: 'Ah! there is poor old Silver Scales gone; I was afraid something was going to happen. He is turned into a lump of wooden paling!' and I felt him shiver as he said it. Then, whether I had become a part of a paling or not I cannot say, for I lost all knowledge of everything till this morning. By the way, how strange it was that I should have been called Silver Scales! It was not at all a suitable name for me in those days, though now"—and I thought he looked approvingly at himself—"it suits me admirably."

"It was the same in my case," said the other. "I never could make out why I should be called White Wings. I was not white, and I had no wings; and, what was more, I was perfectly certain that I never should have. Yet here I am now, as white-winged a butterfly as ever flew."

"Yes," said Silver Scales, "we were caterpillars then, and never expected to be anything else. There was a report, I remember, that got about among some of us once that we should fly one day; but I laughed at it, and went on eating. It seemed too unreasonable for serious attention. What a pity, is it not, that we did not know? How good it would have been to have looked forward to to-day! Do you not think," he added, "that, since we do know now, we ought to go to the caterpillars that are still on their leaves and tell them?"

"It would be of no use for us to try," answered White Wings decidedly.

"Why not?" asked the other, not quite liking to hear his suggestion put on one side with so little hesitation, and a little inclined to suspect his friend of presuming upon his being a day or two older than he.

"For many reasons," replied White Wings, "but especially for two. In the first place, I am pretty sure that they would not be able to understand you; and, in the second place, if you could get over that difficulty and make them understand you, I am about as sure that you could not get them to believe you. Do not forget how you have changed. Think how you now enjoy this floating upon the air and this being carried down the wind. You are in ecstasy in the sunshine, and can imagine nothing sweeter or more satisfying than the nectar of the flowers. But all this is new. Think, if you can, how you felt when you were a caterpillar, and bear in mind that that is how caterpillars feel still. Try to imagine what their thought would be—as yours, too, would once have been—on being told that they should be lifted up from off their cabbages to fly through the air in the breeze and sunlight! Tell them of this, and tell them further that they will not eat cabbage-leaves any more, but will sip honey from the flowers that hold themselves up to the sun upon their slender stalks; would they not reply, 'We do not wish for any such things. We are heavy; it is hard enough work for us to drag ourselves along slowly; we do not want to have to fly—that must be harder work still. We have no wish to be at the mercy of the wind; even here upon our leaves we sometimes have to hold on carefully with our claspers to prevent ourselves from being rolled off. What would it be to be in the air, with nothing to clasp? Nor do we like the sun much better than the wind; we prefer the shady side. And as for our sipping nectar, you surely cannot know what you are talking about! We need more solid food than nectar. Why, do you not know that we spend all day in doing nothing else but eat—eat—eat, and yet we are always hungry? We cannot satisfy our appetites as it is, eating as fast as we can all the day long; and yet you think we could afford to waste our time flying about, hurrying here and there, doing nothing but now and then sipping a little nectar!' Something like this is what you would be told. But," added White Wings, "I doubt if you could make them understand you, to begin with."

It seemed, indeed, not unlikely that White Wings was right in this, as Silver Scales admitted. At the same time he was not sure enough about it to prevent his making the attempt. "It could do no harm to try, at any rate," thought he. So, without saying a word more about the matter to his friend, he soon found an excuse for bidding him "Good morning," and I saw him flying off to look for the leaf he had once lived on, and on which he knew that some of his relatives remained when he left, who might perhaps still be there. About this he was far from certain, since, as he had said to White Wings, he could not tell how long it was since he had left the cabbage and become a chrysalis, or a piece of oak paling, as his brother had supposed.

It was quite a long time before he could feel sure that he had found the right cabbage-leaf—all looked so changed to him. He did not know it again at first when he saw it; it looked so small now, though in his memory it was very large—for so he had thought it in the days he lived on it. And therefore it was that he flew to and fro through the garden, and had once even settled on the very leaf he was looking for before he recognised it. In the end, however, he saw which it was, and found that his old friends had mostly gone. They had become chrysalids, as he had, though they had not yet awakened out of their pupa sleep into the freedom of perfect insect life. But on the leaf were some full-grown, or almost full-grown, caterpillars, that by some means or another Silver Scales knew to be the same as some which were quite young caterpillars,

only just out of the egg, in the old days of his own caterpillar life. They were talking about those who had gone—himself included, for he had not been altogether forgotten; they were telling how he and the others had gone away, and had not come back again, and would not come back; and they were saying that a caterpillar's life was a poor one after all, not really worth living. "You just live a little while," said they; "too busy with eating to enjoy it; and then—it comes to an end, and there is nothing more."

Now when Silver Scales found he could understand what they were saying, he began to hope that White Wings was wrong in one particular, at least; for if he could understand them, of course they would be able to understand him. "And how fortunate," he said to himself, when he heard the subject of their conversation—"how fortunate that I have come just at the very time to set these poor caterpillars right!" Whereupon he settled down right in front of the biggest of them, and began to tell him that he was not dead, that he had come back, and that, if he were changed, it was with a change for the better, since his life now was the happiest and brightest imaginable.

But the dull fat caterpillar had not understood a word. In fact, he could not even make out who or what Silver Scales was, and thought him to be a leaf that the wind had blown up against him. The wind had done so once before, and the leaf had tickled him most unpleasantly until the wind had blown it on further. But this seemed to him a very troublesome leaf that did not get blown away again, and had apparently more corners than the other. So the caterpillar screwed up his face and jerked his head and neck, as caterpillars are wont to do when anything displeases them.

Silver Scales understood the caterpillars, but could not make them understand either who he was or what he said. He did not give up without a very earnest endeavour; but at last he flew away, convinced that it was useless for him to try any longer. And as he went I heard him saying, "Well, life is bright, and I am glad. I can be glad not only for myself, but for my poor cousin caterpillar also; for though he cannot understand it, and will not believe it, for him too there is a bright life in store."

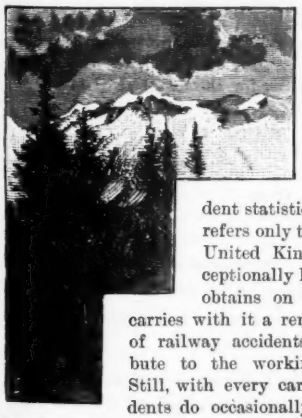
I have never caught the sound of the butterfly's voice again. These were the last words I heard him say—perhaps the last I shall ever hear from a butterfly. But as I remember and think about them, and all I saw and heard that afternoon, I wonder whether something like this has perhaps happened elsewhere than in my garden—whether something like this is the reason why none of my friends, who have left this world and me, have since come back to tell me of the new world to which they have gone, and where I hope to join them.

"IN JOURNEYINGS OFT."

HINTS TO TRAVELLERS.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "EVANESCENT PHILOSOPHIES," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," "CONSECRATED INFLUENCE," ETC.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord."—PSALM xxxvii. 5.



A SEAT in a first-class railway carriage is, it is said, the safest place in the world. The statement is based on accident statistics, and, of course, refers only to railways in the United Kingdom. The exceptionally high speed which obtains on British railways carries with it a remarkable absence of railway accidents. This is a tribute to the working of the lines. Still, with every care, very sad accidents do occasionally happen, carrying desolation, anguish, and woe into many a home. Yet every traveller may very largely obviate or reduce the possibility of railway accidents by the adoption of a very simple expedient. In the extreme simplicity of the method I propose lies its chief objection to popular appropriation. Perhaps the reader will ask what is the secret or talismanic influence by which this desirable result is consummated. I reply, Do you when you travel shoot up the arrow of prayer beforehand for "journeying mercies by the way?" Surely you travel? The question seems as natural, Surely you pray?

"But," someone may say, "do you really think that prayer beforehand will avert a railway accident? If two trains meet each other they must collide, or if a train leaves the metals there must be an accident, and danger and damage may follow. You surely cannot mean that prayer produces any infraction or suspension of well-known and fixed laws of matter. That would be to work a miracle."

Stop a bit! A little reflection will show you that your arbitrary alternative is unnecessary. I am going a journey to-morrow or this morning. I lay the

matter before God, and ask His guidance and protection. Is the Almighty shut up to one method of answer? By no means. He may answer my prayer by an influence on my own mind, enabling me to decide by what train I shall start, or by what route I shall travel. Or God may answer my prayer by influencing the minds of those who have the management of the train committed to their care—the conductor, engineer, brakesman, switchman, signal-tender, and telegraph operators. The safety and comfort of every traveller depend on the fidelity and promptness of all these. Such answers to prayer are independent of all physical laws, and lie without their sphere or dominion. But, again, by adjusting or combining certain physical laws, a train may escape where, without such adjustment or combination, an accident must necessarily follow.

If this be what you call "working a miracle," then thousands of "miracles" are witnessed daily on our great railway system, and every experienced railway traveller can count similar "miracles" in his personal wanderings or journeys. God is not shut up to the performance of a miracle in order to answer the prayer and ensure the safety of such as trust Him. But He does secure their safety, nevertheless, and in any event we can trust His wisdom and love. "Commit thy way unto the Lord" is an axiomatic truth for the Christian at home or abroad, in or out of doors, while sitting down, standing, or going to and fro along earth's highways. Who can tell how often your personal safety when travelling has been due to the Christian prayers of some fellow-passenger, or to the petition of some engine-driver's Christian wife or signalman's sister? Tennyson truly declares,

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of."

Take home the lesson. Commit yourself and your journeys to God's care and keeping. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." The voice of prayer will have its reflex influence in the voice of praise if only we remember—though, alas! we are too prone to forget or ignore—our journeying mercies. Thus we shall express a new and deeper meaning in the words of the Psalmist, as applied to modern times, when, out of a full heart, we fervently exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. . . Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." And as we think of the thousands of human beings who at this moment are being transported by this marvellous agency in all directions, and who, with the merchandise and freight that minister to our social comfort, are in spite of wind and weather, going straight as arrows to their targets, there may well arise from the devout heart, as it realises that "so He bringeth them to their desired haven," the fervent prayer, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

The newspaper which tells of some sad railway accident may often be used to bring good out of evil if it leads us to sympathise with and to pray for the sufferers and their families. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and the wider our area of prayer, the deeper will be the reflex blessings on ourselves. Christianity is essentially unselfish: it is also intensely sympathetic. God give you and me the power to get beyond our little personal outlook, and to sympathise more freely and fully with others, to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Thus we shall become more like our Divine Master, the Lord Jesus, whose loving sympathy is world-wide, and yet intensely personal.

The journal which records a railway accident may convey a wholesome lesson to you and me. Why did yon train leave the metals? That engine and its carriages were a power for good only so long as they were kept on the rails. As soon as the train left the metals it became a power for evil and destroyed itself. So with you and me. Our life is only a power for good when it is kept on the lines of Scripture. As soon as we leave the lines which God has laid down in the Bible for our guidance, we become powers for evil in the world, and compass our own destruction. Would you be a power for good in the world? "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The blood of Jesus avails to bring pardon, peace, and power to overcome. Contemplations of Jesus are the death of sin. And only in this way are we safe, when we follow the lines laid down in Scripture. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," says Christ; "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Those words contain a duty and a blessing for travellers, as well as for the dwellers at home.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

THE unseen touch of God has thrilled
Each bare and leafless bough,
And all the land with joy is filled,
And springtime blossoms now!

Though sweet the change seen everywhere
In Nature's smiling face,
There is on earth a change more fair—
The heart renewed by Grace!

Here, lovely tempers bloom, and make
A brightness all around,
And prayer and praise like music wake,
And happiness is found.

Lord, to Thy children now impart
This blessing from above,
This joy of springtime in the heart,
This gift of perfect love!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

"BANDY": A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TERRIE'S TWO COATS," ETC., ETC.



"Watching with strangely wistful eyes the yards of work."—*p.* 470.

HE did not look a bit like a hero; quite the reverse. Though nearly ten years old, he was so small that no one would have taken him to be more than seven. His hair was sandy, his eyelashes were yellow, and his big blue eyes inclined to be weak. His face was pale and pointed, though he had a nice little smile, with a dimple in it; and last, but most noticeable of all, his legs, thin as broomsticks, were crooked, in the fashion known as "knock-kneed," or "bandy." That was how he came by his nickname; for on the title-page of the shilling Bible mother gave him on his fifth birthday he was set forth as William Thomas Wiggs. But he had rickets very badly when he was a baby, and when he, at length, began to hobble about on his poor little twisted legs, the boys in the street used to say—not unkindly, but with even a rough sort of pity—"Hallo, Bandy!" "Look out, Bandy, there!" until his proper name seemed lost and forgotten. Even Mrs. Wiggs herself took up the, at first, objectionable sounding *sobriquet*, and consoled the child by assuring him that he was "mother's own Bandy." After that it did not seem nearly so ugly, and the unpleasantness gradually wore off, until at the time of which I am about to write he had grown quite used to it, and did not mind in the least.

But, as I said, no one would have given Bandy credit for being of the stuff heroes are made of. He did not care much to play with other boys, for when

he did he was almost sure to get hurt. And he did not like noise and bustle—it made him feel so small and helpless; and he was afraid of fire-works! So it came about that Bandy sat a good deal at home with mother, reading, or watching with strangely wistful eyes the yards of work that passed so rapidly through her whirring sewing-machine. He had no brothers or sisters, and his father had died before he was old enough to know him.

One day something very unexpected happened. It was a lovely day in spring-time: Bandy will always remember that. The trees in the church-yard were opening out their beautifully folded baby-leaves in the warm sunshine; the tenderest of south winds just brushed one's cheek in passing, as if to say, "I'm going away in the country to set the daffodils dancing; won't you come too?" and every road-puddle reflected the blue and silver of the smiling, breezy sky. Bandy was hurrying home from school in great glee, for he had a rare treasure to show mother; he had found in the street a lovely head of pink hyacinth that had dropped out of some lady's nosegay. It had scarcely got muddy at all, and the scent was a revelation to Bandy, for he had never been close enough to a hyacinth to smell it before. Mother was so fond of flowers; how pleased she would be!

He climbed the four flights of steep stairs that led to his mother's room with unusual agility, but paused ere he reached the top, for he thought he heard a strange voice upon the landing.

"Here he is, I do believe!" said his mother. "Come up, Willie boy; we're just talking about you."

To be called "Willie," and told he had been talked about, was enough to prepare him for something decidedly out of the common; and he shyly advanced.

"Poor little fellow! He does look delicate," remarked a lady who stood in the doorway.

"What do you think, Bandy?" said his mother, with one hand taking off the cap he had in his surprise forgotten to remove, and with the other pushing back his hair. "This lady wants to know if you'd like a fortnight's stay in the country!"

Bandy turned very red, and said nothing, but you should have seen his eyes sparkle! He had heard of the country, but had never been farther than Hackney Marshes in his life; being so weakly, his mother had always been afraid to let him go for day excursions with the schools.

"A party of boys and girls are going to a village thirty miles away, next Saturday," explained the visitor, "and if you like, I think we could arrange for you to go with them."

In fact, it had all been pretty well managed before Bandy came in. The cost of his board and lodging in a cottager's family would be five shillings a week. Of this his mother could only afford half a crown, though she would give that willingly; and from a fund which kind people had subscribed for the purpose, the remainder, with his railway fare, might be paid.

The state of excitement that Bandy was in for the next few days can be best realised by my readers if they will set down the remembrance of their own pleasurable anticipations of a month at the seaside, and multiply it by ten, for to Bandy the prospect had all the added charms of absolute novelty. He dreamed that he was already in the country, and woke to find he wasn't; he dreamed that he was not to go after all, and woke to know that he was!

At last he was fairly off, with a little brown paper parcel of "luggage" on his knee, a brand-new and stiff pink-bordered handkerchief peeping jauntily out of his breast-pocket, and fourpence to spend.

I cannot stop to tell of all the delights he found at his journey's end: the wide sky, the green fields, the buttercups and daisies he might pick by hundreds, and no one to say him nay. These were all real and highly appreciated joys, amply fulfilling his most glowing expectations; but two things—so often does it happen thus in this world—prevented his happiness from being complete.

The one was that his poor, dear, overworked mother was not there to share the pleasure with him; and the other, that his companions, finding out that he was what they chose to call a coward, teased him about it.

As to the latter trouble, Bandy, born and bred in London, had an aversion to frogs and toads, hedge-hogs, snails, and other harmless denizens of the country-side, and was—yes, I must own it—terribly afraid of cows! These weaknesses were not shared by his more robust comrades, and they adopted the very worst possible means to cure him of them. One day he would discover a snail in his pocket; on another a frog would hop out of his shoe; while more than once did he shuffle away as fast as his legs would carry him at the cry of "Mad bull!" only to be followed by the derisive laughter of the thoughtless young practical jokers.

There was one terror, however, which they all equally shared: that was the fear of a so-called "haunted wood." In a certain fir-plantation, gloomy and dark, about half a mile from the village, a man had once hanged himself; and the spot had ever since been shunned with superstitious dread by all the more ignorant inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Not one of them would, if he could possibly help it, pass that pine grove, much less enter it, after dark; and the children could not bear to go near it at all. As for Bandy, the very thought of the place was a horror to him if he chanced to wake in the night, and it was only by saying over to himself the precious Bible words with which his mother had been wont to soothe his alarms—

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee"

—that he could forget it, and lapse again into the land of pleasant dreams.

One afternoon the children all went "maying."

It was the day before the little London visitors were to return home, and they wanted to take back some of the white blossoming boughs for their friends. What a joy and a marvel the hawthorn was, with its clusters of pearly buds and dainty sweet-smelling open flowers! And to think folks might gather it just as much as they liked, that was the greatest wonder of all!

They came back, singing and laughing, to the village as the sun went down, half hidden in their leafy spoils, like a party of small "Jack-in-the-greens." Bandy was especially jubilant, as a good-natured big boy had procured for him one of the whitest boughs, and he felt that he would be able to take mother a bit of the country, after all. But, oh! if she could only come and see it all for herself! He wished that more than he had ever wished anything in his life before, but he had not the glimmering of a notion how it could be attained. The mission did not send grown-up people into the country: he had ascertained that; he could not earn any money to pay for her to come—nobody would employ a little bandy-legged fellow like him—and besides, she could not spare time from her work, however badly she needed the change; and if he, Bandy, were to offer to do with less to eat, and so make up for all the expense, he was afraid mother would never agree to that. Oh, dear! what *could* be done in it?

So deeply was Bandy cogitating upon this problem, which he felt constrained to attack afresh in every new burst of enjoyment, that he did not notice the silence that had fallen upon his companions, or the quickening of their footsteps as they passed, as they needs must, the gloomy shade of "Hangman's Wood."

A dolorous wail that issued unmistakably from those darkening aisles of pine, followed by a chorus of terrified shrieks from the children, awoke Bandy to his immediate surroundings. Instinctively he took to his heels with the rest, though, owing to his infirmity, somewhat in the rear. "Everyone for himself" is too frequently the rule with little as well as big people in this world, and nobody—not even the good-natured big boy who had got him the may—thought of Bandy.

The sun was already gone, and the tall funereal pines on both sides of the way made that piece of the road quite dark. On toiled our little boy, trembling with fear, and the more slowly that he was very tired, the distance between him and his comrades growing greater at every step. Once more came that horrible, blood-curdling cry!—this time nearer apparently than before. It seemed, though hardly human, like the scream of someone in great anguish or pain.

Suddenly Bandy stopped—actually stopped before the fearsome wood was passed, and, with a queer mixture of terror and determination, glanced behind him.

No one was in sight; the pine grove was very dark, the road very lonely and very still; but the cool blue sky looked calm and kind, and Bandy, gazing up at it, waited, and did not run away.

Again came the weird sound, this time more like a moan, dismal and prolonged.

"It's something that's got hurt—I'm sure it is!" said Bandy to himself. "And it's crying. That's just how Mrs. Perkins' cat cried when it got run over. Oh, dear! I wish I'd got somebody to go with me and find out."

He looked anxiously up the road, but the hindmost of the maying party was long since round a corner and out of sight.

"Oh dear! there it is again! I *can't* go away and leave it! P'raps nobody will be past here again all night; but I *am* so afraid!"

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."

How glad Bandy was that he knew that text! What could have fitted better to the present case? If any poor animal was lying in the wood in pain, it was a right thing—a thing God would love—for him to try and find and succour it. He would ask God to hold his hand all the time and lead him quickly to the right place, and he *would* not be afraid!

Laying his bunch of may carefully on the road-side grass, and shutting his eyes in prayer just one minute, Bandy, like the little hero that he was, went straight into the grove in the direction from which the howl appeared to come.

It did not seem so dark as he had expected when he was fairly among the firs, and he could always see the sky over his head. He surely would not have to go far in, for the sound had seemed quite near. He could not help shuddering when he suddenly found himself close to the blasted-looking tree on which it was said the suicide had accomplished his tragic deed, but murmuring half-aloud: "Oh, Lord Jesus, do please keep aside of me!" he went past it without faltering. The next minute a last red ray shot dazzlingly from beneath the cloud in which the setting sun had sunk, and revealed, peeping from among a clump of brown heath, the terrified face of a tabby cat.

"Puss, puss! Poor pussy, what's the matter?" said Bandy, running towards the creature with a voice full of sympathy, and all his fear forgotten. "What's the matter, then? Can't you get away?"

A closer inspection revealed the fact that poor pussy, wandering foolishly away from home, it is to be feared in search of prey, had got caught by the leg in a vermin-trap, and had torn her skin badly in trying to escape.

With the utmost tenderness Bandy endeavoured to release the poor thing, which, the trap being of simple construction, he was speedily successful in doing, and to his great gratification she allowed him to wrap his handkerchief round her bleeding leg, and carry her in his arms; the trustful, contented way in which she nestled against his breast proving both that she was accustomed to being petted, and that

she recognised in this gentle-voiced and gentle-handed little boy a friend who would do her no harm.

Not another thought did Bandy give either to the horror of the wood, the fast-gathering darkness, or the bough of may that he was leaving behind, but with a heart full of happiness trudged towards the village, crooning words of caressing and comfort to the cat as he went, fearful only that she might presently take it into her furry head to struggle out of his embrace and run away.

As he neared the village he met a gentlemanly-looking boy a few years older than himself.

"Hullo!" said the latter, pausing and peering curiously at Bandy's burden. "Whose cat have you got there?"

"I don't know," answered Bandy. "I found her. She was caught in a trap."

"She's my little sister's cat, I know!" cried the boy. "We have lost her for two days. Spot, Spot, poor old Spotty! There, I told you so."

For Spot, at the sound of her name in a familiar voice, lifted her tail as much as was possible within Bandy's encircling arm.

"Bring her to our house," continued the young gentleman. "It's just across the road there, at that white gate. Lily has been in such a way about it, that father said he'd give five shillings to get Spot back. Where did you say you found her?"

"In the fir wood up there; the people call it 'Hangman's Wood,'" Bandy told him.

"What! you don't mean to say you've been in there?" exclaimed his new acquaintance, in surprise. "I thought the youngsters about here would sooner jump into the canal head first than set foot in Hangman's Wood."

Two minutes later, Bandy, much to his own inward trepidation, was ushered across the broad threshold of what seemed to him a palace, and conducted into a large and handsome room, lighted by four candles in shining silver stands: Bandy was always fascinated by shining things, and these were the first he saw. The next was the gleaming golden hair of a little girl who lay upon a sofa, covered with a rich-looking gay-striped rug; and after Bandy had once caught sight of her, he had no eyes for anything or anybody else, though he by-and-bye became aware that there were two ladies and a gentleman in the room besides. So lovely she was, with a face just like an angel on a Christmas-card; and she sat up, and held out her arms to the cat, crying, "Spottie! oh, it *is* my darling own Spottie!" in the sweetest, gladdest voice Bandy had ever heard; and Spot, all forgetful of her wandering, and fright, and pain, put her two paws up round the little girl's neck, and purred till every hair of her coat seemed to quiver with rapture.

"A regular Trojan, I call him!" Lily's brother was saying. "There isn't another boy for miles round would have done it. I do believe I might have thought twice before I did it myself, except in quite broad daylight."

Bandy had not the least idea what a Trojan was, but he guessed, from the tone in which it was uttered, that it was something quite different from "muffy" and "cowardy custard," which were the usual terms in which he was alluded to by other boys.

He was on the point of conscientiously explaining that he *did* think twice, if not three times, before venturing into the wood, when Lily's mamma, in the kindest manner, asked his name. And almost before he had begun to realise his surroundings, he found himself sitting on a low chair by the fire, quite close to the angel-faced little girl on the sofa, eating a piece of delicious yellow cake, and telling Lily, and Lily's mamma and papa, and her Aunt Adelaide, and the young gentleman whose name was Rex, all about himself and his home, and the dear mother who bent all day over her sewing-machine.

The ladies were much interested. "What was your mother's name before she was married?" asked Aunt Adelaide.

"Annie—Annie Burley," replied Bandy; adding, "She used to be a nurse, and took care of a little boy—a little young gentleman—who died."

"Dear Cecil!" murmured Aunt Adelaide, with a glance at the other lady. "I thought as much. What a singular coincidence! She was the most admirable nurse I ever knew."

After that they asked him a great many more questions, and Lily's mamma wrote down on a piece of paper very carefully all the particulars of Bandy's address in London, and how to find it. Then, with five shillings in his hand, and a packet of toffee in one pocket and a big orange bulging the other, and the lightest of hearts, he was bidden a kindly good-bye, and sent away.

The cottager, who had charge of Bandy and one or two others of the London party, was glad enough to see him back again safe and sound, for she was beginning to get anxious. She could not leave home to go in search of the missing child until her husband returned from work, and as to getting any of his valorous companions to go back towards the "haunted" wood to look for him—well! the biggest of them, the noble youth who had put the frog in Bandy's shoe and laughed the loudest when he fled from the imaginary "mad bull," had hidden in the wood shed, in mortal dread of being selected for such an errand.

* * * * * *

About a week after Bandy's return to London, his mother was one day amazed by a visit from a lady, whom she had never seen before, but who explained that she was related to the mother of a little boy whom Annie Burley had devotedly nursed through his long last illness many years before. And would Mrs. Wiggs care to leave her present precarious employment and undertake the charge of an invalid little girl, with occasional sewing to fill up her time? She would live in a very healthy part of

the country, explained Lily's mamma—for, of course, it was she—and arrangements could be made for her little boy to be with her in the very same house.

How Mrs. Wiggs ever told Bandy when he came home from school, or how they got their minds ever to take in such marvellous good fortune, I do not know. But you may be sure they did not look upon it as so poor and heartless a thing as mere "good fortune;" they knew that it all came of the love and blessing of the good God whom both mother and child genuinely tried to serve.

It is several years now since all this happened. Miss Lily, under Nurse Wiggs' ceaseless care, is growing quite a fine young lady; and as to Bandy, his former friends would scarcely know him. Fresh air, and happiness, and an abundance of good food, have worked wonders with him. His face is no longer pale and pointed, but rosy-brown and plump; his blue eyes are twice as bright as formerly, and show no signs of weakness; even his legs are almost straight—we believe they will be quite right by the time he has done growing; and the whole of his slim, upright, fearless form has at last a chance of fairly showing forth, unhindered now by nervous terrors, the true hero-soul that even when most despised was always housed within.

BABY'S FIRST VISIT.

LITTLE blossom, that I greet
With such thoughts of love and pride,
Violets make December sweet,
You will bless my winter-tide.

With your wide blue eyes you seem
Only angel forms to see;
Waken from your heavenly dream,
Come to earth, and smile on me!

All the hopes of days gone past
Thrill me with the joys of yore;
Mother-feelings, soft and vast,
Fill my withered heart once more.

Sweet forgotten voices wake
From the silence of the years;
And the long-sealed fountains break
Into floods of happy tears.

Other baby faces rise
Round your tiny face to-day;
Other gentle violet eyes
Look from regions far away.

In my fulness of content,
I can bless the Father's love
For the lights that came and went,
And the buds that bloom above.

SARAH DOUDNEY.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

HE COULDN'T FORGET.

A VERY earnest and energetic teacher was away from home, and though always ready to pick up topics for teaching, and illustrations for arguments, by the wayside, the class was not in his mind. But the world is an inn of strange meetings, and suddenly he was touched on the shoulder by a young man. "I haven't the honour——' "What, don't you know me, sir? I was the worst boy in your class eight years ago. I heard you say it, though you didn't know I was close by. Now, sir, I'm a Sunday-school teacher myself. It was all true what you said of me; but though I was so wild I had a heart, sir, and I felt you wished me well in spite of the trouble I gave; and I had a memory, and the words you spoke, sir, I couldn't forget. They went with me when I ran away from home; they stuck with me. And I'm glad that they did, and I thank you, sir, for your patience in the old days." The teacher came back greatly encouraged, and is still at work, Sabbath by Sabbath, in the midst of lads who try him. If our teaching is for love of Christ, it must prosper.

CHRISTIAN LABOURS IN IRELAND.

In the will of a good man, bequeathing his property to his family, these words occur: "There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. If they had that, and I had not given them one shilling, they would be rich; and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor." Many a yearning heart, concerned on behalf of our brethren over the water, is feeling that the Gospel is the hope of Ireland, and that in trying to bring religion home to

those warm hearts of our neighbours, we shall give them comfort, inspiration, uplifting, patience, and riches for all eternity. However political opinions may differ, the Lord's people unite in the longing that evangelical religion may gain great and glorious victories throughout the length and breadth of the land. Most important are the labours of the Irish Church missions, and in some respects the workers therein are now facing a crisis. Railway alterations have required the former mission premises in Townsend Street and Luke Street, and the compensation only partly meets the attendant expenses. Accommodation is required for the home for girls, residence for female agents, school for 140 outdoor children. To build satisfactorily, about three thousand pounds will have to be found, and this causes anxiety to the society. Their mission work is most successful, and the work among the children has been fruitful of good. The need for outside help being so urgent, Mrs. Smyly, 35, Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin, appeals for the practical sympathy of friends, according as the Lord has prospered them.



THE FILIAL PANG.
(Reproduction of the Chinese illustration.)

THE FILIAL PANG.

Among the books with a moral purpose which can claim a widespread popularity in China, one of the greatest favourites is probably "The Twenty-four Examples." It is older than the writings of our Chaucer, yet to-day is not only known by name, but read throughout the Empire. The "Examples" are examples of filial piety—in the estimation of the Chinese the chief of all the virtues. As showing the kind of conduct held up to admiration and imitation in these examples, we may instance the incident which stands fifth (of which we reproduce the Chinese illustration from an edition published near Swatow in the Kwangtung province). There was a man of the name of Pang, who had a wife and one child—a three-year-old son. With them lived Pang's aged mother. Now Pang was a poor man, and—as is unfortunately too often the case with the poor in the Flowery Land—a very poor man. Large numbers of the labouring classes live ordinarily in a condition so totally devoid of unnecessary comfort, so little removed from destitution, that the least interference with the labour market, the least failure in the crops, sinks them at once into a state of starvation. There is no possibility of a step between. Their normal condition is but one step removed. Pang was very poor. He could not earn enough to support his family of mother, wife, and child. What was he to do? The Chinese are not lacking in affection. Pang loved his little son.

Moreover, as a Chinaman, he not only had for his son the love that belongs to fathers everywhere—he regarded him also with special affection as the celebrant of those funeral rites by which alone his spirit could be delivered from untold tortures in the next world. But notwithstanding all this—his love for his child and his desire for his own happiness after death, to secure which his son's survival was to him a necessity—Pang and his wife were moved by filial piety to agree together to bury their child, that there might be a saving of food for the child's grandmother! Pang was to dig the grave, and his wife was to put the living child into it! The poor father proceeded with his work, and soon had a hole almost large enough for their purpose, when his tool struck against something hard. A heap of gold lay at the man's feet! And, gracious miracle—for, under ordinary circumstances, a heap of gold would be a doubtful blessing to a poor man in that land of rapacious and extortionate mandarins—a document lay among the pieces of gold :—"Heaven gives this wealth to Pang, the filial son. Let no official seize it; let none lay claim to it." This short story presents temptation to remark on more than one subject contested by the champions and detractors of the Chinese, but we leave it as it stands, without comment.

SOME LIFE-STORIES.

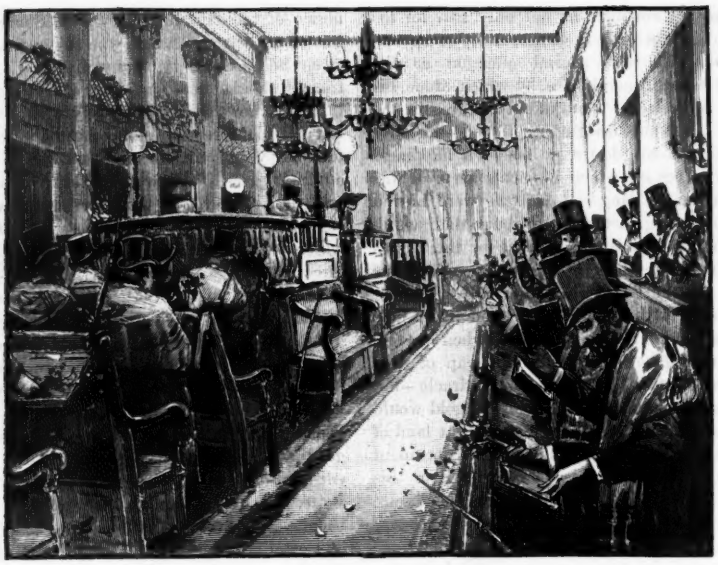
That the boy is father of the man is a truism we often repeat, and almost as often lose sight of. We have never come across a clearer example of it than is afforded by the life of the Rev. J. G. Wood, the eminent naturalist, which has just been written by his son, the Rev. Theodore Wood, and is published by Messrs. Cassell. Even when quite a child, at Oxford, he used to spend as much time as possible in the Ashmolean Museum, and the stories of the pets he and his schoolfellows used to harbour show how strongly the instinct of a naturalist governed these early years. In after life he became, as all our readers must know, famous as a popular writer and lecturer on natural history. Those who read his books and heard his addresses will be glad to welcome this story of their author's life. The friends, and they are many, of another good man who has been called away will be pleased to see the volume called "Memorials of Edwin Hatch, D.D." (Hodder and Stoughton), in which are printed a few of the many tributes that were paid to his memory at the time of his death, together with what seems to be a very representative collection of his sermons. Dr. Hatch was a remarkable man, alike in the breadth of his mind and the strength of his faith. It is to such men that we must look for the demolition of the walls of party jealousy that prevent all Christians working together for their common Lord. The spirit of the man breathes in his writings, and will, we trust, serve to enkindle a like fire to his own in many a heart. From the same publishers comes a somewhat similar volume, containing a brief biographical notice of the late Rev. Dr. A. N. Somerville, and a few of his sermons, under the suggestive title "Precious Seed, Sown in Many Lands." Our Scotch friends should make a point of getting this book. "Harness for a Pair" is a story with a well-pointed, but not too obtrusive moral, by the Rev. J J. Ellis, that our young friends might do well to read. The advice it gives, if followed, would save many an hour and day of sorrow. Another useful volume from the same author is "The Messages of Christ," in which he has gathered and expounded simply and directly Christ's call to all His people—to faithful and faithless alike. Both these volumes are issued by the Authors' Co-operative Publishing Company. Temperance workers will find a new ally in the "Temperance Reader," which has just been added to "Cassell's Modern School Series." Everybody knows how the stories and reminiscences of our reading-books remain with us, and can see how potent for good such a work as this may prove. Two new editions of books of poetry lie on our table as we write, and we can but call our readers' attention to them. The first is a volume of verse by Mr. George T. Coster (E. Stock), full of the life and change of the North-east Riding, and giving us two or three beautiful hymns, notably, that for "A Sabbath at Sea." Messrs. Rivington send us, at the same time, a new edition of "Five Minutes," a well-selected series of daily readings in poetry."

FOR LADIES IN NEED.

No class is more entitled to practical solicitude and sympathy than ladies who have seen more prosperous days, but who in declining years and weakness are without the comforts and cheer



"One who has seen better days."



"When spring unlocks the flowers." (The day of the "Great Hosanna" among the Jews.)

that would be so welcome and helpful. All honour to the "United Kingdom Beneficent Association," that has called into existence so many tender ministries to brighten the homes of candidates and annuitants. The "Ladies' Chain," the "Busy Bees," and other working societies, look after the matter of apparel; the "Hunt the Slipper" Association attends to the important point of boots and shoes. Then the "Quiet Friends" circulate literature, the "Ladies' Repository" tries to sell work, and the "Nourishing Dainties Society" collects and bestows many good things on behalf of those in need. Ladies who would like to join hands with those who are carrying on these channels of sympathy should procure "*Con Amore*," a little pamphlet issued by Charles Caswell, Birmingham, descriptive of many a suggestive and praiseworthy enterprise. Miss Smallwood, The Lees, Great Malvern, interests herself likewise in ladies of reduced fortune, but she finds that applications exceed resources. She can get work and paintings executed, and orders are very helpful; concerts, working parties, and the like, would be of great benefit on behalf of her fund for poor ladies.

"WHEN SPRING UNLOCKS THE FLOWERS."

In the organ of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, we read with interest that on the day of the "Great Hosanna," early in the morning, an emblematic ceremony is performed in most of the synagogues throughout the world. Everyone is provided with a bundle of willow twigs, and at a certain sentence the twigs are beaten on the book-rest in front of the worshipper, to strip the leaves from the stalks. Superstition has mixed up with this ceremony the notion of getting rid of sin, but it is a symbol of the fragility of human life, passing away like the dropping leaves that so soon fall from the bough. Springtime shows us the brighter side—the picture dear to faith and hope. Nature's lesson is not so much man's mortality, but God's immortality; His voice is waking the blossoms everywhere, and sending new life pulsing through tree and hedge, and giving joyous carols to the woodland birds. The fact that we do all fade as a leaf is swallowed up in victory when we remember God, our Dwelling-Place through all generations. He is the God of the living, and every note of Nature is uniting now in the resurrection anthem. His love seems to have renewed earth's youth, as she smiles amid her garlands of primrose, violet, anemone; and the bright daffodils whisper of the roses to come. Specially dear to the heart of the mourner are these signs of glorious new life that bless us on every hand, for the Lord's saints are more to Him than the grass of the field and the birds of the air, and He will not suffer them to perish, nor to pass into nothingness, as a dream that is forgotten. He who from winter's tomb can call the spring-flowers to shine beneath the tender showers like a rainbow, He who clothes hard, frosty ways with white-robed snowdrops, and fills anew the burning crocus-chalice, what has He not wrought with the sainted lives that earth beholds no more? "Fear not; believe only," is the Master's message, and it is echoed to our yearning souls in deathless harmony by the sweet, comforting miracle of Spring.

"SINCE I HAVE KNOWN YOU!"

"Why, what are you doing there, my friend?" said a lady to one of her own sex whom she saw loitering in the dusk not far from her own house. The answer was repellent. "Mind your own business," or words to that effect, was the reply. But the lady, who is well known as an earnest Christian worker, did not leave the lingerer alone, and finally she took her to her own home and gave her food. The woman's story was a sad one. She had been deeply wronged, she said, and she had fallen into great misery. Before very long she lay on her death-bed, and as her friend bent towards her and asked the pointed question, "Do you believe or do you love God?" the touching answer came, "I can since I have known you!" We have heard the story told as an instance of the value of doing Christian work in a loving way. But weakness and sentimentality must not be confounded with such love. To preach from the pulpit is the work of comparatively few; to preach by character, and action, and life, can be accomplished by the many.

MORE ABOUT THE "QUIVER" WAIFS.

We have received the following letter, which we think will interest the subscribers to this fund:—

"22nd January, 1890.

—My dear Sir,—I write in grateful acknowledgment of your welcome remittance, providing me with the means of maintaining little Willie Rush ('the Quiver Waif') for another year. I beg you to accept my heartfelt thanks for your continued personal interest in the little fellow, and for your good service in keeping alive the sympathies of your readers, to whom I desire to convey, through you, my sincere expression of gratitude. I am glad to say Willie is in good health, and makes very good progress in every way. He is still at Denmead, where he was visited very recently by our Boarding-out-Inspector.

With renewed thanks I remain faithfully yours,—

Thos. J. Barnardo."

Our readers will rejoice with us to hear from Miss Sharman that the little girl Winifred, who, as one of our waifs, was in Miss Sharman's Home, is no longer a waif. At the time she was admitted to the Home she was really quite destitute. But now an aunt of the little girl, of whom Miss Sharman knew nothing till quite recently, has presented herself and taken charge of our *protégée*. So we can no longer lay claim to the little maiden whose portrait we gave so lately as our February number, in the illustration to our artist's account of "The Waifs' Picnic" (p. 293). In her place, Miss Sharman has recommended to us another little girl, who is at present in her Home. So long as our readers enable us to do so, we shall be glad to allow Susie Lank to take Winifred's place as one of The Quiver Waifs. Susie is not very strong, and at the time we write is at the Newton Abbot branch of the Home, for the benefit of the fresh country air. Her mother died of consumption, and her father took his own life in the agony of his grief, leaving Susie and her elder sister, both of whom are shown in the accompanying illustration, unprovided for. Miss Sharman, as one of her friends writes, took the children in "at once, out of their turn, as *there was no one who could make a home for them.*" Will not our readers help us to make a home for these children?



Susie. *Susie's sister.*

OUR NEW WAIF AND HER SISTER.

(From a Photograph by E. Kelly, Newton Abbot.)

HOW THE ICE WAS BROKEN.



"She twined her arms round him."

We make the little ones our pets and playthings, but we scarcely realise how truly the Master deigns to use His lambs for the spread of His Kingdom oftentimes. It is on record that a little child interested in Sunday-school work a man who became the founder of many such schools, and made their well-being his life-work! Little hands have done work which older people found impossible, and led hardened hearts and lives to the foot of the Cross. A speaker told in our hearing of a member of his congregation, blameless outwardly, but cold and hard, withstanding Christian appeals, held in awe by many, and much dreaded by the children of the place, who fled when they saw him approach. But a tiny grand-daughter came to stay at his house, and one Sunday evening she twined her arms round him, and urged him to sing hymns. He told her gruffly that he could not sing, but she said with confidence, "Oh, yes, you 'll sing bass, and I 'll sing treble. We'll sing 'Jesus loves me,'" and she started the hymn, "I am so glad that Jesus loves me." Presently he found himself joining in, and, as they sang, his cold heart was moved, and tears began to roll down his cheeks. The child's ministry had smitten the rock, and he was a hard, stony-natured man no more. It was on the morrow that that man was suddenly called into eternity, as he went about his daily work; he was brought home to die, and they heard him repeating with his failing breath, "*I am so glad that Jesus loves me.*" "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." Unless we share their tender, trustful, simple, hopeful spirit, how shall we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?

NOT ABSENT ONCE.

"In my own Sunday-school," says a correspondent of an American contemporary, "I have a teacher who has not been absent a single Sabbath in twelve years, and a scholar whose regular attendance every Sabbath numbers fourteen years." Are these instances unparalleled, as they seem to us, or can any of our readers tell us of similar examples of faithful service? We shall be glad to hear from Sunday-school workers on this point.

A PANIC ARRESTED: A SPEECH SAVED.

A striking instance of the double quality of enthusiasm is found in a story told of Kossuth. The great Hungarian patriot was on tour in America, enlisting sympathy for his beloved land. He delivered an address in Madison, Indiana, to a gathering of Germans, speaking from the heart to the heart, and prophesying of a rising tide of liberty between Rhine and Vistula and Danube, he swayed the spell-bound throng with his oratory as trees are swayed in October winds. Suddenly a piercing scream rang out in the centre of the building, and in the tumultuous excitement of the moment panic was possible. Kossuth stopped with a calmness that had a tight grip of occasion, and a child and a woman were safely removed. But what of the speech? Surely it was a hopeless effort to resume. The audience had become inattentive, and the former fervour was dead. But Kossuth's fiery enthusiasm was not to be daunted. It enabled him to see opportunity in what had happened, and to change defeat into triumph. With a proud and inspiring gesture he said, while yet the child's wails vibrated in the air:—"He may cry now for Germany, but when he is old he will laugh." Kossuth had struck a key that answered. His power was effectually reasserted.

"MY BROTHER'S KEEPER."

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse pleads aright that places of worship should have some place open for evening resort, easily reached, warm and cheerful, where our poorer brethren and sisters might be sure of a welcome, and sit and read "without being lectured or patronised." He relates that he once observed a number of men, who were working on the road, taking their dinner by the wayside, in the pelting rain. Within a mile there were five places of worship, and the nearest was under his own pastorate. He got the schoolroom open, and welcomed them in, offered them the room as long as they worked near, and had a fire lighted for their benefit. Another place welcomed them when their work lay farther off. On Sunday some of them walked a long distance to hear a sermon from their

friend; one of them explaining, "One good turn deserves another!" There are many ways and means surrounding us of holding a kindly hand to our brethren, and we, as Christians, are responsible that they shall not be unhelped and forgotten.

"THE BOOK WAS NOT THERE!"

Four Indians of Oregon once made a journey of 3,000 miles on an unusual errand. The rumour had reached the far western woods that the white invaders had a Book, which Book was the work and gift of the Great Spirit. In a solemn forest council it was decided to send an embassy and ask for the Red man the privilege of sharing in the blessings of this wonderful possession. Two aged Sachems and two young braves were selected to go. It was a weary distance, but at last they reached St. Louis. Unfortunately for their purpose, St. Louis was, in those days, a Roman Catholic city. The visitors were shown many sights, but enquiry for the Book received only evasive answer. Soon the two old men died, the last great task of their lives uncompleted. On the eve of a sad and disappointing return, one of the survivors went into the Council-room of the American Fur Company, and with pathetic, unstudied eloquence, addressed the Governor. "My people sent me to get the white man's Book of Heaven," he said. He called to mind where he had been taken, but ended with the touching refrain, "The Book was not there!" And still the Book was not forthcoming. The poor Indian went away as he came. The mission seemed to end in utter failure. But it was only in the seeming. A young clerk in the office, who had heard those words, "The Book was not there!" wrote about it to friends. His letter was made public, and very shortly afterwards two noble-hearted young missionaries and their brave wives went out to carry the Gospel into Oregon. Man denied the Indian's prayer, but God heard it, and made even apparent failure the instrument by which the answer was sent.



MARIA HIBBERD, THE QUEEN OF "THE QUIVER" ORDER OF HONOURABLE SERVICE.

(From a Photograph by Messrs. Debenham & Gould, Bournemouth.)

THE "QUIVER" ORDER OF HONOURABLE SERVICE.

We were mistaken when we said, in our February number, that Nancy Ball is now Queen of the Order. That distinction belongs to Maria Hibberd, who has served in her present employer's family since August, 1819, very nearly 71 years. The old lady, whose portrait we give this month, is now 87 years of age. She was enrolled among the distinguished members of our Order some two years ago. Since our last note on this subject was published, the following names have been added to the roll of distinguished members :—

Name.	Address.	Years in Situation.
GARDNER, ELIZABETH	PLYMOUTH	51
SMITH, ELLEN	MANCHESTER	50

This class, which consists of those domestic servants who have held their present situations not less than fifty years, is the only class of the Order now open. All communications regarding enrolment must be addressed to the Editor of THE QUIVER.

"A GREAT MORAL INSTITUTION."

The late Earl of Shaftesbury thus entitled the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society, remarking that old people are apt to be considered burdens, while it should be a joy and a privilege to minister to them. Reverence for old age is perhaps a less popular virtue than it ought to be; busy, bustling people are no doubt of inestimable value, but we need the benedictions across this work-a-day world of those peaceful, patient lives on the "right side of eighty"—the side nearest the Land of Sunshine and Rest. The Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society has taken up the privilege of caring for "old-fashioned Christians," and for more than fourscore years it has ministered to the needs of thousands of those whose earthly work is over. There are four homes, and there is also a most helpful pension administration. Some of the recipients are blind, others bedridden, and all are thus enabled to live free from the cares of grinding poverty and in comparative comfort. Of one aged believer thus assisted we read that for forty-three years he "supplied" village churches, walking many miles to render such help. He often expressed a wish to be taken ere he could do no more, and he preached on the Sunday before he died. "I acknowledge," writes

a pensioner, "the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God, who has enabled me, through your benevolence, to keep on a cottage-home, which I must otherwise have given up." May this society be developed by kindly hearts and hands, fulfilling the poet's words as concerns the hoary-haired:—

"Now let the parting hour be bright;
At even time let there be light"

A KINDLY SUGGESTION.

The poet reminds us that want of thought is sometimes responsible for evil rather than want of *heart*. Some of us have been troubled on Sunday mornings by the sight of weary postmen trudging mile after mile to perform the work that seems to belong more appropriately to week-days; yet there is a difficulty concerning this question of Sunday delivery. In critical cases a telegram might certainly answer the purpose of a letter, but few are prepared to give up their Sunday letters, and in towns the decision to do so must be unanimous, or the delivery will be continued. A lady whose mind has been exercised about this matter has formed a simple plan which she would be glad to suggest to others. She makes a rule to abstain from posting letters on Saturday which would be delivered on the Sabbath-day. A very simple solution this of the difficulty, could it become a general practice.

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from January 22nd, 1890, up to and including February 24th, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month.

Chrysanthemum, Bristol, 1s. 6d.; Thankful, 2s.; E. T., Richmond, 2s. 6d.; Thankful. Warwick, 5s.; Wighill Park, £1; J. J. E., Govan (28th donation), 5s.; G. L., London, 10s.; Anon., Bristol, 3s.; Wallflower, Kilburn, 5s.; A Member of "THE QUIVER" Order of Honourable Service, £1 1s.; S.S., Notting Hill, 1s. 6d.; A., Manor Park, 2s.; A Glasgow Mother, 1s.; Hope, Warwick, 7s. 6d.

"THE QUIVER" FREE GRANTS FUND.

We have received the following donations from December 19th, 1889, up to and including February 24th, 1890:—

Avice, Wakefield, 5s.; Miss Moore, Birkdale, 5s.
Collected by Mrs. Jardine, Coatbridge, 11s. 8d.; by Miss Jupe, Bath, 7s.; by Mrs. Roe, Upper Clapton, 3s.; by Miss Heath, Henley-on-Thames, 1s. 6d.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of the following donations to the funds of the Homes:—

Jennie, 5s.; G. J. R., 2s. 6d.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

61. In what did Simon the Pharisee, when he invited Jesus to his house, show that he had no love or respect for Him?

62. What answer did Christ give to the woman at Simon's house which showed He knew what was in her heart?

63. What are the great hindrances to a proper acceptance of God's Word mentioned by our Blessed Lord?

64. What disciple of Christ is mentioned as being drawn away by "these things" from the work of the Ministry?

65. What person is mentioned as being kept from listening to our Lord's teaching by the cares of this life?

66. In what way did Jesus show His sympathy with a ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum?

67. What instances have we in the Old Testament of people being restored to life?

68. What is it which marks the great difference between the miracles of the Old Testament, and our Lord's as shown in raising Jairus' daughter?

69. Quote a passage which shows that as our blessed Lord had power to restore the dead body to life, so also He has the power to restore to life those dead in trespasses and sins.

70. In what locality did the feeding of the five thousand take place?

71. What does St. Luke specially mention as to Our Lord's seating the five thousand?

72. Quote a passage which shows that as Jesus fed men with food for their bodies, so also He has provided spiritual food for the souls of men.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 394.

49. St. Luke v. 10.

50. St. Luke v. 4.

51. The power to forgive sins. St. Luke v. 20—24.

52. St. Paul. (Romans vi. 23.)

53. Isaiah xlii. 1—3.

54. St. Luke vi. 31.

55. When a band of Syrians had come to take Elisha, and themselves had been taken prisoners, then Elisha commanded that food should be given them, and sent them home. (2 Kings vi. 13—23; St. Luke vi. 27.)

56. By His prayer for his murderers. (St. Luke vi. 28 and xxxiii. 34.)

57. The little captive girl. (2 Kings v. 1—3.)

58. The miracle of restoring to life the widow's son at Nain. (St. Luke vii. 13—16.)

59. St. James. (James i. 27.)

60. It was the power which Jesus manifested over death as shown in the command: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." (St. Luke vii. 14.)

XUM





HER FEEBLE STEPS.

(*See p.* 483.)

Her Feeble Steps



A PROUD young mother, in the glow
Of life's glad morning, long ago
It was her happy task to guide
His childish steps when, side by side,
Along a sunlit path they walked.
His small hand clasped in hers, and talked
With joyous tones, and laughter light,
Amid a world of beauty bright —

Now, bent beneath the weight of years,
She leans upon his arm, and hears
The deep, stern voice his comrades know,
Speaking in accents soft and low,
While, with erect and manly air,
A noble son, with loving care
He guides her feeble steps, whose day
Of life is fading fast away!



With grateful heart he dwells upon
The gracious time, forever gone,
The hours she watched and tended him!
And now her eyes are growing dim,
And strength is failing, he will guide
Her feeble steps with tender pride.
Counting her love of higher worth
Than any prize he gains
on earth.

J R Eastwood

REVELATIONS OF CHARACTER.

BY THE REV. W. MANN STATHAM.

I.—CHARACTER AND THE COUNTENANCE.

MIND and body have such a marvellous and mysterious connection the one with the other, that their action and interaction have formed the subject of learned treatises, such as Professor Alexander Bain's work on "Mind and Body." All, however, that I purpose to do in this first article is confined to the consideration of the revelation of character through the countenance. I might, indeed, have enlarged the consideration by taking in the entire physique: for unquestionably the shuffling gait, the pompous walk, the expressive shoulders—shrugged or raised—all have an eloquence of their own. Let the countenance, however, suffice: it is complete as a study, and interesting enough in its variety of aspects. I am not about to defend the position that physiognomy so-called never deceives: but I do submit that it rarely does so, and that qualities of mind and heart and moral being may generally be discerned there. The studious forehead, the scornful lip, the cruel mouth, the nervous upper lip, the unsteady gaze, the self-indulgent features, are familiar to us all. The eye, of course, is in itself an exhaustless study: reverence and irreverence, pity and inconsiderateness, compassion and coldness, rudeness and courtesy, self-respect and shamelessness, earnestness and frivolity, parsimony and generosity, all reveal themselves in the wonderful expressiveness of the eye. I do not, of course, mean that a deceitful manner cannot be assumed, or that, *for a time*, men and women cannot look what they are not: but Nature has no permanent veils: they are very gauze-like, torn and tattered in an instant by those freaks of real nature which assert themselves in so many unconscious ways. The sentinel Will is off guard in an instant, and quietly, but surely, the revelation comes, and we see under the guise the real man!

In the most perfect sense, "out of the heart are the issues of life," and the blush of the innocent maiden and the stammering lips of the perjured witness tell their own tale.

That our countenances, too, vary with the elevation or deterioration of our spiritual character is evident to our best friends; there are times when we consciously live in strenuous endeavours after a diviner life, and those about us know it by infallible signs in the revelation of our countenance. There is a quiet dignity of expression, not long-drawn or Pharisaical, but one which makes manifest a life full of happy cheerfulness and fervency in daily duty, and yet bespeaks a consciousness of the near presence of God.

Our young friends are scarcely aware how much *their* countenances are affected by their friendships. Have we not all known sweet and sacred simplicity and naturalness give place to mannerism and affectation, whereby their faces have lost that early grace of considerate kindness which made their very presence a benediction amidst their often worn and weary-hearted elders?

Is it true, then, it is sometimes asked, that the instincts of people—of women especially—are always to be taken as true in respect of countenance? Certainly "always" is a large generalisation, and I should not like to endorse the idea as true in every case; but in the main I think it is true, and when instinct creates a positive aversion on the part of women, I should personally be inclined to be on my guard in fellowship with those whom they so greatly feel antipathetic to. Unquestionably, however, the consideration of what are called "first impressions" is a great study in one's own life, and the often-debated question whether, —whatever our after-views—we do not generally find first impressions pretty true, is a most interesting query, and I incline to give an affirmative reply. Everything in us works from the centre to the circumference, and what is in the revealing countenance—whether it be gladness or grief, anxiety or peace, confidence or distrust—is first of all in our mind and heart.

Another question, most interesting, too, in this region of debate, is this: Can there be true beauty where there is a corrupt and evil character? Everything here depends upon what is meant by true beauty. If outline of form and feature and perfect complexion are held ever to constitute true beauty, the answer might well be in the affirmative here also; but more than this, I think, is required to constitute true beauty.

Professor Ruskin says the faults of a painter's character show themselves in his work; and, with his large induction of observation, we naturally give great weight to his verdict. Certainly it seems to me perfectly true, as the Holy Book says of those who are not the children of goodness, that "they that be otherwise cannot be hid." And so as human beauty includes moral loveliness, true beauty cannot really belong to those whose hearts and whose lives are sensual and evil.

Expression is, after all, no forced or feigned thing; it is the result of life, and the spirit of man which is in him is one of those subtle things that more or less pervade every feature of the countenance.

From all these considerations, it is manifest that in character are to be found the highest elements of health and happiness, both of which reveal themselves in the countenance. We read in the Bible of "wholesome words": a very suggestive expression; and as the heart and the lips are so near akin, it is evident that the wholesome heart or the healthy heart gives that

"health of the countenance" of which the Bible also speaks. The blessed or holy man, also, is he whose heart is right with God, who is delivered from the bondage of guilt through the Cross of Christ, and from the bondage of habit through the indwelling of the Spirit of God; for "he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Take away, then, the stings of conscience, the agonies of remorse, the slavery of evil habit, and let a man be saved in the highest sense, by Christ's life in him, and you secure the blessed countenance, filled with that sweet benediction of Heaven's own peace, which is spoken of by the Psalmist as "the health of my countenance and my God."

I do not say that there are no marked exceptions to my illustrations and arguments. For instance, there are specially anxious and nervous temperaments; there are inherited features, which carry with them not men's own habits, but ancestral ones; there are the subjects of melancholia, ever to be pitied, and to be honoured too, for the brave way in which they fight on in life's daily battle, and make endeavour to master their own mental tendencies; but in the main I believe that the ideas developed in these pages are true ideas, and they show us that men cannot well or long conceal their true selves.

We may not be "strikers or busybodies"; but, as the poet says—

> "They hurt me with their faces and their eyes;"

and it is certainly worthy of consideration how much scornful people and satirical people and indifferent people do to make daily life a burden and a pain to others. A cheerful countenance still does act like a medicine: it exhilarates and inspires others, and helps to make the daily road a much smoother path, and the common task a much more successful toil. A thankful countenance does much to cure a somewhat popular pessimism, and to make us more grateful for the multitude of God's mercies, new every morning and fresh every evening. An open countenance does much to disconcert the deceitful and the diplomatic, who naturally are afraid to have much fellowship with those who say what they mean, mean what they say, and look what they speak. A reverent countenance does much to rebuke frivolity with Divine things, and to check that lightness of talk which soon degenerates into the empty jest and the hollow laugh. A pure countenance is as a coat of mail against all approaches of the evil spirit. And therefore, for the reasons I have developed in these pages, by the revelations our countenances give of what is believed with the heart, loved with the heart, reverenced with the heart, and cherished and protected as the very life of the soul, the subject of our study becomes a very vital one. Nature hates a forgery—the true handwriting of life is soon known. Nature hates a mask, and at any sudden instant tears it down and rends it in twain—which is only saying, in other words, "God made us, and not we ourselves." Yes—and "fearfully and wonderfully" are we made; no handiwork of man is so subtle and delicate as that which connects body and soul together: the nerves, those messengers of sensation, have a swifter telegraphy than any of our electric wires; and before the will can forbid or arrest the message, it is written on the index of the countenance. Surely, as we study the subject, the ancient prayer has a new beauty and a fuller meaning in it: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

It certainly remains true, so far as Art is concerned, that revelations of character—for instance, as in Judas—have appeared in the countenance; but there is one thing Art cannot do—viz., give us the transformation scenes which sudden temptations and dangers bring forth, such as that spoken of in Belshazzar: "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him." Yet so it is. We are the subjects of marvellous changes of countenance, as our moods come and go. When Cain was wroth, "his countenance fell." When Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, "it was not towards him as before." After the words of Eli, Hannah "went her way, and her countenance was no more sad." And Nehemiah reminds us of his own tell-tale countenance in the presence of Artaxerxes: "Now I had not been aforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart."

So it was; and so moods of mind and passing emotions of grief or joy mirror themselves in our countenances, as in the days of old; but underlying all, and coming out daily and hourly, are those constant expressions which give a stereotyped character to the countenance, and reveal the real abiding self. How beautiful is the quotation of St. Peter, made from the Psalms on the day of Pentecost, and how applicable to every godly man: "Thou hast made me to know the ways of life: Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance."



WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

UNDER ONE ROOF.

'They could not in the selfsame mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart."



VERECROFT seemed very quiet when Lancelot had gone, and everyone seemed more or less unsettled. It was the sort of blank the absence of the head of a household makes; for though Sir Raymond was nominally the master of the house, it was his cousin who transacted all the business and made all the arrangements.

"That will all have to be altered when I come back," Lancelot had said to Sir Raymond, the night before he went away. "You are a man now, you know, and my stewardship is over. Even when you go back to Oxford——"

"I am not going back," said Sir Raymond, with an ingenuous blush. "I don't know that a degree would be of any particular good to me—and I don't suppose I should work much, *now*."

"No," said Lancelot drily. He looked at his cousin curiously, and his own colour changed. "When is it to be?" he asked, almost sharply.

He turned his face from the light, but Sir Raymond was too full of his own thoughts to notice how Lance felt or looked.

"The mother wants us to wait till after Christmas, so of course we shall," he said; and Lancelot felt like a man who hears his death-warrant read

"Christmas? So soon!" he stammered blankly. Somehow he had never thought of anything immediate. When Ray was older, when the mourning for Mrs. Kenyon was over, when he himself would have had time to learn indifference, no doubt this thing must be; but *now?*

It was something in Raymond's face that had made him put his question, but he had not expected an answer like this. It took him all the more by surprise that he had heard no hint of such a thing, had not been consulted beforehand—he who was, at Verecroft, the universal adviser and referee.

"Nothing is *quite* settled, of course," said Sir Raymond, interpreting his cousin's surprise in what seemed to him the most natural way. "You see, Lance, Avice doesn't know you as we do, and she can't understand what a dear old *alter ego* of mine you are, and she didn't like to have it talked about till nearer the time. Of course I told you, as you asked me——"

"Don't apologise. I quite understand, and it is perfectly natural," said Lancelot, in a tone of repressed pain. Was he to lose her friendship also? he thought bitterly.

No doubt it was best so in every way, but it is not always that one has strength to desire the best. Lancelot did not ask if Avice's evident indifference made his renunciation easier; he only felt that it chilled him to the heart, that he would have given a dozen years of his life for one of those shy friendly glances he had been used to meet, for one of the sweet gracious tones that had grown so stiff, and formal, and cold. He wished his cousin a hurried good-night and left him, feeling that he must betray himself if he talked of Avice any more.

He had a long interview with Lady Vereker after that, in which he made it so evident that he wished to leave Verecroft before Sir Raymond's marriage, that Lady Vereker found herself unable to combat his resolution. She pleaded and protested in vain: for once Lancelot was obdurate, and bent on his own way. He would not even consent to remove with Lady Vereker to the Dower House, and continue to manage the estate.

"Ray is a man now," he said; "he ought to manage the estate himself. He must have occupation, and why should I take his natural duties from him? It will be best for him that I should go, and for me too. If I am to do anything in my profession, I ought to begin at once."

It was all so unanswerable that Lady Vereker could only agree, though with many tender regrets. It was settled at last that Lancelot should try to meet with suitable rooms in the Temple, or some other haunt of budding barristers, and should take possession between then and Christmas; and the feeling of a more permanent separation added to the depression with which Lady Vereker and Sir Raymond saw him drive away now.

"You can't understand it, I know," said Sir Raymond, who found his betrothed less sympathetic than usual, "but you will when you know Lance better. You will miss him then as much as any of us."

As much! Did any of them miss him as she did now? Did the loss of this one voice make all other sounds empty and barren to their ears? Did his absence take the light from their eyes and the sunshine from their day? Did they feel as if Life had nothing to offer now that he was gone, and Hope nothing to feed on now that there was no longer the chance that the sound of an opening door might herald his approach?

She was silent, for what was there she could say?

"You see," said Sir Raymond, still wishful to win her interest in the cousin he held so dear, "Lancelot is not a man easy to know, and perhaps it is a good thing for me. If you had known Lance as he really is, I shouldn't have had a chance! As it was, I believe I was always a little jealous when he went near you—though of course it would be absurd to be really jealous of Lance."

XUM

"I wonder why?" said Avice, in level tones that hid a good deal of surprise, and perhaps of indignation; but Sir Raymond answered with an unconsciousness that disarmed reproach.

"He does not mean to marry," he said simply. "He told me so the other day."

Meanwhile Lancelot's absence lengthened to nearly a week, and the quiet days slipped by with little to mark their course. Lady Vereker and Daisy walked and talked together, and sometimes drove out in the pony-carriage through the rich Warwickshire fields and lovely elm-bordered lanes, and Sir Raymond and Avice were left to the dual solitude which is the privilege of affianced lovers, and which Sir Raymond, at least, thoroughly enjoyed. He would have been well content to spend his days at Avice's feet, but Avice told him she detested "philandering," and insisted on "rational occupation."

Fortunately music offered a compromise acceptable to both, and the old hall continually resounded with the fine tones of the organ and the strains of the two beautiful voices. The tenor which Andrea Balmano had bequeathed to his son had been cultivated as it could not have been had he been brought up as the peasant's son he was, and Avice was never so near loving him as when he sang to her.

If they could only have passed their lives away in singing! she thought, with a sigh, as she sat in the shadow of the organ, the evening when Lancelot was expected home.

Lady Vereker and Daisy had driven to Warwick to meet him, and Avice sat and listened to Sir Raymond's singing, and waited—waited—till the sky glowed red with sunset, and the shadows crept along the floor.

Her eyes wandered to the clock, but it was already too dark to see the time. Still, he could not be long, she knew, and now and then she fancied she heard the roll of wheels along the drive.

Sir Raymond had left off singing, and was improvising, in the dusk, faint dreamy melodies that seemed to suit the softness and beauty of the hour. A little mist was rising from the river; the jessamine that grew round one of the windows gave out its faint sweet perfume; there were moths flitting amongst the flowers, and a bat wheeling and flashing across the space framed by the open door.

There were wheels certainly now. Avice's heart beat as if it would suffocate her, and Marmion, Lancelot's great Scotch deerhound, got up from his place by the door, and shook himself and sniffed the air as if he knew his master was coming.

Suddenly Sir Raymond began to sing again, but Avice interrupted him with a sharp, startled cry.

"Not that—not *that!*" she said, and he looked at her in vague surprise.

He had chosen the ballad she had sung in Lady Rosalie's drawing-room when Lancelot had come in. But Sir Raymond knew nothing of that, and naturally it had no special associations for him.

"Don't you like it?" he asked in astonishment. "Why, Avice, you used to sing it yourself! And the violin part comes out so well on the organ. Pull me out the claribel stop, and listen."

"I would rather you did not sing it—not now—not to-night."

"But why?" persisted Sir Raymond, turning round to look at her.

The next moment he jumped up, and went swiftly across the hall. Lancelot was coming in at the door, between Lady Vereker and Daisy, and in the confusion of welcome and greetings only Lancelot himself noticed that Avice had disappeared.

He had seen her as he entered, the tall white-draped figure, with its coronal of shining hair shown up against the dusky background, and seeming to him, at least, to "make a sunshine in a shady place." And now she was gone, and he felt as if he had driven her away. Did she dislike him so much that she would not even join the others in bidding him welcome home? It was thus Lancelot thought of the girl who had fled from his presence only because it was so dangerously dear. He had thought once that she had felt for him a friendship it would have been easy to change into love, but lately he had doubted if even the friendship had existed except in his own imagination.

And meanwhile, Avice was writhing under a sense of intolerable humiliation. Why should this man have such power over her? she asked herself bitterly. She was trying with all her might to do her duty to Sir Raymond, but how could she so long as his cousin's voice thrilled her in every nerve, and the mere sight of him made an epoch in her day?

She did not come down-stairs till the dinner-bell rang, and then her mood was so bitter and sarcastic that Lady Vereker was puzzled and distressed, and asked her son privately if there had been a lover's quarrel while she was away.

"A quarrel? No, indeed! She was all that is nice and sweet. She always is when we are alone. I never saw her quite like this before, but certainly there is no question of a quarrel between Avice and me. You don't understand her, mother."

"No," sighed Lady Vereker; "but I try, Ray, and perhaps it will come in time. We are so different, you see, and I have known her such a little while. I wish Mrs. Meredith would have come with her daughters. I should understand Avice so much better if I had seen her mother."

But Mrs. Meredith had refused the invitation to Verecroft, as she refused all others, and with something more than the vague alarm with which she shrank from strangers. How could she meet Lady Vereker, who was not a stranger, who might recognise her, even now, as the woman who was once Hugh Dalrymple's wife?

CHAPTER XXV.

A MOONLIGHT MEETING.

"Yea, this man's brow, like to a tragic leaf,
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume."—Shakespeare.

Leamington was decidedly empty, as it always is in August. There were fewer pretty girls in irreproachable costumes to be seen about the wide, pleasant streets, and fewer languid dandies, with eye-glasses and sticks and gaiters, lounging up and down the Parade. The Jephson Gardens were given over to nursemaids

and children; the sluggish Leam ran low, and a general air of dusty dulness pervaded the place.

Everyone who could had gone to the sea, to Scotland, or abroad, and even Lady Rosalie had at last carried out her intention of getting away. She and Hilda



"Avice sat and listened to Sir Raymond's singing." –*p.* 487.

Jackson were at Scarborough, and Mr. Ruggles, of the Commissariat Department, had also selected that lively watering-place for his autumnal holiday—a fact which involved a good deal of walking for Lady Rosalie, who found herself required to tramp up and down the grounds of the Bridge Gardens as patiently as she had ever done along the Warwick road in the days of Captain Hallam. Captain Hallam himself was far away from Warwick now. He had volunteered for service in Egypt, and was already on his way to the East; and Daisy Meredith, who felt guiltily conscious of having driven him away, was sadder and more fragile-looking than ever. She said very little about it, but she found a wonderful interest in the war news, read every line of the long reports from "Our own Correspondent at the Seat of War," and was, Sir Raymond Vereker declared, a perfect mine of information on the doings of the Khedive and Arabi Pasha, of Lord Charles Beresford and Lord Wolseley, and all who were concerned in the elucidation of the Egyptian question. Sir Raymond himself had only the vague and general information of the average Briton, but Daisy's interest was something

very different, and very much more personal than this. It was the interest, not of the average Briton, but of the little knot of women whose husbands and sons and lovers were hurrying to the Delta of the ancient Nile as fast as modern steam could take them. She knew the name of the vessel Captain Hallam had gone in, and watched its course as eagerly and anxiously as any wife, or mother, or sweetheart of them all.

Mrs. Meredith, too, read the Egyptian news with unusual interest, though for quite another reason. She had told Daisy that she did not know where her husband was, but though she had no absolute knowledge, she had a strong suspicion that the Dalrymple Pasha, whose name occurred now and then in the despatches, was the man who had been ignominiously dismissed from the English service, and had worn the broad arrow at Dartmoor. She said nothing to Daisy, but she looked in the papers for the recurrence of his name with a sort of horrible fascination. Implacable as she was, and as she thought she had the right to be, the possibility that this man might be her husband, and the father of her children, invested the war news with a terrible interest, and Mrs. Meredith looked for the paper every morning as eagerly as Daisy herself.

Avice, who knew and understood her mother's face so well, was puzzled by the interest it expressed. It must be sympathy with Daisy, she thought—but surely it was better that Daisy should learn to forget Captain Hallam? She had not found forgetting so easy for herself, but Daisy was different, thought Avice, with a sigh, and Captain Hallam was not Lancelot Vereker.

She saw very little of Lancelot now, and time sped with lagging flight, like a bird with a wounded wing. Lady Vereker had gone to visit some friends of her mother's, and Lancelot and Sir Raymond were at home alone.

Sir Raymond spent most of his days at Leamington, sitting in the Hermitage garden, teaching Avice to ride, or boating on the shady waters of the Leam. He had given her a horse, as gentle as it was beautiful, and it was not long before she was able to ride it. Looking back to this part of her life in after years, Avice thought that she had liked nothing so well as these rides on the yielding turf that bordered the well-kept roads, and through the lanes where the bramble-blossoms and roses were over, and the bryony hung its fantastic wreaths, and the traveller's joy was a mass of feathery grey seed-vessels, and the poppies showed red amongst the yellowing corn. Pleasant to remember, too, save for the haunting sense of duty unfulfilled and unattained endeavour, were the afternoons spent upon the Leam, when Sir Raymond rowed out to some sheltered nook in the shade of the great trees whose branches dipped in the sober stream, and read aloud from whatever book they happened to have on hand. It was all very lover-like and idyllic, except that one at least was so painfully conscious that so little love was there. It was sisterly affection at best that she had to give; and though Sir Raymond made no complaint, Avice's calm kindness sometimes chilled him to the heart. He felt like one who had asked for bread and received a stone.

And yet she was so sweet, so beautiful, and kind, and good! The young lover's reproaches turned always against himself; his meditations ended always in assuring himself that he, and he alone, was to blame.

She loved him—was not their engagement a proof of that?—and he, ungrateful that he was, could not be content unless she told him so a dozen times a day! It was no wonder if outraged maidenliness took refuge in the silence he resented so unreasonably.

He was musing thus one evening as he rode home under the bright August moon. He had left Leamington and Warwick far behind, and taking a bridle-path by the Avon, came out into a lane that skirted Vereroft Park, and let himself in through one of the private gates. The park stretched wide and far on either hand, the house showed white through the trees, the great elms stood up tall and dark against the sky, and the young master of it all looked at his goodly heritage with pardonable pride. How good it was to be Vereker of Verecroft! How sweet it was to have so fair a possession to lay at his lady's feet! He wished Avice could have seen it as he saw it now, with the dew glittering on the grass, and the moonlight silvering everything on which it fell. The trees were still in full leaf, and cast dense masses of shadow on the dewy grass, but here and there the moonlight caught the stem of a silver birch, and made pools of light in the open spaces, and glittered on the dew-spread ferns. As Sir Raymond rode up the avenue the ground was white with moonlight beneath his horse's feet, with sharp black shadows flickering and waving across it from the waving trees, and lying dense and thick on each side of the way. Suddenly a man stepped out from a clump of trees and laid his hand on the bridle of his horse.

"What do you want?" cried Raymond sharply, bringing the handle of his riding-whip down on the other's fingers.

The man loosed his hold, but only to grasp the bridle with his other hand.

"Pardon, m'sieu," he said, lifting his cap, and showing a dark foreign face, lit up by a pair of small dark eyes.

It was no ordinary tramp, evidently, and though Sir Raymond still gripped his whip menacingly, he stopped his horse, and inquired what the man wanted, in the execrable French peculiar to undergraduates of English universities. Bad as it was, the man seemed to understand it, and poured forth a voluble reply Sir Raymond entirely failed to comprehend.

"Speak slower! *Parlez—plus—lentement*," he said impressively.

Thus adjured, the man did his best to comply, and Sir Raymond did his best to understand, but only succeeded in arriving at a bewildering conclusion that the ill-looking foreigner, who seemed to have sprung out of the shadows of the night, was requesting his assistance to obtain what he called justice on some person or persons unknown.

"It was not fair, as monsieur would admit, that the parson should take all and the husband nothing, when positively it was the husband who was the interested party. Monsieur had no doubt silenced *ce lâche pasteur* with a handsome *douceur*, but was the husband, was he—Gustave Caillot—to have nothing?

Moi aussi, je puis parler," ended the man significantly; and as Sir Raymond only stared, he added in English, "Me can speak too, sare; me speak too!"

"Speak away, then," cried Sir Raymond, "though I think you needn't have chosen eleven o'clock at night to do it. *Parlez, mon bon homme, mais coupez le court.*"

Whether the foreigner understood this literal injunction to "cut it short" did not appear. He began to protest that he only wanted his rights, and had no wish to make trouble, but have his rights he would. It was intolerable, it was *infâme*, that the *pasteur* should have stolen such a march upon him, but he had no wish to be hard on his stepson. All he asked was that he should have the same as the *pasteur*, and his *beau-fils* would see.

"Oh, get along with your *beau-fils!*" cried Sir Raymond impatiently. "My good fellow, if *you* can't talk English, and *I* can't talk French, what is the use of stopping here? You want a tip, I suppose? Take it, and be off!"

He tossed half a crown on to the path, but the man only looked at it scornfully, and laid his hand again upon the rein.

"*Pas assez!*" he declared, shaking his head vigorously. "Not e—nuff! Von, two, tree ondred so much not enuff! What you haf give ze *pasteur*, ze same you gif me!"

"The fellow 's mad," thought Sir Raymond, "with his *pasteur*, and *beau-fils*, and nonsense.—Look here, my man—*entendez, voyez-vous;* that's all you'll get from me"—pointing to the half-crown glittering on the walk—"that's all you'll get—*c'est tout, TOUT, TOUT!*"—raising his voice as if the man were deaf. He jerked the rein out of his hand, and, touching the horse with his whip, was out of sight before the other recovered from his surprise.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GUSTAVE CAILLOT.

> Make thy demands to those that own thy power!
> Know, I am still beyond thee; and though fortune
> Has stripp'd me of this train, this pomp of greatness,
> This outside of a king, yet still my soul,
> Fix'd high, and of herself alone dependent,
> Is ever free and loyal."—ROWE.

"THERE 's been a furriner asking for you, sir," the footman said, as he let his master in. "Mr. Wickham and me both saw him, sir, but we couldn't make top nor tail of his gibberish, and Mr. Wickham didn't like the looks of him at all."

Sir Raymond laughed. The butler's objection to all sorts and conditions of foreigners was a standing joke in the kindly household at Verecroft.

"This really *were* a suspicious-looking party, sir," said Jones, entirely understanding his master's amusement. "I see him myself, sir, and I really think he were up to no good."

"And no harm either," said Sir Raymond. "I've no doubt I've just met the man in the park. An ill-looking fellow he is, but I don't think he's in the burgling line; I fancy he's a little touched in his head, and Wickham can sleep in peace without making a pillow of the spoons. He wouldn't have fussed if the man had been an English tramp."

"No, sir—but there's furriners and furriners, no doubt, and this was a very different party from the little parson as come a while ago—a pastoor he called hisself——"

"A *pasteur!*" ejaculated Sir Raymond in a startled voice.

"That was what he called hisself, sir. Mr. Vereker saw him, as you were out, and the English gent as come with him too. Nigh upon an hour they were here, I know."

Sir Raymond made no answer to the voluble Jones, but he wondered exceedingly who the *pasteur* was, and why Lance had said nothing of his visit. The foreigner in the park had spoken of a *pasteur*—could it be the same? Perhaps he was not so mad as he had thought.

One thing was certain, Sir Raymond thought: he would have to wait till Lancelot returned to hear anything about the mysterious *pasteur* and his visit. Lancelot had gone up to town on business, and would not be back till to-morrow. There was nothing for it but to wait till then.

But as Jones cleared away Sir Raymond's solitary breakfast the next morning, he informed him that the foreigner had called again, and was waiting to see him.

"I can give him five minutes," said Sir Raymond, looking at his watch, and calculating how soon he would be due at the Hermitage to take Avice for her ride.

But the interview so narrowly timed took longer than he expected. It was more than an hour before Sir Raymond's door opened, and the sound of voices in angry altercation brought half a dozen servants to see what was the matter.

The interview that had had so stormy an ending had begun peaceably enough. When once Sir Raymond understood that the ill-favoured foreigner was neither a highwayman nor a lunatic, he was quite ready to give a patient ear to his grievance, whatever it might be, and by degrees he made out enough of his story to understand that it affected himself much more nearly than he had expected. It was some time, indeed, before he entirely understood the story Gustave Caillot had come to tell, and even when he did, he looked upon it as something to be easily disproved, and was only anxious to make out exactly what the man meant. His name, he said, was Gustave Caillot, and he was the second husband of Louise Balmano, whose infant son had been substituted for the dead heir of Verecroft. He told Sir Raymond in effect the same story that M. Martel and Dr. Fletcher had told Lancelot, except that he brought no documentary proof. He had heard something of the conversation between his wife and the *pasteur*, and when he had questioned her afterwards, the dying woman had confessed all to him, and told him of the statement M. Martel had drawn up, and which she had signed. M. Martel's departure for England had opened Caillot's eyes to the importance of the facts he had become acquainted with, and when the *pasteur* returned, and refused to inform him of the result of his journey, he jumped to the conclusion that Sir Raymond Vereker had purchased his silence, and burned to receive a share of

the hush-money himself. It was with this object he had presented himself at Verecroft; and as at last he made his meaning clear, Sir Raymond's wrath flamed high. He had listened with a patience due in great measure to the difficulty he had in understanding Caillot's rapid speech, but this was too much! Whether the man's story was true or not, he was not going to bribe him to withhold it from anyone who had a right to know. "How much will I give you?" he cried angrily. "*Rien du tout*—not a farthing, not a *sou!* You will tell the heir? Tell him, and welcome—I shall tell him myself!" He was too indignant to find the French words he wanted, but words were scarcely necessary. The indignant voice, the blazing eyes, were enough. Caillot understood that his request was refused, that he had had his journey and made his appeal in vain, and his face darkened ominously. He lowered his head, and glared at his stepson with a look of brutal ferocity.

"You gif me nothing—*hein?*" he snarled, showing his teeth like a beast of prey.

"Not a penny—*pas un sou!*" said Sir Raymond emphatically. "If that was what you wanted, you can take yourself off. *Allez-vous en, je vous dis*——"

But though he opened the door, Caillot refused to go. He could not and would not believe that his schemes had so entirely failed, and repeated again and again his threat of telling the heir unless he were bought off; while Sir Raymond declared, in the best French he could muster, that he intended to tell him himself. When at last Caillot understood, his fury knew no bounds. He looked as if he would like to have flown at Sir Raymond's throat, and departed shrieking out threats and vituperations in a *patois* that was almost as unintelligible to his *beau-fils* as to the astonished servants who had thronged into the hall.

"He didn't hurt you, sir, did he? Is he a madman?" the butler inquired anxiously. Sir Raymond did not answer; he did not even hear.

"Tell Mr. Vereker I want to see him as soon as he comes," he said, and then he shut himself up in his room, and was seen no more till Lancelot arrived.

The luncheon-bell rang, and the footman knocked at his door in vain, and equally in vain Avice Meredith waited for the lover who did not come. How could he go to her? how could he take his place at the table—he who was perhaps not Vereker of Verecroft, but Giuseppe Balmano, a peasant-woman's son?

He told himself that he did not believe Gustave Caillot's story, but in his heart he did believe it, or at least he acknowledged that it might be true. He would know when he saw Lancelot, when he heard what the *pasteur* had said to him—if indeed the *pasteur* Lance had seen was the one of whom Caillot had spoken.

He had some soup in his own room, and then he sat and waited for Lancelot in a maze of wonder and pain.

At last he heard his step in the hall and Marmion's joyful bark, and the next moment Lancelot came in.

"Well, Ray, old man, what is it?" he began, and stopped short at the sight of his cousin's blanched face and wild bloodshot eyes. "What has happened? Is *Avice*——"

"Avice? It has nothing to do with her."

"But there is something?"

"Yes," said Sir Raymond slowly, "there is *something*. It is very curious, very strange, and I should like to tell you all about it, Lance. But will you tell me first, please, about the *pasteur* who came here a little while ago?"

It was Lancelot's turn to look utterly disconcerted.

"The *pasteur*—M. Martel?" he asked blankly. "Surely, surely, he has not been so wicked, so treacherous, as to come here again?"

"No, he has not been; but someone else has. Let me tell you all about it, Lance; for if it is true, it is you who ought to know."

"How much do *you* know?" said Lancelot: "that is the question."

He sat down, greatly concerned and distressed, and Sir Raymond told him Caillot's story, and knew, as he looked at his cousin's face, that the tale he had heard was true. "You knew it—you have known it all this time!" he cried. "Lance! how could you?—why did you——"

"It seemed the best thing," said Lancelot lamely; and then there was an awkward silence neither knew how to break.

"It is true, then," Sir Raymond said at last. "You are Vereker of Verecroft, and I——"

"And you are and must be Sir Raymond Vereker still!" said Lancelot gravely. "We both know the truth, but we must keep it to ourselves. Think of your—think of Lady Vereker! Could she bear to know that you are not her son?"

Sir Raymond buried his face in his hands with a groan.

"I *can't* believe it!" he said hoarsely. "Lady Vereker not my mother——"

"She is, she *is!*" cried Lancelot, laying his hand kindly on the young man's heaving shoulders. "She *is* your mother, Ray, by every tie that makes a mother dear. It is not the accident of birth, it is the long years of patient care and untiring love that make real motherhood; and you know who has given you these. Come, be a man, and think only how best to repay her. It will not be by disowning her——"

"*I* disown her!" cried Sir Raymond bitterly, lifting a face convulsed with grief and pain. "It is not a question of disowning, it is a question of right and truth, of justice to you——"

"I want no justice of that sort."

"Then—then, what do you want?"

"I want nothing. Yes, really, Ray, that is just what I mean. I want things to go on as they have always done. I want you to be Sir Raymond, to be Vereker of Verecroft still, that Lady Vereker may never know you are not her son. Believe me, Ray, it is best for everyone, indeed."

"Best for me, no doubt, and perhaps for Lady Vereker—but for *you*? No, Lance, it is too much! Even if you could make such a sacrifice, or if I could accept it, I am not clear if you have the right to do it. I have not been Vereker of Verecroft all these years

without learning that there are duties to others. If you have the right to renounce it for yourself, you have no right to defraud your children——"

"Put that out of your head. I have told you I shall never marry."

"But you may change your mind; men do continually about things like that. And, Lance, don't think me ungrateful, but I can't help feeling it would be easier for me to give it all up now than to have a claim made later."

"I know. But I have provided against that."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that I have put it out of my power to make any claim. I must tell you all about it, I see, though I never meant to do so. The man you saw brought no real proof of this thing, did he?"

"No; but he said the *pasteur* had a paper which no one could dispute."

"He was mistaken. The *pasteur* had such a paper, but he gave it to me."

"Well?"

"Well, I was afraid, like you, that I might change my mind, so I put it out of my power. I burnt the proofs as soon as he had gone."

Sir Raymond looked at Lancelot in amazement too great for words. He remembered, as Lancelot had done, how the man who had thus dispossessed himself of his inheritance had said that he would rather be Vereker of Verecroft than King of England, and the remembrance seemed to reveal the extent of his sacrifice as nothing else could have done.

"How could you, Lance?" he said again. "No man ought to make such a sacrifice for another—and that you should do it for me!"

Lancelot wrung the hands so eagerly extended to him.

"It was not for you, Ray," he said, with a smile that seemed to transfigure his face. "It was for your mother, and your—*wife*."

He went away, more moved than he cared to show, and Sir Raymond looked after him with almost envious admiration.

"I could not have done it," thought the man whose real name was Giuseppe Balmano—"*I* could not have done it. It took a Vereker of Verecroft to do a thing like that."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SIR RAYMOND TO THE RESCUE.

"That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day."
MACAULAY.

IT was a curious day to both the young men. Two women who had made so momentous a compact, who had made or accepted so great a sacrifice, would have inevitably melted into some manifestation of unusual tenderness, but the two men who still called themselves cousins were only shy and constrained. Lancelot went down to the village with the instinct for action, however irrelevant, which the pressure of unaccustomed emotion induces in men of his type, and Sir Raymond, as he must still be called, shut himself in his room, and tried to think over the events of the day, and bring some sort of order into the chaos of his thoughts.

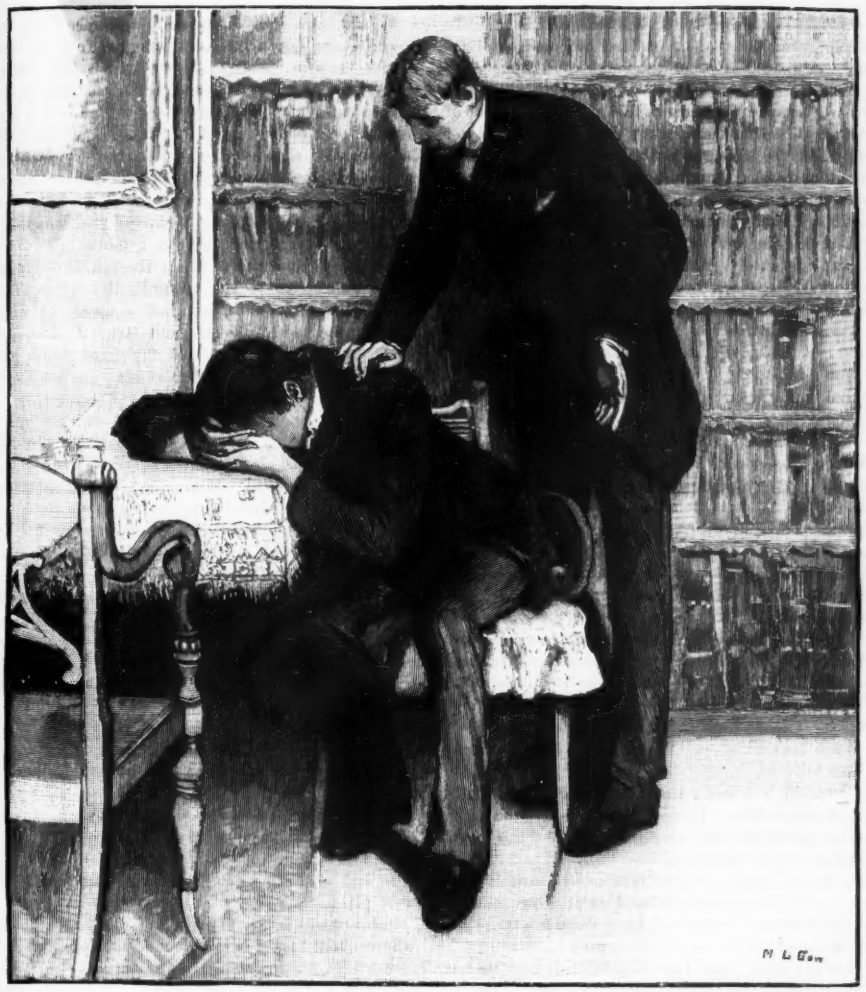
They were confused enough; and sometimes he almost fancied that Caillot and Caillot's story were alike part of some hideous dream. He would wake up and know himself for the man he only called himself now—for Sir Raymond Vereker of Verecroft, who had dreamt that he was a peasant-woman's son. He looked up at the portrait of the late Sir Raymond with the impulse of filial reverence which had made him turn to it in moments of distress through all the years of his young and uneventful life, and then, as he turned from the picture of the English squire, and caught sight of his own olive-tinted face in a neighbouring mirror, he knew that no such blissful awakening would ever be his. The dream had been the fancy that he was the son of the man whose features were so different from his own; the bitter awaking was already come. Only yesterday he had boasted to himself of his goodly heritage, and now he knew that he had no right to call a rood of it his own.

It was not his: it was Lancelot's; and it was by Lancelot's own act and deed, by Lancelot's unparalleled generosity, that he could call himself Vereker of Verecroft still. Some wild idea of repudiating the magnificent gift rushed through his mind, but the thought of Lady Vereker silenced it. He felt, as Lancelot had done, that it would cost too much to the dear and gentle lady they both loved so well.

If Lance could renounce it all to save her pain, surely he could bring his pride to accept the renunciation!

He felt that Lancelot had the right to expect as much as this, to make his own terms, and insist on their acceptance. No, he could not renounce the heritage that had come to him in so strange a way; he could only resolve to do his utmost to deserve it, and to do his duty by it. Vereker of Verecroft he must be in name, but he could and he would be Lancelot's steward in all but name. There should be no more about Lance's going to London, he resolved, in his old imperious way; and some day—when Lady Vereker's gentle spirit had passed away, and could no more be hurt by it—the man she had deemed her son would give up Verecroft to the rightful owner, and Lancelot should be Vereker of Verecroft at last!

A very sweet smile hovered tremulously on the mobile, expressive lips, as he pictured the future restitution, the hope of which would make the present burden of gratitude somewhat easier to bear. And then the thought of Avice made him pause. Avice! Could he ask her to share imaginary fortunes? could he woo her with a title that was not his? could he offer her illusory hopes, possessions he intended to resign, and honours he intended to renounce? On the other hand, how could he tell her the truth? Loyalty to Lancelot bound him to silence; and though he might ask Lance's permission to reveal the truth to her, he felt instinctively that it would be refused. It was all a maze of perplexity and pain, and when the great gong summoned the two young men to their solitary dinner, Raymond's pale face and heavy eyes made Lancelot glad that Lady Vereker was not there. Just for a moment the man who was called Sir Raymond hesitated before he took his usual



"'She is, she is!' cried Lancelot, laying his hand kindly on the young man's heaving shoulder."—*p.* 491.

place, glancing at Lancelot with an ingenuous deprecating blush, while Lancelot flushed uncomfortably at what seemed to him almost like a reproach. Why, oh why, could not that wretched Swiss have left them in peace? he thought irritably.

It was difficult to keep up a pretence of ordinary conversation, but Lancelot made a gallant effort till the servants had withdrawn, and Raymond seconded it with a fitful energy that made the observant Wickham jump to the erroneous conclusion that the course of his love could not be running smooth.

"Haven't been into Leamington to-day, and is as absent and distray as you please," he reported in the privacy of the housekeeper's room. "His young woman's at the bottom of it, I'll be bound!"

Which was true enough, though in a sense quite different from that intended by the worthy Wickham.

"What shall I say to Avice?" Sir Raymond asked, when he and Lancelot were at last alone, and free to speak of the one subject that engrossed both their thoughts.

"To Avice? Why should you say anything at all?"

"Is it right or fair to let her think I am what she supposes? I should not like to wrong her——"

"No, indeed! But you seem to forget that you *are* practically all that she supposes. And if I know anything of her, reasons of that sort have nothing to do with it," said Lancelot gravely. A woman, however pure and noble and good, is seldom as good

as the man who loves her believes her to be. To Lancelot, the fact that Avice had accepted Sir Raymond was abundant proof that she loved him, while his clear perception of her real unworldliness was a further guarantee that considerations of position or of wealth had had no share in her decision. He did not understand the thought underlying Sir Raymond's words, or divine that he contemplated eventually renouncing fortune and title, and restoring them to himself. He only felt that he was possibly attributing to Avice Meredith motives and feelings of which she was absolutely incapable; and when Raymond again tried to elicit an expression of opinion, he refused to discuss the subject.

"There is no need to say a word to Avice on the matter," he said shortly. "I forbid you to do so, once and for all."

After that, it seemed to Sir Raymond that nothing more could be said. Perhaps he was not anxious to say more. He had relieved his conscience by asking permission to speak, but it was not possible to be sorry that it was refused. The priceless jewel of Avice's love was to be left him untarnished and undimmed—the one unchanged thing amidst the cataclysmal changes of the day. He was not Lady Vereker's son, not Lancelot's cousin, not Vereker of Verecroft, but he was, and he might be, Avice's lover, Avice's husband still. He fell into a reverie that was full of a sweetness nothing could touch—an inner core of happiness in the disturbance and trouble of his thoughts, like the peace that lies in the heart of a cyclone, and only roused himself as Lancelot's voice broke the silence at last.

"What became of—of the man?" Lancelot was asking.

"Of Caillot? I don't know. I'm afraid I hardly thought about him. I was too angry—for, you see, I did not think his story could be true."

"What sort of man was he?"

"A rough, brutal-looking fellow—the sort of man one would like to see as little of as possible. You—you don't think I ought to have done anything for him, do you?"

"Not as a duty," said Lancelot decidedly. "He has no claim upon you in that way, I am sure. But as policy, perhaps——"

"Policy!"

"I mean that he may be troublesome, and I am very much afraid that he will. I heard in the village that a rough-looking foreigner was drinking heavily in the 'Vereker Arms,' but when I went to inquire about him he was gone."

"I hope he has gone back to Switzerland. I told him decidedly I would have nothing to do with him, and I'm sure he understood."

"Well, I hope he had money to take him home. It might have been as well to make sure of that," said Lancelot as he said good-night, and went to his room.

Sir Raymond did not follow. He was not physically weary, and his mind was too disturbed for sleep. He went out into the park, and tried to walk off the restless excitement that possessed him. Lady Vereker was not at home, and no one else was likely to inquire at what time he returned.

It was two o'clock when he retraced his steps towards the house, but as he emerged from the shade of the trees he thought it was much later than it actually was. Already it seemed to him that the east was reddening with the dawn—or was it only a fancy, born of the confusion of his thoughts? He rubbed his eyes, but there was no doubt the sky *was* red—redder perhaps than any sunrise could have made it. And even as the thought forced itself on his mind he heard voices and shouting, a roaring that was not the wind, and piercing the night as a flame might pierce the dark, the cry of "Fire!" He waited to hear no more, but began to run towards the house, hardly knowing what he did. In a few moments he was on the lawn he had left so still and dark. It was dotted with people now, and a red flickering light waved gustily over the green, with rushing, swaying shadows blown hither and thither in the wind.

A dense cloud of smoke seemed to envelope the house, but licking tongues of flame broke through it to the right, and showed that the right wing was the part chiefly involved. It was the most modern part of the building, but it was where Lancelot's room was, and Sir Raymond's first thought was for him.

"Mr. Vereker—is he safe?" he asked breathlessly, looking round for a familiar face.

Hopkinson was there, directing a long line of men and maids who were feeding the engine with buckets, and Wickham, paralysed with terror, was clutching Sir Raymond's christening-mug to his breast, under the evident idea that he had saved the most important item of the family plate. One was too busy and the other too dazed to answer, and Sir Raymond impatiently repeated his question.

"Where is Mr. Vereker? Is he safe?" he asked again.

"Yes, sir," said Jones's voice, coming out of a fresh cloud of smoke that rolled between them; "and the plate's all right, sir, too. Mr. Vereker and I see to that and my lady's jewel-case as soon as the alarm were given."

"But where *is* Mr. Vereker? I don't see him anywhere about," said Sir Raymond anxiously. It was difficult to see anything in the blinding smoke, but just then a hurtling crash proclaimed that the roof of the right wing had fallen in, and a huge shaft of yellow flame shot up into the air, and made everything on the lawn distinctly visible.

"He *were* here a minute ago," said Jones, looking blankly around. "He did say something about going back for something he'd left behind, but surely he wouldn't be so mad."

"He were here just now, telling us all what to do," another footman said, "and then he went back to the house."

"Do you mean that he is there *now*, and no one trying to rescue him?" cried Sir Raymond, with a lightning glance at the terrified lacqueys. "Here—Jones! Blake! who will follow me?"

He did not wait to hear, but dashed across the lawn, and disappeared in the burning building. In the right wing flames were bursting from every window, but the central hall was as yet untouched, and the firemen's efforts were chiefly directed to preventing the

flames from spreading to it. Sir Raymond staggered through it, drenched by the hose and blinded by the smoke, and turned down the corridor that led to Lancelot's room. The smoke was thicker here, and the heat almost unbearable; but he struggled on, clambering on hands and knees over the smoking *débris* that choked the way, and called for Lance with spent, sobbing breath.

There was no answer; but just as he had given up hope he stumbled against something that was not a fallen beam.

"Lance! Lance!" he cried, in hoarse, choked tones. And then in the silence a great fear wrung his heart. He took the prostrate, senseless form in his arms, and crawled painfully back, dropping senseless himself at the feet of Jones and Blake, just as those tardy heroes were making a timid endeavour to penetrate into the smoke-filled corridor.

A dozen eager hands bore the unconscious figures to the nearest room, and the village doctor, who had been doing manful service amongst the buckets, was speedily exercising his more legitimate calling.

"Dead? Certainly not!" he said cheerily, touching each wrist with deft professional fingers. "Some cold water, please, and don't crowd about them so, and we shall do very well."

Lancelot was the first to rêvive. He had been overpowered by the smoke, but, except for a few bruises, was otherwise uninjured; but Sir Raymond was more seriously hurt. The exertion of dragging the deadweight of a practically lifeless body through the *débris* of the corridor had been very great; and, though he had been too excited to think about it at the time, he had been injured by a falling beam, and was in too much pain to move.

"Is Lance safe?" he said, and swooned away again before an answer could be given.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PRIVATE FRANKS.

"Thoughts cannot form themselves in words so horrid
As can express my guilt."—Dryden.

It is a far cry from Warwickshire to Egypt, from the banks of the Avon to the Delta of the Nile, from the dark waters of the Leam to the wonderful blue of the Red Sea.

But it is to Egypt that all English hearts are turning this autumn—to Egypt, where the pick of our soldiers are, where the blue-jackets and the Highlanders are wading side by side through the burning sand, and the Guards, who have not been out since the Crimea, are marching to victory under a son of their Queen. And with them are the dark and stately forms of the Indian Contingent, and the black coats of the Rifles, and the uniforms of half the regiments in the British army. So many have volunteered for Egyptian service that Philip Hallam, who has got an appointment on the staff, thinks himself lucky to have done so, and endeavours to forget Daisy Meredith's cruelty in his new and wonderful surroundings.

He has never been in Egypt before, and everything strikes him with a vivid sense of mystery, and almost of unreality. The sands, the palm-trees, the Pyramids, the flowing Eastern garments, seem especially unreal. They are so like the "Sunday pictures" of his nursery days that he feels as if he were a little boy again, and almost fancies he can hear his mother's voice.

It is nearly a month now since he arrived in Alexandria, and saw the ruined forts and the smouldering embers of the bright and busy town. Since that he had borne his part in everything that was going on: had helped to free the Suez Canal, had endured the fatigues of the desert march, and, having been wounded at Tel-el-Kebir, was now at Cairo, recovering his strength.

Captain Hallam's wound was not a serious one, but it had nearly been not only serious, but fatal. That it was not either was owing to the self-devotion of a private soldier, who, seeing the young officer in danger of being overpowered, had rushed gallantly to his rescue, and received himself the deadly spear-thrust that was meant for Philip's breast. It entered Private Franks' instead, and the first act of Philip's convalescence was to make inquiries for the man who had saved his life at the risk, and perhaps at the expense, of his own. He managed to identify him with some difficulty, for he did not know his name. He only knew that his hair was fair and his eyes were as blue as Daisy Meredith's, and this description, even if he could have brought himself to give it, was too vague, he felt, to be of much use. It was only when he added that there was something about the man that suggested that he might have seen better days that he succeeded in tracing him out.

"You must mean Franks," said Colonel Selby, an officer commanding a detachment of the Expeditionary Force. "Big fellow, isn't he, with the bluest eyes I ever saw? Was a swell once, I believe, and gives himself airs on the strength of it. That's the man, I've no doubt. He 's one of ours, and a precious sulky brute; but he 's done for, poor fellow, I 'm afraid. I saw him in hospital this morning, and the surgeon said he 'd never come out alive. If he 's the man you want, you haven't much time to lose."

Captain Hallam lost no time. He went at once to the stifling Cairene hospital, where the wounded who had been brought thither from Tel-el-Kebir did not know whether to execrate most Egyptian sunshine or Egyptian flies, and on one of the beds he saw the man who had stood between him and death, and whose own life was ebbing slowly but surely away. Philip felt that he could not leave him to die alone. He had him moved to his own quarters, and had reason to be thankful all his life that he had obeyed the impulse of gratitude and pity which prompted him to do so.

He soon felt sure that his suspicions as to Franks' antecedents were correct. However the man had come to his present position, he had had the rearing of a gentleman, and in the privacy of his own apartments Captain Hallam treated the humble private as the equal he felt him to be. But the more he saw of Franks, the more Philip wondered what his history had been. He was not communicative, but the few allusions he had made to his past life betrayed that his father had been a man of wealth and influence, and that the son who was dying as one of the rank and file of the British army had known the advantage

of a liberal education, and had, indeed, been an undergraduate at Cambridge. His name, he admitted, was not Franks, but what it was he declined to say.

"I changed my name because I had disgraced it," he said briefly. "If you knew all, you would not soil your hands with shaking mine." Philip asked him no more. Whatever the secrets of that wasted life, the man who was known as Private Franks was hasting to a tribunal infinitely more merciful and more just than any before which he could be arraigned by his fellowmen. But it was not in human nature not to wonder who and what he had been, and quite unexpectedly the information was supplied.

The 25th of September was a memorable day in Cairo, and to none of the myriads who thronged its streets was it more memorable than to Philip Hallam.

Cairo was *en fête*. There were decorations everywhere, wreaths and flowers, flags and trophies, every device that ingenuity could suggest to show forth a more or less fictitious loyalty. The Khedive, reinstated by force of British arms, was to enter the town accompanied by the Duke of Connaught, Lord Wolseley, and Sir Edward Malet, and the Cairenes, with true Oriental servility, made ready to do them honour, and vied with each other in their eagerness to welcome the Sovereign against whom they had so lately rebelled. It was said afterwards that the houses of the chief rebels were the most brilliantly illuminated that night; and now, in the full noontide sunshine, it would have been difficult to find a house without its festoon of gorgeous flowers, or strip of bunting fluttering in the morning breeze.

Captain Hallam's rooms overlooked the Mahmoudieh Square, and as the procession approached he wheeled Franks' couch to the window, and stood behind him, looking down on the motley crowd below.

It was a sight no one could forget. Beside the Khedive's carriage, with the British commanders and Sir Edward Malet, was a brilliant escort of the flower of the British and Egyptian troops, while the crowds that thronged the streets were of every variety of nationality, and race, and colour. There was all the mixture of past and present, of trivial and magnificent, of Christian and Moslem, of European and Asiatic, which is common to Egyptian life; and Philip was new enough to Egypt to be fascinated by the spectacle presented. It was all gorgeous and wonderful; but one of the figures which struck him most was that of an imposing-looking man who rode just behind the Khedive's carriage, clad in the Turkish uniform, and wearing an unmistakable air of dignity and command. Perhaps Hallam noticed him the more because his face was so decidedly European, and even English, and something in it seemed oddly familiar to him, in spite of the unfamiliar trappings, which indicated a personage of considerable rank.

"I wonder who that is?" he said, turning round to point him out to Franks. But Franks had seen him already. He was lying back on his pillows panting for breath, with a brilliant hectic flush on his wasted cheeks.

"It is Dalrymple!" he said, in uncontrollable agitation. "It is Dalrymple Pasha! They told me he was a pasha, but I did not believe it. But it is Hugh, sure enough."

"Dalrymple?" cried Philip; "*what* Dalrymple? And what is he to you?" The name brought back all the terrible story Hilda Jackson had told him under the trees at Avonmead. He had not been in the drawing-room when the subject first came up, and knew nothing of the supposed identity of Dalrymple Pasha and Dalrymple the forger, but suddenly he knew what the inexplicable likeness was that had puzzled him a few moments before. It was the subtle resemblance that is called a family likeness, and that is often quite independent of colouring, and even of form. It was this he had seen in the bearded visage of Dalrymple Pasha, and the faces of which it had vaguely reminded him were the faces of Avice and Daisy Meredith.

"Do you know who he is?" he asked again. "Do you know his history? Is he the man who committed forgery some years ago?"

"No!—he is only the man who was convicted of it by a purblind judge and a jury of fools!"

The son of the purblind judge stared in not unnatural astonishment; and then Daisy's lover felt his heart begin to beat as if it would suffocate him. "You mean that he was *innocent?*" he cried. "I ought to have felt and known it! What else could *her* father be?"

Private Franks stared as hard as the Captain had done.

"*Her father!*" he muttered. "Captain, for pity's sake tell me what you mean! Do you mean that you know a daughter of Dalrymple's—of my sister Madge? Stay—I will tell you who I am, and you will see I have a right to ask. I am Ned Fazackerley; and I have not seen or heard of my sister or her children since the day I enlisted as Private Franks."

But the question of Fazackerley's relationship, or of his family secrets, was not the uppermost one in Philip Hallam's mind. That Daisy's father was innocent was all he cared to know; but he must have some proof beyond bare assertion. "I will tell you all about your sister later on. Tell me first how you know that Dalrymple was innocent!" he entreated, and a rush of overpowering emotion crimsoned the pale face before him. Franks or Fazackerley, whichever his name might be, held out his hand.

"Shake hands *first!*" he said; and as Philip grasped the fever-wasted palm, a faint sardonic smile curved the thin red lips. "I am a fool to tell you, I believe, but they can't hurt me now. I know that Dalrymple was innocent, because I forged the thing myself!"

(To be concluded.)



THE MOUNTAIN STREAM.

A PARABLE.

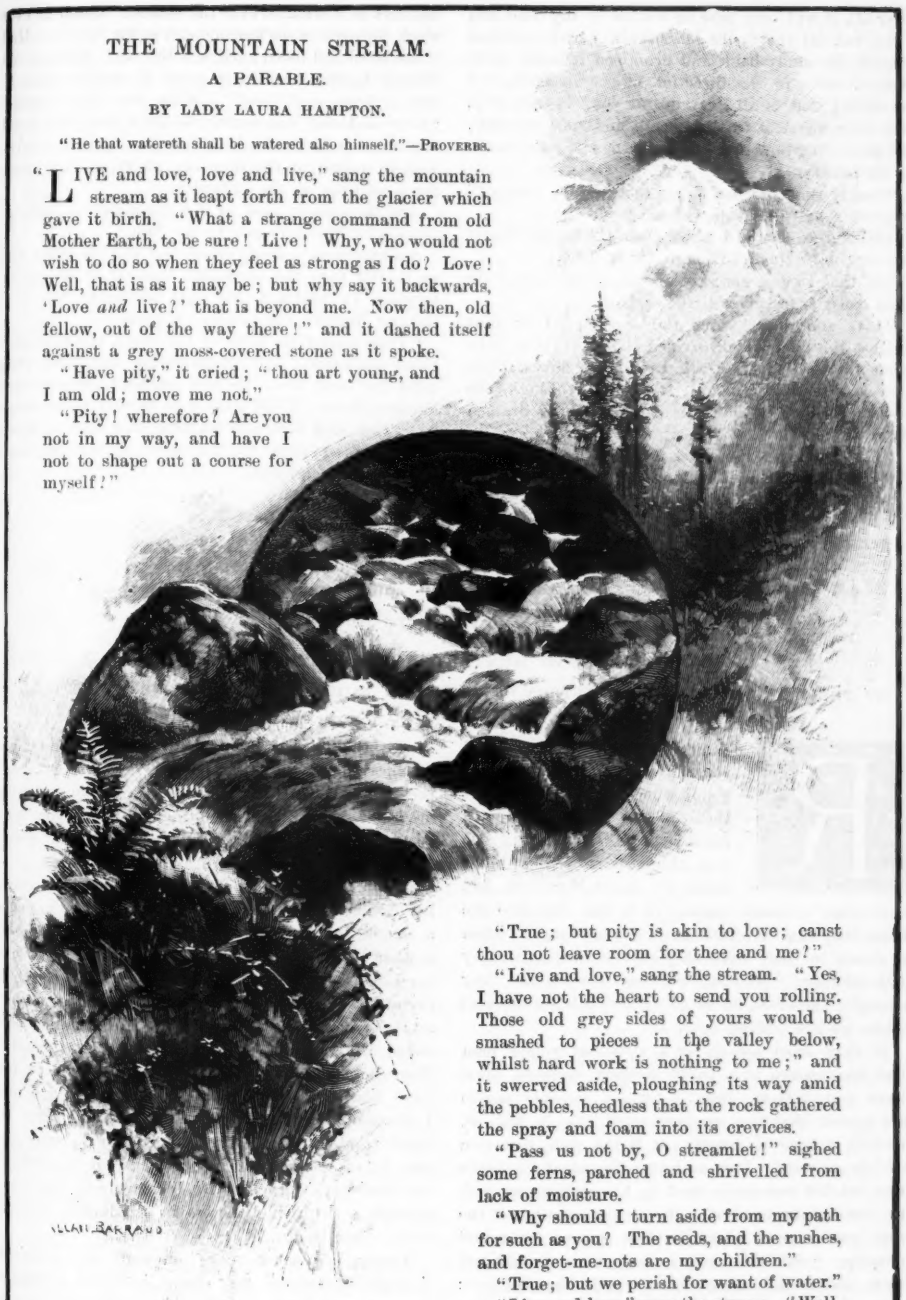
BY LADY LAURA HAMPTON.

"He that watereth shall be watered also himself."—PROVERBS.

"LIVE and love, love and live," sang the mountain stream as it leapt forth from the glacier which gave it birth. "What a strange command from old Mother Earth, to be sure! Live! Why, who would not wish to do so when they feel as strong as I do? Love! Well, that is as it may be; but why say it backwards, 'Love *and* live?' that is beyond me. Now then, old fellow, out of the way there!" and it dashed itself against a grey moss-covered stone as it spoke.

"Have pity," it cried; "thou art young, and I am old; move me not."

"Pity! wherefore? Are you not in my way, and have I not to shape out a course for myself?"



"True; but pity is akin to love; canst thou not leave room for thee and me?"

"Live and love," sang the stream. "Yes, I have not the heart to send you rolling. Those old grey sides of yours would be smashed to pieces in the valley below, whilst hard work is nothing to me;" and it swerved aside, ploughing its way amid the pebbles, heedless that the rock gathered the spray and foam into its crevices.

"Pass us not by, O streamlet!" sighed some ferns, parched and shrivelled from lack of moisture.

"Why should I turn aside from my path for such as you? The reeds, and the rushes, and forget-me-nots are my children."

"True; but we perish for want of water."

"Live and love," sang the stream. "Well,

after all, it will only take up a little of my time, and I can run all the faster afterwards;" and it washed against the sandy bank and crumbled it away, as it made a curve in the direction of the speakers. "I am afraid that is all I can do for you," it said, as it sent tiny wavelets to their roots, and sped onwards, not perceiving how greedily the ferns and sand drank of its bounty.

"Surely thou art not going to leave me empty?" moaned a half-dried-up wayside pool.

"Wherefore should I break down the barrier that is between us? Have I enough for us both?"

"Of that I know not; yet of thine abundance truly thou canst spare me a little, or I die."

"Live and love," sang the stream, as it beat against the dam which divided them. "There, take what thou wilt; after all, I can but flow a little slower afterwards;" and it glided through the pool, regardless of how the hidden depths drained its resources.

"Live and love," it sang as it emerged on the other side; but how feeble its voice! how little strength it had left as it trickled over the stones! Could it ever reach the great river flowing still so far below? Had it not lived and loved; and was this all? Had not old Mother Earth in the past given it another song to sing—"Love and live?" What did it all mean? "Love and die" was nearer the mark, for what good had come to itself of all the love bestowed on others! And it looked to the blue sky above as if to seek for a solution of the difficulty.

And the answer came, as it always does, in time, to those who look upwards to the Sun.

A slight mist, a fleecy cloud, and falling rain; and as it fell into the streamlet, causing it to spring forward in renewed life and strength, the sun, shining through the rain-drops, spake:—

"Thou gavest to them of thy work, thy time, and thine abundance, and in obedience and faith thou didst live and love. Be not amazed; though thou knewest it not, I did gather to myself these drops from rock, and fern, and wayside pool, that in thine hour of need thou too mightest be watered, and learn to love and live."

RESTLESSNESS.

TO YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN.

BY THE REV. J. P. GLEDSTONE, AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND TRAVELS OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD," "SAVE THE BOYS," ETC.

"RESTLESS! why, what else would you have a young man or a young woman be? Do you want them to sit in arm-chairs all day twirling their thumbs? Do you think that young blood flows no faster than old, and that when it comes rushing in a full tide into the brain they can help feeling its excitement, and when it throbs in their veins they can sit still as if they felt nothing? We shall rest soon enough and long enough; therefore, let us go ahead while we can, and while we are willing to do it."

If that short speech by a vivacious young man had been spoken at a public meeting, everyone must have said—"Hear, hear!" for all sensible people are agreed that the suppression of life is bad—is, in fact, a kind of murder; it is the right direction of life we want. It is said that President Garfield's first teacher was sorely tried by his restlessness, and, in attempting to subdue it, almost smothered the fine young soul which he had got to train and develop. "Scholars cannot study their lessons and look about the school-room," said the teacher; "therefore, gazing about is strictly forbidden." The rule was unconsciously broken by Garfield almost as soon as it was made, and when he tried to obey it, as he honestly wished to do from the first, it only succeeded in making him a dull scholar. At length the teacher had to say to Mrs. Garfield—"James is not quite the boy in school that I expected."—"How so?" she replied; "you astonish me."—"I know," said the teacher, "that you will be grieved, but I think it is my duty to tell you." Mrs. Garfield asked him to "say on." "Well, it is only this; James don't sit still, and he don't learn his lessons. I fear that I shall not be able to make a scholar of him."—"Oh, James!" exclaimed the mother.—"I *will* be a good boy. I *mean* to be a good boy," sobbed the little fellow. Mrs. Garfield, divining the true cause, observed—"Perhaps he can't sit still; he never was still in his life." James persisted in his promise—"I *will* sit still; I *will* learn." The teacher accepted it, and, laying his hand on the boy's head, said to him—"You dear child, you and I are good friends, and I think we shall have no more trouble. I will try you again. So, wipe up, and let us laugh, and not cry." Left to work in his own way, Garfield's life became from that time onward a surprising success in scholarship as well as in other things.

Young life must move outward and forward. A right disposition may desire and seek a change from the old home and the old way of working and living, not for the sake of self-indulgence, but possibly for the sake of self-sacrifice and noble endeavour. There is a restlessness of youth and early manhood which is both right and honourable;

XUM

natural, too, as that of a child who, through restlessness and exertion, grows, and creeps, and walks, and runs; no doubt getting into many dangers, but also, through them, coming to a vigorous, self-reliant manhood. Wings are given to young birds to fly with, and the first flight is out of the nest.

We also remember that the beginning of many a fine and beneficent career has been the resolution of some brave son or braver daughter to leave the warm, quiet, dear old fireside, and go out to win a livelihood, and to help the beloved ones left behind. There can be no doubt that many a comfortable, self-indulgent young man, who will not found a home of his own because he cannot do it in a style sufficiently grand, would make himself more of a man and more of a gentleman, and some true-hearted girl more of a woman and more of a lady, if he would marry on small, yet sufficient, means, bear his lot like a man and a Christian, and fight his way up to larger means, if they will do him any good, but, in any case, up to an honourable character and a worthy name. There can also be no doubt that many a young woman who is luxuriating at home amid many comforts, but with no responsibilities, so keeping all her finer qualities of mind and heart subdued and inactive, would be transformed into a heroine and a saint if she would but step outside her father's door, and see how wide, how sinful, and how sorrowful the world is, and begin to do something for its consolation. And until she does that, the trembling girl who has gone to be a governess, the timid girl who has entered a shop, the sensitive girl who has taken a servant's situation, rather than eat the bread of idleness and burden the home, is far above her in character and worth. The words of the prodigal when he was restless and wanted to leave home, words which must have wrung his father's heart with pain, have often, used in a new sense, filled the hearts of other parents with loving, thankful grief; for it is a touching thing to hear a child say—"Father, give me my clothes and my few things, and let me go and see what I can do for myself and you." Everything depends on why a young man wants his own, and why he goes away. He may be in his father's house, and yet not of it; restless, impatient, discontented, eager to break loose; or he may leave the house, and still be a true member of it. Jacob leaves his home in shame; Joseph leaves his in unsuspecting innocence; David leaves his for duty; Absalom leaves his to indulge himself and to gratify his ambition.

Unfortunately, restlessness in the young is sometimes a sign of moral distemper rather than of noble longings of heart and tender flutterings of spirit. It can hardly be seen by any careful, loving parent without more or less anxiety. So Mrs. Garfield once had her anxious season for her generous and just-minded son. He had caught the sea-going fever from reading novels, and nothing would satisfy him but he must be a captain and command a vessel. And that is all right enough for the men who are fitted for it and called to it, as some of our bravest and best are; but it was not the work and place for Garfield. While the excitement lasted, his mother was full of fear, lest a capable youth, who had powers in him far above the requirements of a ship captain, should throw himself away; at last, through a wonderful succession of events, he was led to abandon his wish, and to enter upon those pursuits which eventually brought him to the President's chair.

Surely young persons ought to think for a moment of the anxiety which their signs of restlessness cause those who are the most interested in them. Very likely the prodigal's father had seen signs of discontent before his younger son said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Coldness, aversion, distance of manner, show themselves imperceptibly and unconsciously to him who exhibits them; but how quick is a father's or a mother's eye to discern them—quick as to detect the signs of fever or consumption. The cold feeling, the sharp word, the careless manner, the selfish indifference, the unmanageable waywardness, are quite as symptomatic of some inner derangement, as the cough, the lassitude, the hot skin, is of some malady of the body. Young people cannot hide these things; the very hiding becomes a revelation. And any young person who begins to hide his or her heart away, may well inquire whether all is right.

Let us look at the *causes* of this restlessness which seizes so many of the young. Three young fellows come before our mind's eye: one across the Atlantic; one at the Antipodes; and a third starting for Africa. One who had sinned secretly from his boyhood, and lived in deceit, chose to leave home, tempted by the thought of liberty, although he had the prospect of a large income before he was twenty-five years old. He got the "liberty" with a few shillings a week, and also a good deal of hardship, and would be glad to be back again. The second ran away from an "irksome situation," and on the other side of the world obtained the same kind of work he had here, the same wages, and longer hours. The third is going away because he is too lazy and too fond of drink at home, and wants to do as he likes. In no case is the cause adequate.

Some are restless because home-government, they say, is too severe and too rigid. If this be the cause, it ought not to be irremovable. Something can be done by patience and reasonableness, not to say endurance. It is to be hoped that any restless young man who may read these words will be prepared to admit, and that honestly and without reservation, that there must be parental rule, and that each child in a family cannot be permitted to do just as he likes. You do not think that the house door should stand open all night for you; you do not think that your father should become your servant,

and your mother and sisters your slaves; you do not think that the home should be turned into a common inn to please you; you only complain that the government, which is necessary, is sometimes rather too hard, and that, therefore, submission to it becomes difficult and irksome. And someone else admits it, though perhaps he has never admitted it to you.

There is hardly a more touching or more ennobling passage in all biography than part of a letter of Dean Alford to one of his children, in which, with rare humility and manly frankness, he asks his child's forgiveness for his harsh words and tempers. Not that there was, or had been, any quarrel, and not that his child was restless and wishful to get away from control; it was only that he remembered a fault and had the courage to own it. Such a confession must have been like balm to the heart. "Confess your faults one to another." But then the absence of a parent's confession in nowise justifies any son or daughter in leaving home and going into a far country there to live in wilful sin. Nothing can justify sin. We ought to do right, even if all the world, father and mother, brothers and sisters, have wronged us. But what are our obligations if we are the children of parents who, with all their faults, honestly and lovingly seek nothing but our good?

But perhaps rigid home rule is not at all the cause of the disquietude of some young people. They are discontented with everything in the old house; nothing is grand enough, nobody is illustrious enough. Home customs are disparagingly contrasted with the customs of the world, and sport is made of the plain way in which the family has been brought up. The opinions of some pretentious young man or conceited girl, who knows what is "the correct thing," what is "good form," are quoted as a final authority. After years of loving service, father and mother are to be slighted for some poor, selfish worldling, whose only commendation is self-importance! Young men and young women who are beginning to think every place so much more attractive than home, everything that other people have so much better than what they have, everybody outside their circle so much finer, so much more fashionable than their friends, should have a care before they risk any changes. The prodigal thought as they do, and in his exchange he got riotous living for plain living, dissipated companions instead of those of his own blood, and then—the fields for his home, and swine for his companions, and husks to fill his belly with.

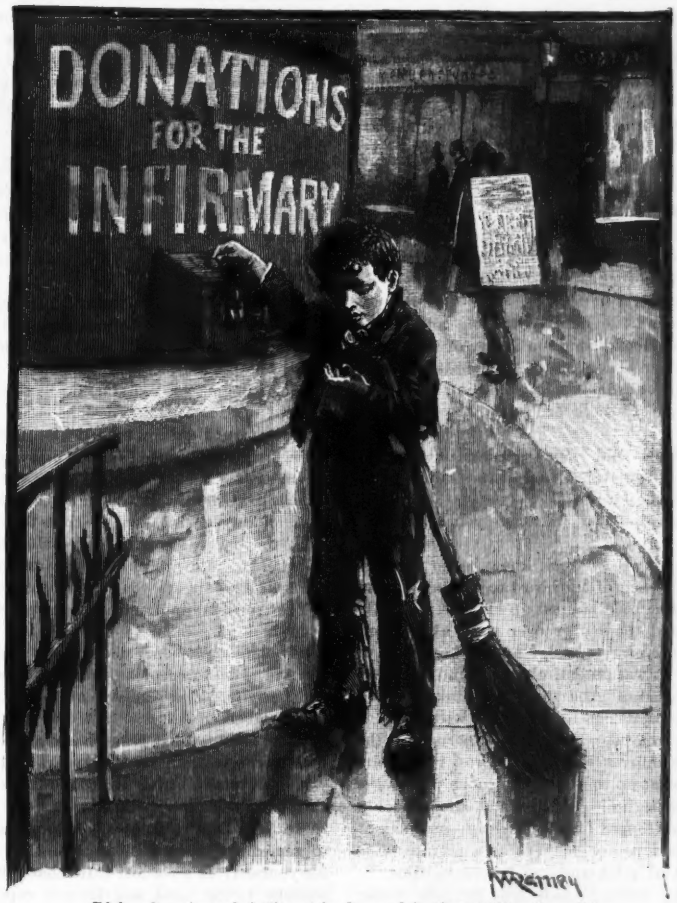
But suppose that restlessness should have a deeper meaning than any yet hinted at; suppose it should be the symptom of a deep revolt from God and all His service; suppose it should be a break-up of the inner nature; suppose it should show that sin is struggling for expression, for indulgence, for dominion. It does mean that with many, who, nevertheless, are ignorant of their own condition. Perhaps the prodigal did not at first mean to do as he did; but when once his foot crossed his father's doorway, and lost the firm foundation of home-life, it was not easy to stop, nor did he stop until he had reached the very bottom of degradation and shame. And so it may be with some restless ones who shall read these words. They do not like hard restraint, and only want, as they think, a little more freedom, but, in point of fact, they are breaking loose from God and His law; they are turning away from Christ; they are choosing the world rather than the Kingdom of Heaven. It may be admitted that they are doing this as men half blind, not knowing whither they are going, not knowing where they are, not knowing how they are on the point of undoing themselves. They may call home only a house, and not so good as many other houses, but God sanctifies it as *home*. They may think that their father is only a man, and his judgment none of the best; but God has set him as His representative, and commands that he be honoured more than all men. Home and home-life may be thought poor, paltry things, but God says they are sacred, and that he who spoils them commits sacrilege.

We remember what the gracious and forgiving father in the parable did when his younger son, the one with the hot blood in his veins, asked for *his* portion of the estate: he gave it him without a demur, for he knew that remonstrance and pleading were useless, that his son's heart was gone from him, at least for a while, and that the only way was to let him do as he liked. Very solemn, even alarming, is the quiet manner in which the father yields; as it is ominous when God just lets anyone take his own course. No words are more awful than these: "Let him alone." The young are never in such peril as when they liberate themselves from all control, when their brothers and sisters no longer try to influence them, when their father ceases to reason with them, and their mother to plead.

So it were best for those who are restless without a cause to curb their impatience, and see whether, by the grace of God, they cannot abide where they are. But even those who can plead an adequate cause for their restlessness will find it best to be quiet and patient. If they know the love of our Lord Jesus to us, and His sufferings for us, they also will be able to endure grief, suffering wrongfully; and as He conquered by submission, so will they. An unquiet, hot-blooded young man, a high-spirited girl, can become as restful in the love of our Saviour as a sleeping babe in its mother's arms.



A SHILLING AND A PENNY, AND TWOPENCE.



Dick solemnly and deliberately dropped in that shilling."—*p. 502.*

FOURPENCE and threepence is sevenpence, and four pennies elevenpence, and three halfpennies and two farthings, that makes one and a penny altogether—uncommon good for one week, I call it!"

Dick put his head on one side and regarded the collection admiringly. It was set out on a stone step up a retired back alley, where was no thoroughfare on Sundays, and therefore a convenient retreat for squaring up the week's financial affairs.

However, thoroughfare or no thoroughfare, with a sum like that in possession it was advisable to be cautious, and run no risk of possible surprises. Dick speedily rolled it up again in the piece of rag that did duty for a purse, and betook himself to the Sunday Free Breakfast.

He thoroughly approved of free breakfasts—of free dinners too, if he could only have discovered any institution of the kind. He meant to lay in a sufficient supply to tide him well over the rest of the day. After that duty had been discharged, he would consider the best way of investing that one and a penny capital to bring in as large a profit as possible.

The first part of the programme was the best. His paper bag of provisions was liberally packed, and Dick was well acquainted with a particular seat near the platform where there were often stray buns and pieces of roll to be secured by any person possessed of a little foresight and quick fingers; and he had every reason to be satisfied to-day with his spoils.

After the mugs of tea came the hymns and speeches. They were tiresome, of course, and took up valuable time, but it was not deemed good manners to take

one's tea and bolt; so, having a due regard to future Sundays, Dick politely stayed to the end, and did his best to look interested.

There was a new man speaking to-day, a little man in spectacles, who seemed very much in earnest about his subject: "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay him again."

The address ended rather abruptly; the speaker, flushed with earnestness, came down from the platform and sat down on a bench near. Dick slipped up beside him and touched his sleeve.

"Did you ever lend anything yourself like that?"

"Aye, that I have, my laddie."

"And did it pay?"

"Ten times over. I have never repented one sixpence of it, and never shall."

"Who did you give it to?"

"Who! there's little need to trouble about that part of it. Just look about you at any of these poor starving creatures. There are the hospitals, refuges, alleys, and slums of every kind, all needing more help than we can give; there are only too many to give to."

That was a wide field. Dick selected one definite point from it: "Hospitals? that's the same as the infirmary down the street?"

"Yes, a grand one it is. What are you asking for, my lad?"

"Just speiring a wee." Dick knew better than to publish the existence of his hoard to strangers; not for nothing had he been trained up in the streets. He went and debated the matter over with himself on the parapet of the nearest bridge for the best part of the morning. It was an entirely new kind of speculation, and needed a good deal of thinking over. Whole shillings were not to be trifled with.

There was an iron-bound box at the corner of the street, "For the Infirmary" painted across it in white letters. Dick went up to it that afternoon just as the lamplighter was beginning his rounds, and solemnly and deliberately dropped in that shilling—one coin at a time. The odd penny he kept as a private nest-egg, and lost it at pitch-and-toss before bedtime.

Ten times one shilling made ten, but the weeks went by, and there was no sign of that sum coming in from any quarter. Dick waited, first cheerfully, then patiently, then despairingly; there was no room left for hope any longer. He had been done, taken in—his money was gone for good. That man had deceived him on purpose; he would never believe in any of those Free Breakfast people again. So keenly did he feel it, that he even dropped his attendance at that useful and once deeply respected institution.

Some three months later, Mr. Gilchrist, the unconscious promoter of the fraud, was paying a visit to a sick friend in one of the infirmary wards. He was going down the narrow passage between the rows of beds, when a sudden shrill whistle from one of them made him look round at one of them. A small dark face was all that was visible on the pillow, the rest was chiefly bandages.

"Hey! you're the man that preached at the Free Breakfast one day?"

"Yes; what about it?"

"And you went and told us to lend our money to the Lord," burst forth Dick, trying to wriggle up from his pillow in wrathful indignation—"and I did. I lent Him a whole shilling that same day, and I've never got a farthing of it back, after all you said."

"Take care," said Mr. Gilchrist, laying him down. "I am sorry to see you here. What is wrong?"

"Oh, I got run over," impatiently; "but where's my money gone?"

"How did you lend it?"

"I put it in the infirmary box on the bridge—all I had, except one penny; I lost that after."

"Are you not getting some value for your shilling now—a bed and medicine, doctors, and nurses to make you well again?"

"They ain't going to make me well again," said Dick sharply, "and they'd have had to do it for nothing; it's not for the shilling. I lent that to the Lord, not them."

Dick's logic was sound as far as it went. "So you wanted it back in hard cash?"

"Of course I did; wasn't it hard cash I lent?"

Just then the nurse came up and said something in an undertone, with a warning glance at Dick's excited face. Mr. Gilchrist sat down by the bed very soberly.

"Dick, my poor laddie, if that ten shillings came back to you just now in hard cash, what would you do with it? Do you know you are not to go back again to the streets you came from?"

The restless fingers twisted up the coverlet in silence.

"Was that the only money you ever lent?"

"Aye, I never had as much at once before—one and a penny. The penny went too: I got cheated at pitch-and-toss."

"And the Lord has been giving you food and shelter, health and strength, all these years, and the only thing you ever tried to give Him in return was that one shilling. Dick, it may be that in a day or two you are to see Him face to face; my laddie, you'll be gladder to remember that one loan then, than all you spent for yourself. It's *not* lost: 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay him again.' I didn't make that up; he said it Himself."

Dick's head was burrowed into his pillow. After a few minutes, thinking he was dozing, the visitor got up quietly and went away.

Just at the edge of dusk the nurse noticed a grey shadow creeping over the small face; he was feebly groping under the pillow for something—a bit of dingy rag he had been very particular to have put there when he first came.

"Is the man there?" he asked, looking about blankly.

"Oh no! he went hours ago; he is coming back again, though."

"Tell him," Dick's voice stumbled curiously over the words, "tell him to put that in the same box for me; and I wish—I wish now I'd put that other penny in too."

"That," when Mr. Gilchrist opened it the next day beside the empty bed, was a legacy of twopence. Which twopence was duly acknowledged in the accounts of the institution.

SARAH PITT.

THE MORNING SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

BY A SUPERINTENDENT.



A YOUNG PHILOSOPHER.

WITH a few happy exceptions, morning school is a source of great anxiety to all concerned in the working of the great Sunday-school machinery. The two main reasons for this are that a large number, both of scholars and teachers, are absent, and that those who are present are not in touch with each other to the same extent they are in the afternoon gathering. It is somewhat difficult, owing to the different bases adopted in different districts and denominations, to compile reliable returns of what proportion of scholars attends in the morning, but the most favourable estimate does not show more than thirty per cent. This is arrived at by dealing with very large numbers and a widely extended area, and though useful and accurate as an average, it misrepresents nearly all the individual schools which furnish the means for arriving at it. This has to be borne in mind in any consideration of the morning-school problem, and of the question of how the earlier part of the day can be most usefully occupied.

In some old-established and country schools the attendance is considerably larger, while in new districts, especially in manufacturing towns, it is much smaller. Where the former is the case, superintendent officers and teachers may go on their way rejoicing, and say the morning-school problem does not exist. Unfortunately it does for others. The great revival of religious activity has caused very many mission-churches and new schools to spring up in the last quarter of a century, and has created an ever-increasing number of places where one-half the day is more or less of a numerical failure.

Mere number ought not to be held of vital importance in any Christian work, but unhappily human frailty makes it so. Hence we find that teachers and scholars lose interest in the thinly attended morning school; and then what was poor becomes poorer, and may even cease to be. In the latter case one-half of the very short time teachers and scholars might spend together is lost. But if things do not reach this worst pitch, and if a few conscientious workers do keep on, the result is not satisfactory; so long as teachers will come, there will be a certain though a varying proportion of scholars to meet them, but the scholars will be a very "scratch pack." From some classes there will be none, from others one or more, families rather than classes being represented. As both teachers and scholars are few, each of the former has an assortment of the latter given to him—his class never being twice the same, but always consisting of a small number of well-trained and a larger number of less manageable scholars. The proportion of the latter to the former is often far more than in the afternoon, for it is by no means the best educated or the best home-trained ones who are most regular in their attendance.

In proof of what I have said I may adduce a personal experience. Some few years since, it fell to my lot to be president of an association of schools in a large manufacturing town, and I considered it part of my duty to visit during my year of office all the schools with which I was thus officially connected. The superintendence of a large and growing school made it convenient to me to devote the mornings to this work, as I could then more easily obtain an efficient substitute. In some few instances I found the morning roll-call of the associated schools nearly as good as in the afternoon, but this only in about one instance in ten. In



THE DOOR-KEEPER.



"FOR TEACHER."

many cases the attendance fell quite to the thirty per cent., and in a number it went considerably below that; while in about one school in ten there was no morning school at all. The latter schools I found were those where the bulk of the scholars were drawn from the lowest ranks of life. I might have thought—and for a little time I did think—that perhaps this town was exceptional, but subsequent inquiries convinced me that it was not. These inquiries, assisted by personal inspection, have been made in all towns that I have visited on business or pleasure for some years, and these towns have been as widely apart as Exmouth, Rhyl, and Nottingham, so that the area covered has been fairly wide. In one school I have visited, a children's service was substituted for the morning school; and I have heard of a few other instances of the same thing, and of several where children's services are held after school, which I think a mistake.

One other form of morning school there is which appears to have many advantages over either of those already mentioned—at least, if carefully and judiciously worked—and, indeed, seems to offer a solution of the difficulty. Put very simply, it consists in substituting "desk" teaching for "class" teaching; but as the term desk teaching has different meanings to different people, some explanation of the system is needed.

It is worked in three ways, each of which, no doubt, has its own advantages, though the third is the one which appears to me to have the greatest number. The first is for the superintendent to take charge of the entire service every morning; the second is for the superintendent to take charge, but to have one of the teachers to give the lesson; the third is for the teachers in turn to take the entire charge of the service. Whichever of these methods is adopted, the programme is much the same, though it might with advantage be varied according to local needs. The form which has been found generally useful is as follows:—Opening hymn; prayers; hymn; reading of the lesson verses; hymn; the lesson; hymn; closing prayers.

The first step in all educational work is to interest the scholars in it, as only by so doing can a lasting impression be made upon their minds. To obtain this interest with children, it is imperative that they should have a share—the larger the better—in the actual work; and if the time-table that I have given be examined. it will be found that the scholars may be made personally to engage in every item in it. There are eight parts; and if the morning school lasts an hour, that gives five minutes each for seven of them and twenty-five minutes for the lesson. With the time lost in giving out hymns, and in other little matters which those conversant with schools are familiar with, this will be found about the right allowance. Of these eight parts, four—that is to say, the hymns—will be seen at once to belong to the scholars. In two others, the prayers, the scholars ought to have a part if they have not, and it can easily be arranged that they should join aloud. This leaves only two items in which, on the face of the table, the scholars have not a direct interest, but it may be given as to those two also. The public elementary schools have added to Sunday-school difficulties in some ways, but they have had one good result which is not sufficiently taken advantage of, and that is, they have accustomed scholars to read and recite all together. This is an art that well deserves careful cultivation in our Sunday-schools, and the reading of the lesson-verses in the morning is admirable exercise in it. The school may be allowed to read the whole of the lesson to the teacher, but the better way is for teacher and school to read it in alternate verses. To read aloud for some minutes is a sufficiently hard task for most people; but to read aloud with others for the same time



ALWAYS EARLY.



ALWAYS LATE.

is for most young people impossible. There is then only the lesson left, and in that the scholars may have a part too, and a large part, but it depends upon the teacher entirely. In even the smallest gathering of scholars there will be found some who are fairly familiar with most of the books of the Bible, and therefore if a reference passage is required, the scholars should be asked to find and to read it. This will always be done if a little patience be exercised; but too often the teacher gives up the hope of getting the passage, and because it is not found as quickly by others as by himself in his familiar and perhaps marked Bible, he reads it. This has three disadvantages. It breaks the continuity of the address without any corresponding benefit, it prevents the scholars having that part in the teaching which they should have, and it disappoints several who were just finding the verse, and checks them from trying to find references in future.

Another way of giving to scholars a share in the work is to intersperse the teaching largely with questions; indeed, a lesson, to be effective and useful, must rather be brought out of the scholars than be a mere sermonette. To question a school properly requires considerable skill; but that skill may be acquired, and is well worth acquiring; and it is wonderful what may be brought out of a body of scholars by a skilful questioner. Many a weary and disheartened worker has been encouraged and helped when he has heard such a one drawing out of the children, some of whom have been looked on as hopelessly dense, facts which it was hoped but not believed that they knew. Having previously dealt with the subject of addresses ("THE QUIVER," p. 321, vol. xx., 1885), I need not further pursue this subject here.

The advantages of this system to the scholars are many and obvious, for it will be seen that they are trained to combined action and improved in discipline; they are taught to apply the knowledge they have, and to bring their minds to the understanding of the lessons laid before them in order that they may have their share in answering and in finding references; and they are interested and made to enjoy the schooling, instead of simply feeling that they are there because their parents have sent them. There is, however, equal advantage to the teachers if they are engaged in it in turn. It accustoms them to careful and exact preparation; for few men have the hardihood to face even a small school—with, at least, a few teachers and the superintendent present—without having spent some time upon the subject to be dealt with. It trains the teacher, too, in the art of speaking; and, indeed, is the starting-point from which many an effective speaker has set forth. The ordeal of making the first speech of your life to a large school is more than most young men care to face, but none will draw back from taking the lesson at the morning gathering. Time after time confidence is gained and skill is acquired, and unconsciously to himself the teacher becomes better fitted for his class-work, and able to occupy the desk when called on in his own school or in one he may be visiting. If a set series of lessons is taken—and the balance of evidence appears largely in favour of that being done—the teachers who hear will also be largely helped by





Forbidden Fruit

learning how their fellow-workers look upon the portions of Scripture selected from time to time.

It is somewhat difficult for me to say anything as to the advantages of this system of morning school to the superintendent personally. Of course it is easy enough to say that it enables him to form a correct estimate of the ability of his colleagues, and also to train his teachers, which is as much his duty as it is to generally direct the school. It is not quite so easy, however, to confess that there will scarcely be a teacher but will touch his self-love and show him something in which he has come short. This is not done intentionally, but it is none the less done, and done continually. Taken altogether, the superintendent is, we will say, the best man in the school, but he wil find as he listens to others that one has more skill in questions, another is more effective in illustration, another more apt in his anecdotes, and so on through the whole range of things needful for his office. This, if not always pleasant, is useful; and may be made very helpful to him, and through him to the school.

THE HYMNS OF HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. W. MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

III.—THE HYMN OF THE ANGELS AND OF CREATION.

(Rev. v. 11—13.)

IF we couple the Apocalypse to the Acts of the Apostles, and fill up the blanks in both with what we know of the history of the world at that time, we cannot fail to be struck with one most remarkable fact. It is this—the unmoved tranquillity and confidence of Heaven. Three characters are held up in the Bible to universal anathema—Jeroboam, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Nero, Emperor of Rome. Jeroboam had made Israel to sin; Antiochus was the very "abomination of desolation;" but, outrivalling both, Nero was cursed by his friends, cursed by his own mother, and has been cursed by fifty generations of men, whose flesh has crept and whose blood run cold while they read the story of his infamies. And yet, as in the case of the two earlier, the voice of faith rose above national and moral disaster, so above the shout of the theatre, and the shriek of murdered victims in the palace, arose the clear, strong harmonies of Heaven that still animate and inspire the drooping Church of God.

For when St. John wrote, not only were the scenes of burning Rome—which tradition says he witnessed—fresh in everybody's mind, but persecution, fierce, terrible, and determined, had risen against the Church. Christians in Rome were seized, and a huge multitude (says Tacitus) were condemned to die. They were nailed upon crosses in places of public resort: they were clothed in the skins of wild beasts and set upon by dogs: they were covered with shirts of pitch and hung up to burn as lamps in the street.

Far off in the East—centre and source of Christian hope—Jerusalem was encompassed with armies which, when other plans for quieting Palestine had failed, resolved upon a decisive blow by destroying the Holy City. About the same time St. Paul, the leader of Gentile Christians, was beheaded, and St. Peter, the leader of Jewish Christians, was crucified at Rome. Terrible days those were, and days to test the faith of the young Church in her Master and His cause. Yet, through all this, St. John, in the noblest vision ever granted to man, finds the courts of heaven ringing with song, and sees, as the object of adoration and faith, the very Lamb that had been slain, and Whose brethren of the flock were already in the shambles of death.

Is not the vision, then, a permanent appeal to the Church? For one of the Church's difficulties and besetting sins is the lack of courage, which tends at all times to sink into despair. Let us, then, who inherit alike the weakness and the strength of the past, listen as the angels sing.

I. And, first, let us understand the attitude and position of the angels. They are round about the Throne of God, around the Elders—that is, the Church—and around the Living Creatures. They are, therefore, the sentinels and the guardians of divine and human things. Of their nature we know little, and all that has been pictured about them, and much that has been written, is derived from imagination, based upon a slender and fragile groundwork. They are not departed saints, as maudlin devotionalism has occasionally asserted; and while painters describe them as lovely women, the Bible always speaks of them as males. Such distinctions, however, are alien to their nature; orders there are amongst them, and beings allied to their ranks, like the seraphim, of whom we know just as little. But we do know that the angels are the ministers of saintly men, and are sent forth upon this errand of ministry to the earth. We know that special angels hold interest in individual Christians, and we know that the angels that are in heaven rejoice over every prodigal who returns to his Father. So they stand equally around the emblem of Eternal Power, around the fourfold forms of life, around its drudgery as well as its ambition, and around the Church, distressed, and broken, and divided, and betrayed. No thought of fear dims the lustre of their eyes, nor lessens the precision and the emphasis of their song. They are untold in number, outbidding the enrolled legions of earthly onslaught, and they break forth into their own hymns when the last note of the melody of the Church dies away.

And it is worthy of notice that they secure ample leisure for worship. It is a lesson that ought not to be lost upon our hurrying age. Thank Heaven, there are

still secluded corners of our land where the shriek of steam-engines, the clamour of crowded streets, the driving of pulse and brain, is unknown: where the valleys laugh and sing with the standing corn, where the hill-tops are silent as the seas, and where the woods have quiet nooks, where squirrel and thrush dwell unalarmed, and where jaded brains may shape some thought of God. But Heaven is busy, too, and there is work enough to be accomplished. There are sinners lost in wilds of the hill, and in loathsome dens of the city, who will need to be brought home. There are claims and needs and dangers of the Church the world over—energies to be cherished, works to be encouraged, impurities to be purged, sorrows and disappointments to be assuaged. There is the whole creation, in all its kingdoms—its uncounted forms, its throes of birth and of dying, the types and races that have gone, the new ones that are conceived, and must appear when the time is ripe. And with all these interests in hand, their eye is upon the Throne; for here only do angels and men alike behold, and thence only receive the interpretation of life and the wisdom and guidance for work. And well were it, not only for its honesty, but even more for its progress, if the commerce of England and Scotland and Ireland were directed by the laws which abide in God. The Sermon on the Mount, which those who will not acknowledge Christ as their King nevertheless claim as their rule, requires more than even these eighteen hundred years have done for its implicit obedience. The new commandment is not always—*must* we say is not frequently?—the rule of the shop, the public market, or the exchange. Yet only those who obey can worship, and only those who rightly worship can truly live. And so

II. The central thought of the angels, like that of the Church,* was the worthiness of Christ: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And as it was in the mind of the Church, so here again this worthiness is associated with sacrifice. It seems as if not only the advantage of Calvary were to be accentuated, but its example to be indelibly impressed upon our minds. For most men suffer (outside the range of their own families) only when they must, and they fail to perceive that sacrifice at once tests what we are, and makes us what we ought to be. In this way Christ's sacrifice proved His essential worth, and, beyond this, proves to-day His permanent worth, to His people. It is not His power alone. That never elicits adoration. It is the goodness that reigns paramount within Him which men worship and love. How can we weigh that? The warehouses of the city have no scales that can hold it. Who can tell, or what arithmetic compute, His worth to a single Christian? Try to cut Him out of your life—His person, truth, and example—and then see what a barrenness and waste remains: a land for the pessimist to revel in; a truth for him to tell them, with all his blatancy and might—that such a life is not worth the living.

III. The Response of Creation. The poet of Palestine had said, many a year before St. John lived, that there is neither speech nor language throughout the earth in which the voice of the firmament is not heard. "The songs of the spheres" was another method of expressing the same truth. The sky vibrates with praise as the great stars stand out in their places. "Earth, with its thousand voices," said Coleridge, "praises God." And while these call to man, whatever his tongue or his worship, man the world round feels that he must respond. He cannot help worshipping. Under the gaslight, and in the heated atmosphere of some remote meeting-place in the big town, he may lustily proclaim that God is nothing to him. He may intoxicate his conscience into the delusion that religion only restricts his English liberty or empties his English pocket. But when the gas is out and the cheering companions are gone, when he is alone on the mountain-side, and the thunder booms out its terror above, and the lightning flashes death around him; or when he is on the broad sea, and all the tempests break about his ship, and the yeasty waves lash the sides, and sweep the decks and drown the fires, and the vessel goes adrift, a voice within answers the voices without, and the infidel is compelled to pray. A well-known infidel, whose wife was one of God's true saints, had a daughter that lay a-dying. She called her father one day to her bedside and asked him—"Father, in which belief shall I die, yours or my mother's?" The heart-broken man gasped out: "You had best die in your mother's."

And as man must worship, so his worship adopts a more expansive form than that which angels take as yet.* His eyes, too, are indeed filled with the image of the Lamb. What mind can forget Calvary and Olivet? But away beyond the present fact, he contemplates the continuous recognition; and age upon age he hears the same hymn. And further yet, and fuller, the worship of the Lamb broadens into the worship of the Godhead. It is offered to "Him that sitteth upon the throne." And it expresses the spiritual history of every saint. We see ourselves in this hymn. When first our life lay before us, and we took it up and placed it upon the altar of God's salvation, Jesus Christ was all—was everything—to us. Then, as faith deepened and threw up the greater and stronger life, we saw Jesus in all things. And then we beheld the love of the Father to be as great and tender as the love of the Son, and the strength of the Holy Ghost gathered round us and within us, and God in His Blessed Trinity embraced all things. "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

Did the angels and the living Creation know what was coming forth out of the sealed Book? Immediately after their songs, the seals begin to open, and direful events unfold themselves. What matter? It was the Lamb that held the Book and would open the seals, and whether death and famine and war stalk forth or not, all is in God's hands, and He has given His angels charge concerning us. And so the Four Living Creatures answer with their loud Amen. So we on earth endeavour to throw back from Church and hearth some echo of its tone; and so with the Elders, with Creation, and with the Angels, we claim our ransomed right to fall down before the throne and to worship Him that liveth for ever and ever.

* Rev. iv. 11.

* See Rev. vii. 12.

SOME MARVELLOUS WORKS OF GOD.

BY THE REV. TRYON EDWARDS, D.D., DETROIT, MICHIGAN, U.S.A.



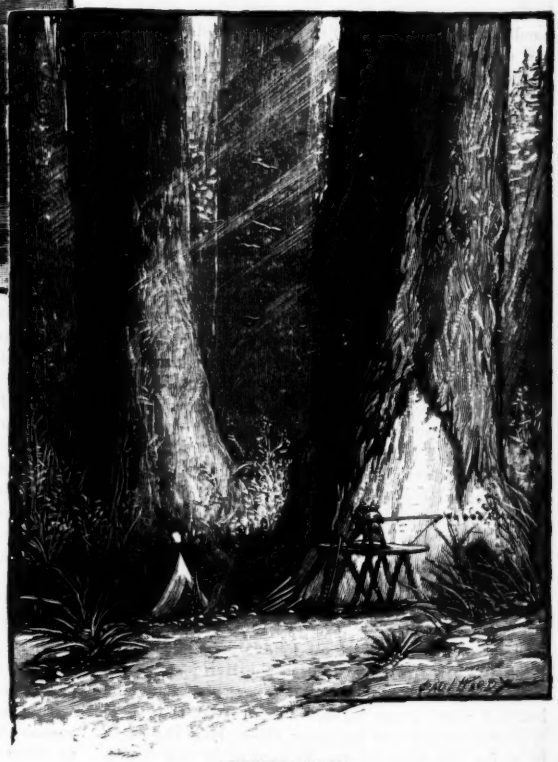
THE GIANT GEYSER.

CALIFORNIA is a land of wonders, remarkable for its mines, rivers, cascades, and waterfalls, for its deep ravines and lofty mountains, for its genial climate and its richly productive soil, abounding in all kinds of beautiful flowers and the most luscious fruits. The waterfall known as the "Bridal Veil" leaps by a descent of 630 feet to a slope below, and then by a series of cascades to the valley, in all over 900 feet. And the "Great Yosemite" fall has a vertical descent of 1,500 feet, then cascades of 626 feet, and then a final plunge of 400 feet, making in all a descent of 2,526 feet.

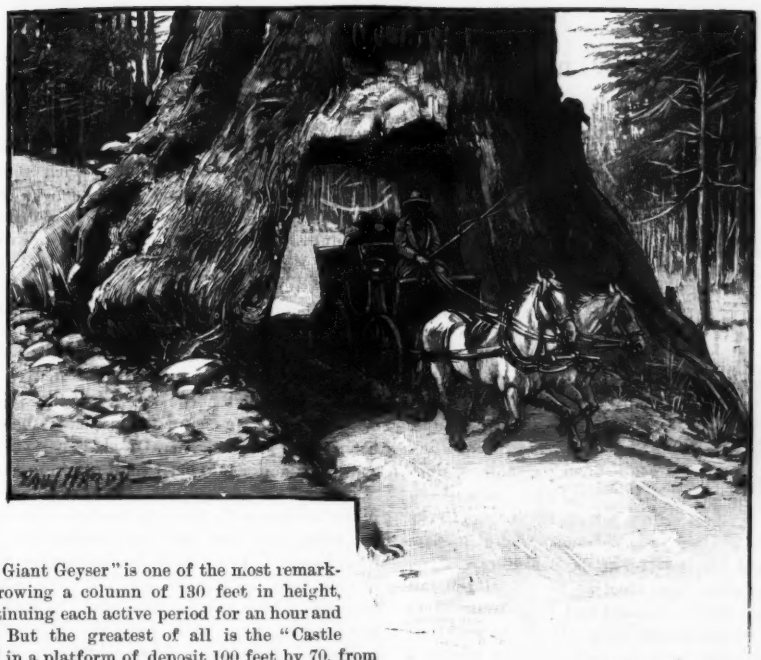
But of all the wonders of California, perhaps the most wonderful are its *geysers* and its *giant trees*.

The geysers were first seen and made known to the public by the United States exploring expedition of 1870-71. They are in the region of the Yosemite River and on the Madison River. In the former locality there is a district a mile square in extent, which is filled with these hot springs in active operation, from which the hill-sides are covered with a snowy deposit very like a frozen cascade. For some three or four miles around there are the remains of numerous springs which, to a great extent, have ceased to flow. Farther on is a deep ravine full of hot springs of sulphur, sulphate of copper, alum, and steam jets in every variety of form. And still further on is a valley said to contain some 1,500 geysers, some small and some of immense size, throwing up columns of water from 10 or 20 to 200, and in one case to 250 feet in height.

The largest of these geysers have various names, such as the "Bee-hive," the "Giantess," the "Fan," the "Saw-mill," the "Turban," etc. The "Old Faithful" is so called because it plays with great regularity every three-quarters of an hour, throwing a stream from 100 to 150 feet in height.



REDWOOD TREES.



GIANT TREE.

The "Giant Geyser" is one of the most remarkable, throwing a column of 130 feet in height, and continuing each active period for an hour and a half. But the greatest of all is the "Castle Geyser," in a platform of deposit 100 feet by 70, from which rises a chimney 12 feet high, and 120 feet in diameter at the base, and 60 feet at the top, with an aperture of some three feet. This monster geyser, when in full operation, sends a column of water to the height of 250 feet, the movement being not continuous, but pulsating, at the rate of about seventy throbs to the minute, the time of continuous activity being about an hour.

The Firehole River is one of the most remarkable features of this region, its bed and banks being entirely composed of the hot-spring deposit, honeycombed and scooped out by geyser-springs and pools, varying from minute vents not larger than quills to great tanks of boiling water. The river itself, the course of which is straight, looks much like a canal running through a region of lime-kilns, and covered with slag-heaps and the refuse of smelting-works. The Yellowstone Park, which is sixty-five miles by fifty-five in extent, has in it several thousand springs, of which about fifty are geysers.

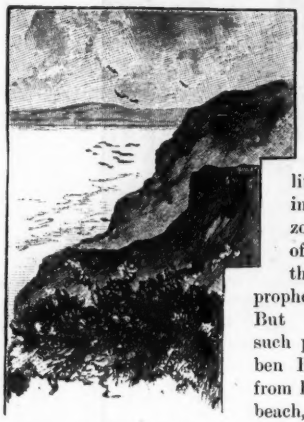
About sixteen miles south of the Yosemite Valley are the Mariposa groves of the giant trees, one of a number of groups or collections of the *sequioia gigantea*, found only in California, and of the *sequioia semper virens*, or redwood. Three of these groves are in Mariposa County, and include 134 trees, each of more than 15 feet in diameter, and several hundred of a smaller size. In all the groups there are trees from 275 to 375 feet in height, and from 25 feet to 35 feet in diameter, and well proportioned to the top. The age of some that have been cut down has been estimated, by the usual methods, at from 2,000 to 2,500 years.

Our second illustration gives a view of two of the redwood trees, and of their size as compared with the men working to cut one of them down. And the last illustration shows one of the "giant trees," hollowed by age, through which a stage is being driven, and within which, it is said, thirty horsemen could stand at one time. On the stump of one of these giant trees a concert was given to fifty people, all standing or sitting on it at the same time.

The grain of the redwoods is straight, easily worked, and capable of a high polish, and is extensively used, not only on the Pacific coast, but in the eastern cities of the United States, and even in Europe, for offices and the inside finish of dwellings. Being very durable and strong, it is also used for railroad ties and bridges, and the less valuable portions for fence-pickets and shingles. Within some forty miles along the coast there are several large "lumbering" establishments, and millions of feet of this "lumber" have been shipped in every direction. A century would not exhaust the supply furnished by the forests of these magnificent trees.

HOW REUBEN FOUGHT FOR HIS LIFE.

BY F. BAYFORD HARRISON.



IT was a spring morning; the sky had been red, but was now grey, with oddly shaped little clouds floating near the horizon; the fishermen of Pencarn shook their heads, and prophesied squalls. But notwithstanding such prognostics, Reuben Blee came down from his cottage to the beach, where it lay, and prepared his boat for a day's fishing.

His companions stood aloof as he placed the sail and the oars within the boat and then returned to his cottage for the fishing gear. While he was thus absent there came down the path from the village a Bath-chair drawn by a footman, and containing a middle-aged gentleman wrapped in a shepherd's plaid shawl, with a black cloth cap closely covering his forehead and ears. The servant drew the chair up as near as was possible to Blee's boat.

When Reuben Blee came back he touched his cap to Squire Tregenza, without speaking.

"Eh, Blee, going out? What of the weather?"

"Yes, sir," replied Blee, "but I must go."

"How is your wife to-day?"

Reuben shrugged his shoulders. "No better, sir."

Squire Tregenza's sharp eyes seemed to draw nearer together, and his sharp nose seemed to become sharper. "A cross-grained old woman, Blee—as cross as I am."

"It is bad health with both of you that does it," said Blee.

"Hum, perhaps. It is the family gout that does it with me. With regard to Mrs. Blee, I dare say a doctor would set her right in a week. You should call in the doctor."

"Where is he, sir?"

"Oh!" answered Mr. Tregenza, "there are plenty of doctors in London; two or three even in Truro."

"And where are the guineas, sir?" asked Reuben bitterly. "What would a doctor charge to come here, even from Truro; fifteen miles across moor and rock?"

"Fifteen guineas, Blee," was the Squire's reply.

Then Reuben turned away to his boat, and Mr. Tregenza made a sign to his servant to draw him back to the village, and into the grounds of Tregenza Castle.

As soon as he was out of hearing, the fishermen began to say to each other that if their squire was like other squires he would pay a doctor to come to a poor sick woman. But one man remarked that the squire would not even pay for a doctor to attend himself, so it was not likely that he would do so for one to attend Mrs. Blee. While his mates thus conversed about Mr. Tregenza and his close hold upon his money, Reuben silently put his boat into sailing trim, and began to run her down towards the sea.

Two or three of his friends came to give a hand. "You should not go out to-day," they said. But he answered, "My sick wife must have comforts, and I must earn them for her. I shall not go out far, and if a squall comes on, I shall run in again."

The sail was hoisted, and off went Reuben Blee. A few strokes with the oars, first one side and then the other, took him into deep water, and into the fresh breeze. Two young fishermen also went out in their boat, so that he was not quite alone. At first the fishing was not successful; he should have had another man with him, but Mrs. Blee had quarrelled with nearly all her neighbours, and no one had offered to go with the old man, while he was too proud to request their company. He wished now that someone had come with him. He could not manage the net by himself, and when he drew that in and let out a line he only caught two or three small bass hardly worth taking home.

About noon the breeze freshened. As Blee ate his cold dinner he thought that perhaps a change in the wind might improve the fishing. By the time that he had finished his meal, he found the sail straining, and the boat tearing along before the wind. It blew from the south; soon he found that he must button his coat and pull on his hat; then he could not do anything with the net, for the boat rocked from side to side, shipping water at each roll.

The sky had become thick with clouds, and heavy showers of sleet fell at intervals. "I had better get home," said Blee to himself, endeavouring to put the boat's head round. This was out of the question until the sail was down. He prepared to lower it; while doing so a great wave broke over him, blinding him for the moment, and pouring off his waterproof clothing into a pool in the bottom of the boat. He again tried to unship the sail, and would have had it down in one moment more, but a loud snap told him that the mast had broken, and he had but to roll up the sail and throw it on one side.

Blee was now entirely dependent on the oars and the rudder. He looked for Pencarn, the village on the well-known cliff, but the rain was so dense that he could not make out even the coast-line. Then his desperate condition was evident. He was alone; he could not use two oars, even if they could have

made any way in the raging waters. He did not know where he was; a big wave might at any moment overwhelm him; he had no food on board; he might strike on some unseen rock. And as he stood, with every nerve set, and his hands clenched on the rudder, in the awful darkness of the storm, the waters clamouring for his life, the gulls flashing past like evil spirits watching for him, he gave himself up for lost in this world, and muttered low cries of prayer that the mercy denied to him now, might be extended to his soul after the death which was at hand. This was the worst of the storm.

But God has placed within man's heart a clinging to life, even to this temporal life, and the Christian knows that he must not tamely yield up his breath without a brave struggle. So Reuben Blee prayed and toiled. He bore against the tiller with all his strength, keeping the boat's head, as he believed, to the north-east.

Then, as his last misfortune, he felt something give, and knew, only too well, that the rudder had broken, and that he was entirely at the mercy of the elements. It was now late in the day, and the approach of night added horror to Blee's situation. He sat huddled up in the stern, holding an oar by way of a rudder, but utterly hopeless of escape. He fell into a half-conscious state, dreaming over his early married life—over his children so soon taken from him, over all that had ever shed brightness on his life.

How long he sat in this state, he did not know, but he was at length aroused by a sharp, grinding noise beneath him, and, suddenly aroused, he was aware that the boat had struck on a rock; more than struck, for water was forcing its way in. Blee was now thoroughly awake; he saw that the rain had almost ceased, that in the distance a low line of yellow light marked the place where the sun had set, and that a rock-bound coast, unknown to him, was lying on his right hand.

"Now," cried he, alert once more, "if we drift towards shore, and escape rocks, we may be saved!"

All that he could do was to bale out the water which was rapidly filling the little cabin and threatening to swamp the boat, but he saw with mingled hope and dread that the wind was driving them—him and his boat—towards a bare, bleak village. On, on they went, the wind astern; now a crash as they grazed a rock, now heeling over, now drenched by spray, now twirled half-round by a wild gust, and the last that he perceived was when a life-boat loomed out of the dimness, and his own frail craft seemed to drop away from beneath him.

When Reuben Blee knew what was happening around, he saw a clean, humble cottage, a quiet old woman in a cotton gown, and a short, stout man, with a rough head, a shaggy grey beard, and large spectacles. This man was called Dr. James, and the woman was plainly a nurse.

In answer to his questions, Reuben was informed that he was at Polwith, a village twenty miles by road from Pencarn (there was no railway), and that he had just escaped with his life, for had not the life-boat's crew, who had been out to a wrecked sloop, happened to see his little boat, he must have been drowned. But warmth and food had restored him; Dr. James gave him some dry, whole clothes, and he was now to find his way to Pencarn.

"I can walk it, sir," said Blee, "though I am getting old, and twenty miles on land is worse to me than a week at sea. But thanks be to God, my poor old wife will see me once more; and, thanking you, sir, I'll be making my way home. She must have been thinking of me all day and all night, and I am afraid she will be more poorly than when I left."

"Is she ill?" asked Dr. James.

Blee described his wife's condition.

"Wait a bit, my man!" cried the doctor. "I'll have my pony-trap out, and I'll drive you over to Pencarn, and see what I can do for your wife."

"But, sir, I'm a poor man—I don't know how to pay a doctor."

"Tut, man, your rich squire shall pay me."

"Do you know Mr. Tregenza, sir? Rich as he is, he will not even see a doctor for his own ailments."

"I know him well enough by character," said Dr. James; "here comes my trap. Say good-bye to your nurse, and jump in; my time is valuable."

Blee was hurried away, not allowed even to offer payment for anything. As the doctor drove, he talked to Reuben about his fishing and his wife, and many other things. Poor Blee was very sad at the loss of his boat, the *Evening Star*, and Dr. James felt much sympathy for him.

At Pencarn Blee ran into his cottage while the doctor's pony was put up at the one little inn. As soon as that was done, Dr. James went to see Mrs. Blee.

After listening to all she had to say, including her account of the terrors of the previous day, and her expressions of the deep affection for her husband which underlay her irritable, invalid conduct, the doctor said to her—

"My good woman, there is nothing much the matter with you. I shall give you a pill, and a draught, and a lotion, and a liniment, and a plaister, and a few more remedies, and you will be perfectly well in the course of a fortnight. It is all on the nerves."

Dr. James had some drugs in a box in his trap, and went away to mix them. His cheery words had a magical effect on the patient.

"It is all on the nerves," she said to her husband; "you see, my nerves were on the stretch yesterday, and to-day they just are limp. If Dr. James can set my nerves right I shall be quite well, I am sure."

Mrs. Blee found something very comforting in the knowledge that her illness was all on the nerves; and in imparting this information to her neighbours she grew quite cheerful and amiable. The doctor remained a few days at Pencarn, and saw his patient,



"This was the worst of the storm."—*p.* 511.

whose ailment had been chiefly, though not entirely, nervous, recover her health, if not vigour.

Often when out on the smooth waters, or on the rough waves, under the blue summer sky or the overcast winter heavens, Blee thought again and again of the terrible day when the *Evening Star* foundered, and he escaped almost as by miracle. He could trace the hand of Providence which had so driven him to Polwith, and there cast him ashore, and had then brought him home safely, and with him the doctor who was destined to restore the invalid woman to health. Had Reuben been able to look into the future, he would have seen stranger and further-reaching results following on his wild conflict with the stormy sea.

For Reuben Blee's adventure and narrow escape from death by drowning were, of course, reported to Squire Tregenza; and further stories of the wonderful cure of Mrs. Blee's long nervous malady were brought to his ears. "Well," he said, at length, "here is a doctor at my very door; I will have a guinea's worth of advice from him."

Mr. Tregenza and Dr. James had an interview. The squire was all sneers and sarcasm, the doctor all roughness and bluntness. Mr. Tregenza's close-set, piercing eyes peered at his medical attendant, and the physician's round glasses glared full at the rich squire. They seemed to understand each other. Dr. James, with difficulty, persuaded his patient to take the remedies prescribed, and in the end the "family gout" was subdued in very great measure.

One morning Dr. James said abruptly, "I am going home to-day."

"How much?" said the squire, opening his cheque-book.

"Twenty pounds to set Reuben Blee up with a new boat."

"Leave Blee to me," growled the squire. "What is your bill for your attendance on me?"

"Nothing. I don't attend people for money."

Mr. Tregenza scowled. "For what, then?"

"Just for the sake of practice and occupation. I live at Polwith because the people cannot afford to support a poor doctor. I resided many years in Paris, and had many patients among English people in that city. Now I live in a Cornish village, because—I am a Cornishman."

"I thought so!" exclaimed Mr. Tregenza. "You have worn a disguise, assumed a false name——"

"Excuse me—no. Old age has disguised me with grey beard and spectacles; and my name is James."

"Your Christian name, yes; but your surname?"

"Ah!" said the doctor, "that is Tregenza."

"James Tregenza," said his brother, with a smile of mingled scorn and admiration, "you did not quite succeed in deceiving me. Take a cheque for a thousand—five thousand—pounds."

"Thanks, no. I have enough and to spare. Give twenty pounds to old Blee; and send your cheques to hospitals. Good morning, Henry; my pony will be impatient."

And so the two eccentric brothers parted. Reuben Blee soon had a new boat; and, after that gift had been made by Mr. Tregenza, Dr. James paid many a visit to Pencarn. The squire was apt to suspect his relatives—friends he had none—of seeking to obtain his money. Finding that his brother did not require or expect anything from him, he began to tolerate Dr. James's presence, and then to desire it. But the doctor, also lonely and eccentric, was not the man to live idly at Pencarn Castle when all that he absolutely needed was to be had at Polwith Cottage. He only occasionally drove over to Pencarn, stayed one night, and returned to Polwith.

These occasional visits showed him that the squire was really in failing health. While Reuben Blee and his wife battled on bravely through hard work and poverty, the rich man in his indolence grew ever weaker and more suffering. He was too proud to ask Dr. James to remain with him; but there came a day when the pony was turned out in a field, and the doctor's portmanteau unpacked, and a physician summoned from Truro.

Mr. Tregenza knew what was being done around him; and as soon as the physician had taken his leave, bade his brother send for the family lawyer. "I will make a new will—or, at least, a new codicil."

"Why so?" asked Dr. James. "What is wrong with the old one?"

"In it I have left everything to public institutions and to the poor of Pencarn, to build them places of worship and an infirmary."

"Nothing could be better," said Dr. James.

"Well, I am going to alter it. Send for the lawyer. Do you presume to hesitate? Am I not master in my own house?"

The family gout and the family temper were too serious matters to be trifled with at such a moment. The lawyer was summoned. He drew out a fresh will, leaving the half of everything which Mr. Tregenza could bequeath to Dr. James.

By this time spasms of pain alternated with periods of intense prostration. Sleep, said the doctors, was the one medicine which might prolong life. The patient was asleep at the moment when the new will was ready.

"Now," said the lawyer, "he must be roused to sign it."

"I forbid it," cried Dr. James; "to awaken him would be to shorten his life."

"But his life cannot be saved, only lengthened. What does it matter? Forty thousand pounds will be yours if you rouse him to sign that paper."

"And forty thousand agonies of remorse! Shall I murder my brother? Perish all the wealth rather than I should do such a deed! If he wakes naturally, well and good; then he can sign the paper."

The lawyer could insist no further. He waited near at hand, until a servant told him that Mr. Tregenza was awake. Then he went into the room, and found the sick man resting with his head on his brother's shoulder, and his hands clasped tight together. The power of holding a pen, or of doing anything in this world, was over for Henry Tregenza. Dr. James was saying, "Father, into Thy hands——" and the slow, heavy breath, the glazed eye, the clammy brow, showed that the pains of death encompassed the master of so much wealth.

The breath ceased, the eye grew fixed, the brow pallid; life was extinct. James Tregenza turned away with heavy heart from the death-bed of his only near relative. On the table lay the unsigned will. "Thank God!" he cried to the lawyer, "that he did not sign it! It would have been like defrauding the poor."

And the rest of Dr. James Tregenza's life was mainly spent in disposing of Henry Tregenza's riches in accordance with the will of their late owner.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

THE earth, with leaves and blossoms fair,
Grows brighter day by day,
And, in the green fields everywhere,
We see the lambs at play.

While birds to one another call,
And sing with tuneful voice,
Shall we not praise the Lord of all,
And in His works rejoice?

Each golden morning is His gift;
The days, no longer dim,
Abound with light and joy to lift
Our grateful thoughts to Him.

O God, may our young hearts discern
Thy hand in all we see,
And from the world of beauty turn
To love and worship Thee!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

MAY 18. THE TRANSFIGURATION.

To read—St. Luke ix. 28—36. *Golden Text—ver.* 35.

I. THE STORY. The passage having been read, question on these points:

(*a*) *The time.* Eight days after a particular conversation: What had that been about? The self-denial required from Christ's disciples, and the glory which should be His at His second coming. What had He foretold about some of them? (Ver. 27.) That they should see the Kingdom of God—*i.e.*, should see Christ recognised by God as King. This would be the case this day.

(*b*) *The place.* Christ went up a mountain to commune with God.

Remind of others who had done the same—

Moses went up to Mount Sinai and heard God's voice. (Ex. xix. 3.)

Elijah heard the voice of God at Horeb. (1 Kings xix. 12.)

Can picture Christ and disciples slowly climbing mountain side in the evening—getting backward views of Lake of Galilee—watched by other nine disciples—seeing the sunset.

(*c*) *The persons.* Christ going, as often, to pray.

Peter, James, and John, three witnesses of His *glory.* Before this had witnessed His *power* in raising Jairus' daughter. After this witnessed His *sufferings* in Garden of Gethsemane.

Who else appeared? Moses the Law-giver, buried by the angels. (Deut. xxxiv. 6.)

Elijah the prophet, who went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. (2 Kings ii. 11.)

These both appeared in glory, bright and shining.

(*d*) *The scene.* Christ while praying, appears all glorious. His face and raiment become bright and shining with rays of God's glory. The disciples fall asleep; Christ, Moses, and Elias talk together.

(*e*) *The conversation.* They speak of Christ's death. This the object of His coming—to put away sin by sacrifice of Himself. For this He receives token of God's glory now, earnest of full glory hereafter. (Phil. ii. 9—11.)

Now St. Peter and the other disciples awake and join in the talk.

What do they *see?* The glory shining round Christ.

What do they *hear?* God's voice speaking of Jesus Christ.

What do they *say?* It is good to be here—would like to remain and enjoy still more of this wonderful vision.

(*f*) *The end.* Now the vision is over. Moses and Elijah leave. Christ is left alone.

Christ and disciples return to every-day life. They do not speak of it now, but St. Peter lays it up in his mind, and thirty-four years afterwards tells of it to the Christians in his second letter. (2 Peter i. 17.)

What a wonderful night!

II. THE LESSONS. 1. *Glory in suffering.* Christ's Kingdom won by suffering—giving up own will—bearing pain, enduring hardship for others.

This won glory for Him. So will it for all.

2. *Prayer approved and answered.* Christ's prayer answered by glorious vision of God, and assurance of God's favour. Some comfort to God's people still. While they are yet speaking, God will hear.

3. *Christ to be heard.* God speaks by His Son (Heb. i. 2), His life, His example, His teaching, His death. Hear Him, follow Him, obey Him. (Golden Text.)

MAY 25TH. THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY.

To read—St. Luke x. 1—16. *To learn—ver.* 11.

I. THE CALL. (Ver. 1.) Remind how Christ came to lost sheep of House of Israel. These scattered all over Palestine and "beyond Jordan." Was always working Himself, going up and down the country, but the work of preaching too great for one person. Had already sent the Apostles on a short mission to test their powers; but they must stay with Him, learn of Him, and be further prepared for their great work after His Ascension. So he chooses out seventy men—just as Moses had chosen seventy Elders to help him (Num. xi. 16). Notice these points about their mission:—

(*a*) *Whither?* All the places which Christ intended to visit. Would prepare the way for Him as St. John the Baptist did.

(*b*) *How?* Two and two—for comfort, help, and support.

(*c*) *Why?* Because the harvest of souls so great. Multitudes sitting in darkness and shadow of death (St. Matt. iv. 16) need light of Christ (St. John ix. 5).

What, then, are they to do? Pray for more labourers, more workers in Christ's vineyard.

II. THE INSTRUCTIONS. (3—12.) (*a*) *Be prepared for danger.* Will be as lambs among wolves. May be in danger of losing lives, as Christ was at Nazareth (chap. iv. 29), St. Paul at Lystra (Acts xiv. 19).

(*b*) *Be simple in habits.* Were to go forth in the humblest manner, not encumbered with luggage—were to trust to ordinary hospitality.

(*c*) *Be messengers of peace.* Were to go as heralds of the Prince of Peace, telling of the love, joy, peace, which Christ brings. If the master of the house loved peace, he would receive them.

XUM

(*d*) *Be contented.* Not to go from house to house in search of better fare. Were servants of a Master who sometimes had not where to lay His head.

(*e*) *Be useful.* Had power of working miracles. Were to heal the sick—thus preparing them for the visit of the Physician of souls.

(*f*) *Be preachers.* Not to preach themselves, but Christ and His Kingdom.

(*g*) *Be firm.* If rejected, were to adopt usual symbol of shaking off dust—would have no communication with those who thus treated the servants of the great King.

III. THE WARNINGS. (13—16.) Three cities mentioned in reproof.

Chorazin—only named here—nothing known of it.

Bethsaida, or "House of Fish," on north of Lake of Galilee, where miracle of feeding 5,000 was done. (St. Mark viii. 22.)

Capernaum. Christ's "own city," where many miracles were worked. Had been exalted in spiritual privileges. What were these?

The *presence* of Christ—their Saviour, had they accepted Him.

The *works* of Christ—giving full proof as to Who He was.

The *ministers* of Christ—but they despised them.

These cities would become ruined, desolate—as they now are.

LESSONS. Christ's servants to be treated with—

1. *Hospitality,* for the labourer is worthy of his hire.

2. *Respect,* as messengers of Christ.

3. *Attention,* for they speak in Christ's name.

JUNE 1. THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

To read—St. Luke x. 25—37. *Golden Text—Lev. xix.* 18.

I. A QUESTION ASKED AND ANSWERED. (25—29.) Christ is asked a question. What is it? No question could be more important. On right answer depends all man's hope for eternity. But why did the lawyer ask it? To tempt, or test Christ—to try and get Him into a difficulty. How did Christ answer?

The lawyers, accustomed to study and explain God's Word, would know what was written there. Love to God includes—

The heart—seat of the affections.

The soul—seat of the will.

The strength—all man's powers of devotion.

The mind—or intellectual faculties.

That is—to know, fear, choose, and love God is the first step to heaven.

The second is to love our neighbours as ourselves.

But who is our neighbour?

II. A STORY TOLD. (30—37.) Teacher to question on the story.

1. *The traveller's need.* Alone, unarmed, making dangerous journey over rocky mountain descent from Jerusalem to Jericho. Set upon by banditti, wounded, robbed, left for dead. Was there no one to help?

Priest, God's minister, bound to help—passed by.

Levite, one of sacred tribe, came near, looked, did nothing. Perhaps afraid of thieves' return—or in haste to get on with their own journey. Thought of themselves first and last.

2. *The traveller's help.* A stranger comes near—of another nation not friendly with the Jews. What does he do? All he possibly can for present and future—binds up his wounds, pours ointment over him, gives him a draught of wine, puts him on his own camel, walks by his side to the nearest inn, delays his journey to look after him till the next day, arranges for his being taken care of. Shows true compassion, love, and devotion.

Who was the neighbour? Only one answer possible.

What, then, is it to be a neighbour?

1. *To look* on needs of others as our own. (Phil. ii. 4.)

2. *To help* all in need. (James ii. 16.)

3. *To deny* self for the sake of others.

The best example of all—He who told this story.

Christ left His home and came near us.

He rescued us from our great enemy, the devil.

He gives us the riches of His grace abundantly.

Shall we not love Him and our neighbour for His sake?

JUNE 8. TEACHING TO PRAY.

To read—St. Luke xi. 1—13. *Golden Text—v.* 9.

I. THE REQUEST. (Ver. 1.) This Gospel been called the "Gospel of Prayer." Records six occasions when Christ prayed, as follows:—

(*a*) At His baptism, when the Holy Ghost came upon Him. (iii. 21.)

(*b*) After healing the withered hand. (vi. 12.)

(*c*) Before calling the twelve apostles. (ix. 18.)

(*d*) At His transfiguration. (ix. 28.)

(*e*) On the cross, for His murderers. (xxiii. 34.)

(*f*) His last words. (xxiii. 46.)

Also have in this Gospel three parables about prayer.

(*a*) Friend at midnight in this lesson.

(*b*) The unjust Judge, teaching earnestness in prayer. (xviii. 1, etc.)

(*c*) The Publican and Pharisee, teaching the right spirit of prayer. (xviii. 9.)

Christ's disciples now ask Him to teach them a prayer.

II. THE PRAYER. (2—4.) The Lord's Prayer a model for all prayers. Notice:—

(*a*) *Its brevity.* One line of address, and six short petitions.

(*b*) *Its simplicity.* No fine words. Simply "Father," "give," "forgive," "deliver."

(*c*) *Its comprehensiveness.* "Us," not "me." Includes all.

(*d*) *Its contents.* Three prayers for God's glory, three for man's needs.

Notice the different ways in which God is approached:—

As Father—we His children: *Our Father*, etc.

As God—we worshippers: *Hallowed . . Name.*

As King—we subjects: *Thy Kingdom come.*

As Master—we servants; *Thy will be done.*

As Lord—we His dependents: *Give us . . . bread.*

As Saviour—we sinners: *Forgive us.*

As Deliverer—we fallen: *Lead us not—deliver.*

How do we pray for God's glory? That His name may be honoured, His Kingdom spread in the world, His will be done by man. For ourselves we ask all things needful for body and soul—in food and raiment, pardon for the past and help for the future.

III. THE PROMISE. (5—13.) Notice three things:

1. *Our need.* All things come from God; life, breath, food, etc. Absolutely dependent upon Him. Must feel this need if we would pray aright.

Notice the man's importunity in the Parable—would not stop till he had obtained what he wanted. So we must ask, seek, knock.

2. *God's willingness.* The friend gave to get rid of the man asking. God gives because He delights to. Promises to hear and answer before the prayer ended (Is. lxv. 24), as for example—

St. Peter released from prison (Acts xii. 5).

St. Paul saved from shipwreck (Acts xxvii. 24).

3. *God's gifts.* Bread as from a father to children.

The Holy Spirit as from God to man.

LESSONS. 1. *The duty of prayer.* Pray without ceasing.

2. *The promises to prayer.* Golden text.

3. *The spirit of prayer.* Earnestness, devotion, unselfishness.

THE OLD ENGLISH PAROCHIAL PSALMODY.

WITHIN the memory of many now living, a great change has taken place in both the manner and material of the musical part of the church service. The psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins, of Tate and Brady, have long been known only by name; the old florid "repeat" tunes have given place to a class of hymn-melodies as chaste and emotional as their predecessors were rough and vigorous; the parish clerk, reading out the psalm line by line before singing, has become as extinct as the pulpit sand-glass; and the pleasing variety of instruments which used to be found accompanying the service, is to be met with no more. The old people who were brought up in the old ways, for the most part regret the change; and we are not sure that, with all our artistic advancement, the church services have gained in heartiness and enthusiasm. The music, indeed, is much better—much more refined; but the congregational singing is not nearly so good as it was in the olden times. With this aspect of the subject, however, we are not now concerned. Having in previous papers given some account of the materials of the old Psalmody, we desire now to speak of some of the usages and customs with which that material was associated. The subject is an extensive one, and it will not be possible, in the limited space at our command, to touch on more than a few of its branches.

The question of instrumental accompaniment in the services of the English Reformed Church before the organ became universal is one of great interest. It must not be forgotten that the introduction of organs throughout the entire Church is the work of comparatively recent times. As early as 1536 a protestation to the King by the Clergy of the Lower House in the Province of Canterbury styles the "playing at the organes" a "foolish vanitie"; and in the middle of the next century the instrument suffered more severely in the general devastation than any other part of the church furniture. Even in 1586 it is proposed, in a pamphlet, that "all cathedral churches may be put down where the service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs, singing, ringing, and trowling of psalms from one side of the choir to another." Some said that the use of "organical music" in the public service was Levitical; but in most cases the objections arose, no doubt, from a recollection of the glaring abuses prevalent in the Popish worship. By-and-bye the opposition died away, and instrumental music was once more freely introduced into the Church. Within a month of the Restoration, Pepys records—"This day the organs did begin to play before the King"; on November 4th, 1660, he writes—"To the Abbey, where the first time that I ever heard the organs in a cathedral"; and on April 4th, 1667—"To Hackney. Here I was told that at their church they have a fair pair of organs, which play while the people sing, which I am mighty glad of, wishing the like at our church in London, and would give £50 towards it." The term "pair" of organs which one meets with about this time meant, not, it should be explained, two instruments, but simply an organ *with more than one set of pipes.*

But the organ was not the only accompaniment to the singing used in the church service. The instrument was too costly for many congregations, and keyboard-players were not so common then as they have since become. The instruments chiefly in request in later
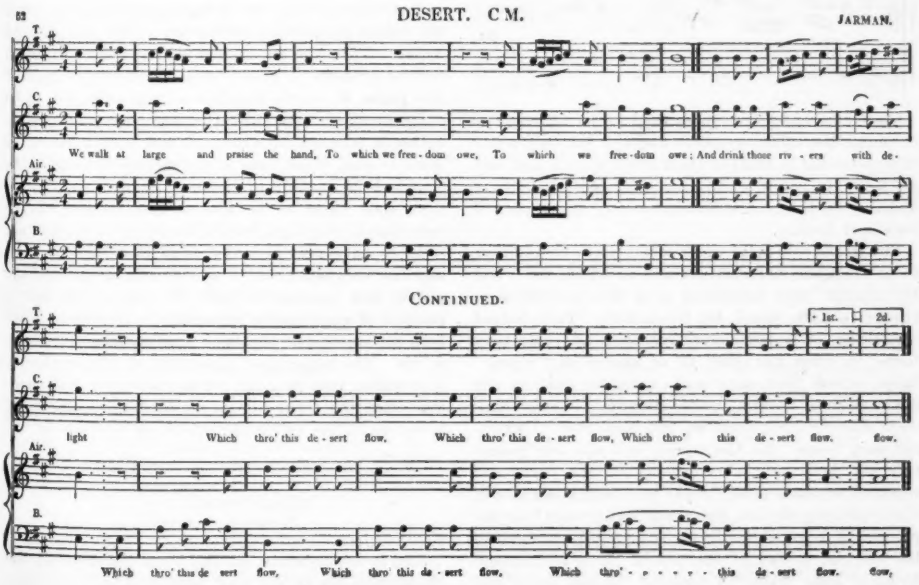
times seem to have been bassoons, hautboys, flutes, clarionets, and sometimes a violoncello or double-bass. At the time Coleridge was writing "The Antient Mariner," a bassoon was added to the church orchestra at Stowey; and we are probably justified in recognising in that bassoon an instrument of music destined to a celebrity little dreamed of by the good people who first heard it. So late as 1791 Drs. Arnold and Callcott, in the preface to their edition of the Psalms, speak of "country parochial choirs . . . where generally no other bass than a violoncello or a bassoon is used;" and readers of George Eliot's "Scenes of Clerical Life" will remember a clever picture of an old-time village choir which boasted of two key-bugles and a bassoon. Further back we read of a much greater variety of instruments as in use in the Church. Walcott, in his "Traditions of Cathedrals," tells us that viols were employed at Exeter, and the lyre and harp at Hereford. Cornets and sackbuts were played at Worcester at the reception of Elizabeth in 1575 and 1613; and at Durham and York, when Lord Guildford visited those minsters, "wind music in the choir" had been only recently disused. In 1667 cornets were used at Westminster, and Pepys humorously alludes to "the fiddlers in red vests" playing in the Abbey. Organs and violins are mentioned at St. Paul's in a coarsely irreverent work; and in 1700 and 1702 the "Te Deum" was sung in that cathedral with vocal and instrumental music.

Barrel-organs, as substitutes for the larger and nobler instrument, were quite common, especially in the country, in the end of last and beginning of the present centuries. In an edition of his "Compleat Psalmist," published in 1769, John Arnold has some curious remarks from which we learn something as to the state of organ manufacture in his day. The art, says he, has been brought to such perfection that "I have seen some advertisements in the newspapers of church organs of the machinery kind, which are so contrived as to play (having barrels fitted to them for that purpose) a set of voluntaries, also most of our ancient psalm-tunes, with their givings-out and interludes, which are very commodious for churches in remote country places where an organist is not easy to be had or maintained, and may also be played by a person unskilled in music, who has only to turn a winch round, which causes the barrels to play the tunes they are set to." It is only about forty years since barrel-organs began to go out of use in the churches, and one or two were to be met with even in recent years. In 1880 Mr. Curwen came upon one in actual use in the old parish church of East Ham, Essex, not more than six miles from the centre of London. This was reported to be a fine instrument of its kind, having four barrels, "containing" in all forty-four tunes and chants. Mr. Curwen persuaded the old man who had turned the handle for forty years to give him a recital. It was of no use, the listener was assured, for anyone to play that organ who had no ear for music. Pauses had to be made in the turning at the reciting notes of the chants; a *rallentando* had to be given at the end of the hymn, and the stops must be piled on at the successive lines of a repeating tune. All this could be done rightly only by a musician!*
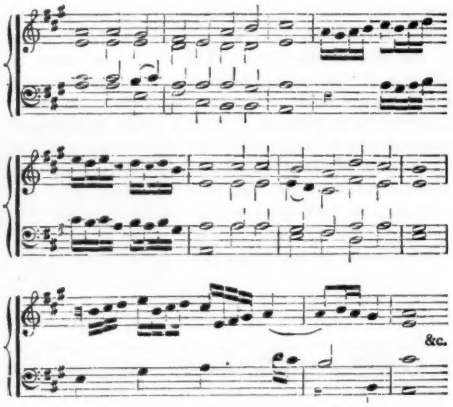
Alas! we believe the East Ham instrument has now been converted into an ordinary keyboard organ, and we suspect very few, if any, of its class now survive, even in the remotest corners of the country.

In a little book published in the early part of the

* See Curwen's "Studies in Worship Music," First Series, p. 183, where a detailed list of the tunes played by this organ is printed.



present century, the author, while advocating the use of instruments in service, complains of the frivolous interludes played between verses and lines. The interlude at the end of lines has now quite gone out of use, but we are not so sure that it may not yet be heard occasionally before the last verse. Mr. Havergal, in his "History of the Old Hundredth Psalm Tune" (1857), refers to the "absurdity and ill taste" of these interludes, which, he says, are to be traced to the vitiated practices of the English organ school a century and a half ago, when the evil seeds which had been sown on the restoration of the second Charles had attained their full blossom. "The malpractices of that age had not ceased at even the beginning of the present century. The custom of interluding a flourish at the end of every strain in a tune is still rife on the Continent, and is not quite extinct in our metropolis." The following specimen of the interlude, taken from a version of the "Old Hundredth" printed about 1700, will give readers who have never heard anything of the kind some idea of what this musical incrustation was like. We can find room for the first two lines only—



Good extempore interludes used to be regarded as no unfair test of an organist's ability; but only a few men succeeded in making them effective in actual use. As heard in country churches, they must have been nothing less than a distraction to every worshipper of taste and feeling.

The grand and solid tunes which have come down to us from the Reformation, and of which the "Old Hundredth" may be named as a type, do not seem always to have suited our forefathers. They desired something of a more florid nature; and this they found in what has come to be known as "repeat" tunes, which they sang with a vigour that in our day would be thought quite startling. These tunes were scarcely ever syllabic, but abounded in extraordinary "runs" for the voices; and one line, generally the last, was taken up by all the parts and repeated several times with ever-increasing force. Unfortunately the last line would not always bear the process of repetition without ridiculously perverting the original import of the words. In a well-known hymn of Isaac Watts, for example, the last line of one verse—"And love Thee better than before," divided as it always was at the middle of the word "better," must have been more edifying to the young people in the choir than to sober-minded worshippers in the pews. "And take Thy pil—grim home," "Where my sal—vation stands," "I love to steal—awhile away," all divided where we have placed the hyphen, show other instances of the ludicrous effect which was sometimes produced by the old repeat tune. Many lines, of course, bore the process of repetition admirably, and, leaving words out of account altogether, the effect on the feelings of the successive assaults on the music, as the parts joined in one by one, "the whole culminating in a tumultuous shout of praise," must have been specially grand. "Miles Lane," with its thrice reiterated cry of "Crown Him," is the best known of the very few repeating tunes that have been spared to us. It is always heartily sung, being evidently a tune which the people enjoy, and it bids fair to last for many years yet to come. As a specimen of this class of melody, we print the tune "Desert," which was much sung in its day.

The reading of the Psalms line by line, sometimes by two lines, before singing, was a custom which seems traceable to the backward state of education in the seventeenth century. It is generally believed to have originated among the Scottish Protestants; but it was really proposed by the Westminster Assembly, under protest from the representatives of the northern Church. The Westminster Directory for Public Worship was in 1645 adopted by both kingdoms in order to secure uniformity of worship, and this manual recommends that "for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof." That the custom was not coeval with the Reformation is evident from the following passage which we quote from an old author:—"It was an ancient practice of the Church for the minister or precentor to read over as much of the psalm in metre together as was intended to be sung at once, and then the harmony and melody followed without interruption, and people did either learn to read or get most of the psalms by heart." In Scotland the reading of the line, though resented at first, soon came to be looked upon as one of the essentials of worship; but the English Churches do not seem to have ever regarded it in that light, and at any rate they renounced it as soon as a majority of the people had learned to read. It was at the best a practice of questionable advantage, involving as it did both the interest of the tune and the meaning of the words. The latter must have suffered very much; for it is seldom that two lines contain an entire sentiment, and often the third line is required to complete the sense, as in the following stanza by Cowper:—

> "When comforts are declining,
> He grants the soul again
> A season of clear shining,
> To cheer it after rain."

And as to the music, having sung the line out, the thoughts of the people must have been so intent upon

what the clerk was to deliver next that they would with difficulty remember the preceding part of the tune, so as to begin with some decision where they had left off. These considerations should have been, in themselves, enough to condemn the practice of "lining," even if it had not been otherwise absurd.

The old parish "clerks" appear to have been on the whole an incompetent and ignorant set of men. Many of them do not seem to have been able to sing more than one or two tunes, and these only indifferently. An old author, writing in 1762, tells of having heard "York" tune sung fifteen times in a week at one church, and in another the "Gloria Patria" sung to the sad strains of "Windsor." Another author attributes the decay of psalmody, which was setting-in in his day, partly to the unskilful clerks; "for as the clerks sing, so generally sings the parish." In 1730 one James Leman, in a work entitled "A New Method of Learning Psalm Tunes," draws a sad picture of the state of psalmody, and of the accomplishments of the clerks. "Though we have," says he, "several very good and easy tunes, yet not above five or six are commonly made use of, and scarce one private person in a thousand is able to sing them right; nay, even among the clerks themselves there are very few who understand so much of music as to be able to sing many of them either." Pepys, it will be remembered, thought it a jest to hear "the clerk begin the 25th Psalm, which hath a proper tune to it, and then the 116th, which cannot be sung to that tune;" and if the church were the place in which to seek jests, many would no doubt have found excellent sport in the "good old times." But the clerks seem to have done worse things than the like of which the old Diarist speaks. What do readers think of the following, which we quote from a letter in Hooker's *Weekly Miscellany*, February 14, 1741?—"Some parish clerks, when party disputes run high, are proud to pick out a malignant psalm, one which they imagine suits with the state of public affairs, or with some transactions in their own parishes, and casts a reflection upon them, whereby a part of the congregation is grievously scandalised, while the other is unreasonably diverted." Let us hope, for the sake of the clerks, that there is no truth in this.

The character of the choirs and choir-singing associated with old English psalmody must be familiar to most readers from frequent references in the literature of the present century. George Eliot seems to have been specially observant in this particular. In one of the "Scenes of Clerical Life" we are told something as to the process and procedure of the singing at Shepperton Church—of how a slate appeared in front of the gallery, announcing in bold characters the psalm about to be sung, and of how this was followed by the migration of the clerk to the gallery to join the choir, the latter being regarded in Shepperton as one of distinguished attraction, occasionally known to draw hearers from the adjoining parish. In another work we come across a jocose-looking man who during the week worked as a wheelwright, and on Sundays represented the musical profession by acting as leader of the local choir; and in the same story there is a persistent plaint, by one in authority, about the obstinate demeanour of the singers, who decline to change the tunes in accordance with a change in the selection of the hymns. Though surrounding them with a framework of fiction, George Eliot here represents things as they evidently came under her own eyes; and it may be taken for granted that all similar descriptions of the old rustic choirs by the great ones of English literature are tolerably faithful to the original. Nearly everyone knows the very fine picture of "A Village Choir" in the South Kensington Museum, by T. Webster, R.A. It is a most suggestive work of art, and looking at it carefully, one may learn a good deal more than we have been able to set down here.

J. Cuthbert Hadden.

A SONG OF REST.

AMID a merry pleasure-seeking throng,
In fair companionship two singers stood,
And to my listening ears so sweet their song
The crowded room became a solitude.

Weary of all life's cares, and sick at heart,
I found no peace among my fellow-men,
And would have gone from all the world apart,
Buried amid my selfish griefs, and then——

And then, as by a miracle, I heard
That song of welcome to a mind distressed,
That song so precious in its every word:
"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

To *all* earth's weary heavy-laden ones
Were not the Master's gracious words addressed?
So e'en to me, one of God's erring sons,
Christ stood with outstretched arms and offered rest.

The sweet song ceased, the singers passed from sight,
The loving words remain, for ever blest!
And in my darkest hours they bring me light,
"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

G. W.

"I'VE HAD MY INNINGS!"

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A.



AMONGST the pleasant people with whom I have come into contact in life was Miss Georgina Carolina Dimity. Her name does not suggest Norman blood. I have no reason to suppose that any of her far-off ancestors (for ancestors of some kind she certainly had—she had not come into the world by any scientific processes of evolution) had been in any of the Crusades, or ever couched a lance in tournament, or wielded sword or mace in sterner fray. No, Georgina Carolina! the sweet, fresh, old-fashioned curtains of my bed, which are namesakes of yours, suggest to me that your honoured family are of comparatively modern date; but they are perhaps all the more useful, and none the less honourable, for that. In ancient Greece there was a certain Dimitos, or, as we should call him, "Double-thread," whose father was one "Dis," whom we should call "Mr. Twice," and whose mother was called "Mitos"—perhaps *Miss* "Mitos"—then; we should call her Miss "Thread" now; and, for all I know, you may go ever so much farther back than the Normans, or Saxons either. Perhaps old Dimitos was at the siege of Troy, and split somebody's head there, or had his own split—which it was, being no doubt a matter of consequence to him, but by no means any affair of ours. Anyhow, it happened so long ago that we need not trouble ourselves about it.

"Georgina Carolina" I can account for, and that in a highly satisfactory way. "Georgina" is the female of "George," Miss Dimity's uncle in India, who was supposed never to marry, and who, it was believed or hoped, might leave her some money; and "Carolina" being also the gentler sex for "Charles," or in Lat'n "Carolus," Miss Dimity's grandfather, who was believed to be good for something beyond a knife, fork, and silver spoon, and a mug and rattle of the same now unhappily depreciated metal.

If silver goes on depreciating at its present rate, either the size of mugs, and forks, and spoons, and rattles, must be increased, or else kind relations must face the situation in its metallic aspect, and rise at least to silver-gilt. Judging by the number of gold-mines of untold wealth in which I am almost daily urged to become rich, it may be that even that metal may become so cheap that the aforementioned articles will have to be made not of paltry silver-gilt, but of the genuine thing, gold itself.

Miss Georgina Carolina being thus far satisfactorily accounted for (for I am not authorised by any relationship, actual or probable, to ask to be allowed to inspect the family Bible, with no doubt the Dimity genealogy in the front), let me tell you that she was one of the most chirpy, cheery little women I ever met. She came down to breakfast with a spring. All day long the sun seemed to shine on Miss Dimity, and in her, and out of her too. Her canary sang, and she sang, and her cat purred, and her dog wagged its stump, as no other birds sang, or cats purred, or dogs wagged in the neighbourhood.

You will ask why I don't speak of Chip's (the dog's) tail. The answer is, because he had none—that's how he came to be Miss Dimity's. She heard of some cruel boys in the neighbourhood who had cut off a dog's tail, and she immediately searched out that dog, adopted it, ministered to its stump, and made such a good cure of the poor creature that she was prouder of that stump than she would have been of the most bushy tail.

Our misfortunes in life are not without their compensations, and in this case Chip was the gainer by the trouble, in a small way; for, not having so much to wag, he could wag what he had all the faster, and thus, by working hard at both extremities of his being at the same time—giving short, sharp barks at one end, and short, quick wags at the other—he reached as near perfection in the expression of joyous feeling as any dog could hope to do: he became like his mistress. Miss Dimity was, in a canine way, reproduced in Chip.

Now, I might have kept Miss Dimity to myself, and I should not have at all objected so to have done, had it not been that Miss Dimity said something to me one day in conversation which I feel strongly inclined to tell you, my reader, for your good. And how could I have told you what Miss Dimity said, if I had not told you something, at any rate, at the same time, of who she was?

What she said to me one day was this: "I'VE HAD MY INNINGS!" Indeed, I'm not sure but that she prefaced her bright little saying, brightly said, with a chirpy little "Ah, hah!"—a merry little laugh; and this I mention, because there are thousands of melancholy beings who, if they said the words, would have begun them with a groan, and ended them with the same.

Miss Dimity was of course, you know, speaking figuratively—using the well-known game of cricket as an image to convey to my mind that she had had many little pleasures and bright times and "chances" in life—"chances" having a particular meaning, as most ladies know. She had her runs, and did her little bit of batting, and though she had not scored much in one particular way, still she was quite content, and looked on what was pleasurable in the past with a cheery, a thankful, and a contented mind.

How it was that my friend's innings came to an end I never found out. Whether she was, so to speak, stumped out, or bowled out, or caught out,

XUM



A SONG OF REST.

(See p. 519.)

or leg-before-the-wicketed out, I cannot tell; but she recognised the fact that the time of her innings was passed.

Uncle George in India—or, rather, when he left India (and, in fact, the world) for good—had done his duty by his niece, and grandfather Charles his by his granddaughter; so Georgina Carolina was comfortably off. She might have kept a one-horse carriage if she had not preferred to spend the money in doing good. And this, I cannot but think, helped to keep my little friend as chirpy as she undoubtedly was.

Miss Dimity, when I first made her acquaintance, was living by herself. She and Chip, a canary and a cat, with a couple of maids, formed the establishment. Occasionally she had a friend; but in one way she might be said to have lived in the world—in a perfect whirl by day, and almost by night too; for, from sheer love of her kind, she had pitched her abode in a noisy street. She liked to feel that her fellow-creatures were near and about; and I verily believe she enjoyed the fearful rattling on the stones, which were almost enough to dislocate anyhow the smaller bones of anyone who was not so fond of his fellow-creatures.

Yes, Miss Dimity had mixed in society in her time. She had made many nice acquaintances, most of whom were gone now, but those who were left kept up with her and valued her still. She had been young, and had all the charms of youth. She wouldn't like to say so, but she had been admired. Three times she had been as nearly as possible proposed for. She had had many little enjoyments along her path, all of which were passed now. She had had a youth, and she remembered it all.

And now it had all passed. Somehow or other the innings was over—old Time had bowled her out; or if he had not done it himself one of his fielders had—Miss Dimity's stumps were down.

But by no means Miss Dimity herself—that's the point of the whole thing. She took stock of herself and of the situation, and she left the wickets as gracefully as anything you can conceive.

And what had she scored—how many runs had she made? She had not made anything matrimonially, else it would be absurd to go on talking of her as *Miss* Dimity; nor had she scored any runs in the money way, for she had left her innings in this line before George or Charles died, and put her in such a position that she could have kept that one-horse carriage if she liked. Not to have done what she well knew she had not done, would have made, and has made, many a one discontented and soured for the remainder of their natural—or, shall I not rather say, their unnatural?—lives.

But Miss Dimity had not been bowled out, nor got her leg before the wicket, nor ended her innings, however it came about, without having made *some* score. She had friends, and respect, and honour, and a good conscience, and the memory of many a good deed done. She had never grasped eagerly after any of the things of life, especially the great things; and when I made her acquaintance she was able to sit in sweet contentment by her fireside. Yes! I can do no better by you, good reader, than to tell you what Miss Dimity's condition was in her present state.

Contentment was one great feature of it. Miss Dimity believed that the past was past, and that when it was yet future, and when actually present, it was destined to be, and was swiftly moving on to being, "a past." Pasts must come to her as to all on earth. They had come, and she recognised them. No doubt, if she chose to rout them up, they had their "might-have-beens"—or, as is so often the case, their *supposed* "might-have-beens." But there was no use now in thinking that this run might have been made, and that where that one had been made, two might have been made instead. A contented mind is a continual feast; and many a snack—aye, I might say many a meal with three courses and dessert—had Miss Dimity on that.

Chip's general demeanour would suggest that he also was of the same mind; he never howled at any unhappy reminiscences of the lost joints of his tail—that bereavement was a thing of the past; the stump was of the present, and he was content therewith. Chip howling and Miss Dimity sighing would have made a duet very distressing to sensitive nerves.

And with content comes cheerfulness. When Miss Dimity approaches her canary in the morning, which is the first thing she does on coming into the breakfast-room, she is always taken stock of by that small fowl with its head on one side. Is it warranted in warbling, or singing, in any degree, in such a dusty, moiling, toiling world as is passing before its very eyes—nothing but a pane of glass between it and organ-grinders, and dust-carts, and beggars, and rushing, hurried, toiling, moiling men and women? Sunshine is scant, and the weather is chill; but here comes its mistress—here is Miss Dimity. That canary might have considered itself warranted in tuning-up a bit—a bar or two, anyhow—if it had contemplated the sugar-bowl, and reflected that the time was at hand for its getting its lump; but no! neither would its throat warble nor Chip's stump wag, until the inspiration for both came in the person of Miss Dimity.

Dear little woman! she had imbibed no bad feelings, she had not allowed herself to become in any wise soured by her innings in life, not having made some great score; she had sown the seeds of cheerfulness, and she was enjoying the harvest now.

Moreover, she had her love of humanity. She loved her fellow-creatures as such. She had actually pitched in that noisy thoroughfare, to be in the midst of them; and, dear little woman! she had mankind moving about near her to her heart's content. I think my nerves cannot be quite as strong as hers, or perhaps I am unfortunately not so devoted to my kind, for I confess to liking quiet in a general way. I don't mean to say that I would have changed places with Robinson Crusoe, if I lived in his time; but if Miss Dimity and I were going to keep house together, I think I should say, "My dear, let us go into the country—or, anyhow, look out in town for some quiet little nook." I don't know that I'd venture to say a place where they had a board up with "No Thoroughfare" on it; but a street with only one opening to it, and not much frequented, as it doesn't lead to anywhere.

I think that an excellent habit Miss Dimity had during the time of her innings of not depending on others, but having resources within herself, stands to her now. There are some who stake all their happiness on some one thing; the ball hits it, down it goes, and with it all is lost. But, in or out, dear Miss Dimity had her own resources, and she was not without them now.

And usefulness was there—that great secret of happiness. Miss Dimity did not content herself with merely looking at her fellow-creatures through the window, or listening to them as they rattled over the pavement in the street. No; she went out amongst them, and mingled her humanity with theirs; and Chip went with her, and by wagging his stump as hard as he could on these occasions, made some gutter-children happy, if he did nothing else; for he felt kindly disposed to boys, notwithstanding what he had gone through for them in his youth.

Many of us have to look on at activities in which we can no longer take a part. Let us be content.

What mistakes we see! Ah! others, out of the game in which we in our time were so eagerly engaged, saw the same mistakes in us. But all that is past now.

Let us remember that happiness may exist outside the old activities—now past for ever. The old innings is past, but we have some other innings now.

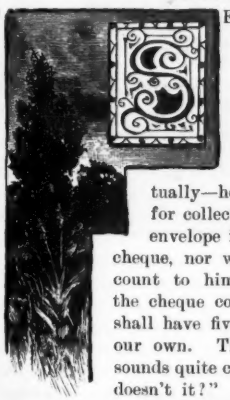
Aye, up to the very end there is an innings for every-one who will live for God and man. But all this life's innings must end; and then, good reader, then, when you take stock of the past, God grant that there be no desolation in your heart when you say,

"I'VE HAD MY INNINGS."

IN THE SECOND PLACE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I," "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," "ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.



"SEE, Jocelyn, we have got exactly fifty pounds a year. Mr. Frost says he will pay us half-yearly, on the 1st of November and the 1st of May. He says we shall have our money quite punctually—he won't charge anything for collecting it, not even for the envelope in which he encloses the cheque, nor will he oblige us to account to him for the penny which the cheque costs. Every half-year we shall have five-and-twenty pounds, all our own. Think of it, Jocelyn; it sounds quite comfortable for two girls, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Jocelyn in a contemptuous voice; "it will about pay for our gloves. How unreasonable you are, Hope, to burst in with your dull, dry, technical news when I am reading! Don't you see that I am reading a letter? Can't you guess that I want to finish it? You are such a tiresomely matter-of-fact girl—— There, I don't want to fret you, darling."

Hope arched her rather marked brows very slightly.

"You never vex me, Joey," she said. "I felt so excited to see certainty and some sort of land at last that I forgot you were reading. I beg a thousand pardons. Oh, thank you, Anne—coffee and hot scones—how delicious! Come to breakfast, Jocelyn; I am dreadfully hungry."

Jocelyn moved slowly across the long, darkly wainscoted room. She took her place opposite the coffee-tray, but her eyes were still lowered over the voluminous pages of a closely written letter.

"Sugar, Hope?" she said, in a mechanical voice.

Hope was cutting bread and butter.

"Yes, darling—but please not more than five lumps. Jocelyn, I assure you that is the sixth which is about to drop into my already over-sweetened beverage. Thanks, dear. Bread and butter, eggs, ham, scones, wait your acceptance when you are ready. In the meantime I am too hungry to stand on ceremony."

"Oh, I'll be ready in a minute—such a long letter! Thrilling, though—quite thrilling. Don't talk to me for two minutes, Hope, and then you shall hear news."

"Jocelyn's cheeks are quite flushed," murmured Hope, as she devoured bread and butter. "Her hands shake; she is smiling. Can it be a proposal? She is so agitated, and in such a glow of delight, that it really looks like it. But who is there to propose? She won't have poor Cecil, and there really is no one else. Fifty pounds a year—twenty-five every half-year. Could we live in London?—it isn't quite a pound a week. Yes, Jocelyn, what is it?"

"An egg, please," said Jocelyn. "I have finished my letter; it is from Aunt Margaret Seaton."

Hope's face was like her name, very bright and pliable. She had dark brows, hair several degrees lighter, and expressive grey eyes. Her eyes, which could express almost every shade of feeling, grew dark now; her lips took a straight and somewhat hard curve, and the rather fleeting colour on her cheeks paled perceptibly.

"A letter from Aunt Margaret Seaton, and you look so happy, Jocelyn?" she questioned. "I wonder she could write, I wonder you can read. I—I don't understand."

"Of course you don't, darling; you have not heard a word of the letter. It's all right, I assure you; but we'll talk it over presently. Now what about that dreadful Mr. Frost and his dull epistle?"



"'You won't break down; girls like you never do.'" - *p.* 526.

Jocelyn was very like Hope—like her, with a difference. She was more brilliant, more beautiful. Hope's hair was only light, Jocelyn's was golden. Jocelyn's lips were not so firm as Hope's, but they were exquisitely curved, and gleaming white teeth showed between them when she smiled. She was not so tall as her sister, but she was beautifully made; the plainest dresses became her, and took a look of ease and grace and beauty from the very way she put them on. She had an affectionate, bright, frank manner; and although Hope, too, was bright and frank, Jocelyn was, on the whole, the greater favourite. Everyone liked the Karrons, however, and all the old friends who had known the girls from their childhood were sorry when they heard that they must go away from the snug wainscoted house where, during their mother's time, they had lived, not in wealth, but in considerable ease and comfort, and face the world as very poor girls.

Still they had fifty pounds a year. Hope, who had half risen from her seat when Jocelyn made an announcement with regard to her correspondent, sank into it again, and taking up Mr. Frost's letter, spread it before her on the table.

"It's very short," she said. "He has addressed it to me."

"Of course—that goes without saying; you are the business one of the family."

Hope's eyes had not yet quite regained their usual undisturbed tranquil gaze. She loved Jocelyn with all her heart, but not quite understanding her at the moment, she rather avoided looking at her.

"I'll read the letter aloud," she said. "This is what Mr. Frost has written:—

"'DEAR MISS HOPE,—All your poor mother's unfortunate——' H'm, I needn't read aloud what he says about mother, Jocelyn. Anyhow, the debts are all paid off; that's a comfort. He goes on, down here—'It is

my painful duty to have to inform you that you and your sister are penniless; or, all the same thing, I find there is a thousand pounds left, which, as it happens, I can safely invest at five per cent. This will bring you in £50 a year. In a month's time I will send you a cheque for the first half-year's interest paid in advance. You may reckon on receiving a cheque from me to the amount of £25 on the 1st of November and the 1st of May regularly each year in future. This is the utmost I can do. I can scarcely express to you my consternation, or enough deplore——'

"Oh, now he's going off in another rigmarole. You can read the letter, of course, Jocelyn; but if I were you I wouldn't—it would only give you pain."

"Poor mother!" murmured Jocelyn. "I suppose he does feel rather irate."

"Irate! He's as rude as he can be. He's not a gentleman," answered Hope. "It's no affair of his if mother did—if mother couldn't help having pretty things, and making us the happiest girls in all the world. I'm nineteen, and I haven't had a cloud until now; and all my life I'll have my nineteen perfect years to look back upon. Don't talk of it, Jocelyn, for if you do I'll certainly break down."

"Poor mother!" again echoed Jocelyn. "What sweet taste she had in dress, too! No one ever made up lace ruffles like her. Do you remember the day she powdered my hair, Hope, and made me wear the old point and velvet, and Sir Digby Leroy made those ridiculous compliments? Why, Hope, you are looking quite pale. That will never do—you would be positively ugly if you were pale, Hope. You want that touch of colour in your cheeks to darken your eyes, and make you worthy of your name. Oh, how thankful I am I hadn't the misfortune to be called after a virtue!"

Hope pushed aside her breakfast, and going over to the fire stood with her back to the old oak carved mantel-piece.

"We have got to face everything, Joey," she said. "We were waiting for Mr. Frost's letter—it has come, and now we must face the world. I am not low-spirited, and I always, always mean to be bright; but it is a grave subject, isn't it?"

Jocelyn raised her coffee-cup to her lips. She drank deliberately, her pretty eyes were lowered, and the fingers which shook when turning over the pages of Mrs. Seaton's letter now trembled again.

"It is ridiculous to be afraid of a creature like you, Hope," she said. "And of course I'm not—not a morsel. Still, I foresee a storm. Fancy a storm in a teacup between two loving twin sisters! However, it will soon blow over. Even *you*, darling, even *you*, pet, must bow to the inevitable. Fifty pounds a year; it might keep us in gloves—I'm not sure. Now, look here, Hope: how much money have you in the house?"

"A five-pound note," said Hope, "half a sovereign, a florin, twopence, and four halfpenny stamps."

"What riches! I want you to lend me the five-pound note. I want to go to town to call on Aunt Margaret Seaton."

CHAPTER II.

THERE was no pleasanter or more sociable little village in all Chalkshire than Downton, and few of its inhabitants were more popular here than the Karrons. Oakdene was the most popular house for evening parties, for impromptu charades, for tennis, for all other amusements suited to the young, happy, and gay. Jocelyn and Hope Karron were in endless request not only in their own house but in all other houses where the girls were young and the lads merry. Mrs. Karron was just the gentlest, softest, most picturesque of women, and the cares and perplexities of money seemed never to touch the lives of the Oakdene inmates. Now and then Mrs. Karron would say, in a graceful, indolent fashion, looking with her loving dark eyes at the two pretty girls—

"You know, darlings, I ought to deny it to you, for I have a kind of idea that we are shockingly poor. I had a letter from Mr. Frost only a week ago, and he really quite frightened me—talked about the workhouse, and said we would soon be beggars. I could not sleep the night I got the letter—but now I don't believe it."

"Did he send you the cheque you wanted, mother?" Jocelyn said on the last of these occasions. "After all, that is the main thing."

"Oh yes, he sent me the cheque."

"Then of course you need not believe a word of his tiresome talk. And now we can order that brown velvet from Marshall's."

Hope was standing by the fire when Jocelyn ran gaily over to open her mother's davenport. She had a very gay sparkling face in those days, but now it looked a little grave. She seemed to put a kind of constraint over herself, and then said slowly—

"I know you hate business, don't you, mother darling?—but if you like, *I'll* write to Mr. Frost, and find out what he really means."

Mrs. Karron threw up her hands in despair.

"You don't want quite to kill me, Hope," she exclaimed. "Fancy that dreadful man going into details! He is a lawyer, and he would do it in that terribly confused way that only lawyers can aspire to. In your poor father's lifetime, Hope, he never could get me to understand figures. He was so gentle with me, trying to explain over and over those dreadful differences between compound and simple addition. He said I had plenty of talent, but not for figures; therefore what could Mr. Frost do with me?"

Mrs. Karron raised her handkerchief to her eyes as she spoke, and Hope bent her tall young figure and kissed her.

A few months, however, after this last exhibition of weakness and ignorance on the part of Mrs. Karron, the dreaded blow fell. It was a fortnight before Christmas, and the girls were preparing for even more than their usual round of festivities. New dresses were ordered, sashes, gloves, boots, a thousand and one trifles, which, as the mother declared with smiles and proud glances, could not be done without, and cost so little—so very, very little. Boxes laden with these indispensables came down from London, and then in course of post followed the bills. Whatever the necessary trifles may have been, the money to be paid for them was sufficiently

large even to stagger poor sleepy, good-humoured Mrs. Karron. Although she disliked Mr. Frost, she had learnt to lean upon him; and of late years, at his own request, he had arranged to pay most of her accounts from a reserve kept for the purpose in a London bank. The girls were up-stairs, trying on their new evening dresses, when Mrs. Karron, with a queer foreboding and almost fear at her heart, put the obnoxious bills into an envelope and directed them to Joshua Frost, Esq., Lincoln's Inn Fields. The post carried them away, and the widow breathed freely once more. There should be no girls like Jocelyn and Hope at the gay party which was to see the old year out and the new in. Hope insisted on washing and mending her mother's old point, and the mother was to accompany the girls to this special festivity.

Alas! man proposes. Two days before Christmas Jocelyn and Hope were away for the day, having joined a large skating party. Mrs. Karron was having a gentle *siesta* in her pretty drawing-room when the room-door was rather abruptly opened by Jane the parlour-maid, and Mr. Frost in the flesh—not a terrible letter of his, not even a still more detestable telegram, but the man himself—stood before the poor frightened lady. He was a quiet, grave man. Silly people were apt to call him stern; in reality he had one of the kindest hearts.

"I have come to see you," he said. "Don't look so alarmed. There is no help for it, however. You have got to face facts. I've brought you back these bills; there is no reserve to meet them with."

He stayed for about an hour; long before the girls came back he was halfway to London.

"Where 's mother?" said Hope, as she entered the cheery square hall about six o'clock that evening. Jocelyn was following with young Cecil Grey. "Jane," continued Hope in a half-whisper, "Mr. Grey will stay to supper. Is mother in the drawing-room?"

She pushed her fur cap from her rather low forehead as she spoke. Her eyes were sparkling with pleasure and excitement.

"Your mamma isn't well, Miss Hope," said Jane. "Perhaps Mr. Grey won't mind going home, miss. And—and the doctor, he 'd like to see you, Miss Hope."

"The doctor!" exclaimed Jocelyn, who had now come up. "I don't ever remember seeing a doctor in this house. Cecil, you had better go into the drawing-room, or home, just as you please. Come, Hope; we 'll go and see poor mother. What *can* be wrong?"

"The doctor wants you first, Miss Hope. He 's in the study; he won't keep you any time," murmured Jane. —"Don't go up to your mother, please, Miss Jocelyn, until Miss Hope has seen the doctor."

"Oh! what a ridiculous fuss," said Jocelyn. "Mother was quite well when we left home this morning. You are an awful croak, Jane. It is hateful to have people about one who make the worst of things," she continued, pulling off her fur-lined gloves and glancing up at young Grey.

Hope looked from Jocelyn to Jane; then the bright glow left her face. She felt grave and queer. She was too inexperienced to be really alarmed; but she hurried down the little passage which led to the tiny and seldom-occupied study.

"What is it, Mr. Marvel?" she said, as the grey-haired old doctor came to meet her.

"How do you do, Hope?" he said. He took her hand; he had known her all her life. "Yes, I knew you were a brave girl," he continued. "You have stuff in you. That 's right, my dear; hold yourself erect, and look me full in the face. You won't break down; girls like you never do."

"What 's the matter? What 's the matter?" said Hope, impatiently.

"I knew you had the right sort of mettle in you. I always admired you very much, Hope."

"I am getting extremely impatient," said Hope. "I have got a temper, and you are trying it. I suppose mother is really ill. But do tell me what is wrong, and let me go to her."

"She is very ill, my dear child—alarmingly ill. She has had what they call a stroke; it is a bad one, and must have been occasioned by some sudden shock. She is most anxious to see you, Hope. She cannot speak; but there is something on her mind. Perhaps you can help her to interpret it. Anyhow, I want you to go to her at once, and to be very calm and quiet. Whatever you feel, you must on no account break down. If Jocelyn cannot control her feelings she must not go into your mother's room."

"You think, then," said Hope, opening her big eyes wide, and staring at the doctor, "you think that mother—our mother, who was quite well this morning, is in danger?"

"Why, didn't I say so, child? Or if I didn't say it, I meant it. People don't have serious strokes without being in danger. Now, Hope, if you are going to break down——"

"I 'm not. Will you tell Jocelyn, please? I 'm going to mother this moment."

She ran out of the room, and brushed against Jocelyn, who, in her furs and richly coloured dress, made a picture as she still stood chatting with Cecil Grey in the hall.

"Good gracious, Hope! what is the matter?" exclaimed her sister; but Hope did not utter a sound. She reached her room, threw off her hat and jacket, encased her feet in a pair of worn but noiseless old slippers, and calmly, with a pale face, but two brightly shining eyes, entered her mother's bedroom.

The stroke had come truly, and poor Mrs. Karron could not utter a word. She looked at Hope with a whole world of entreaty, and question, and despair in her eyes.

The girl's strong young hand clasped hers. She bent down over her.

"You want something, mother dear," she said, in a clear matter-of-fact voice. "You can't speak; the doctor says you won't be able to speak just yet; but I dare say I can bring you what you want."

The eyes grew more questioning and eager.

Hope gazed at her mother as if she would read her very soul. Then she went across the room, and returned with some paper and a pencil.

"You can write, mother," she said, in an encouraging voice.

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She put the pencil into the feeble, almost powerless hands.

"You can write, mother," she said. "I will hold the pencil with you, and you shall write on this paper what you want me to do."

A caged spirit seemed almost to leap from Mrs. Karron's dying eyes. With a resolution which had never before been manifested by her, and aided by Hope, she managed to get the following message conveyed to the sheet of paper:—

"Dear Margaret Seaton,—Send me £2,000 by the next post, or I shall die."

"Yes, mother," said Hope. "This shall go at once. Mr. Grey is down-stairs, and he will post it. Of course Aunt Margaret will give you or lend you the money. She is rich; it is nothing to her. Rest easy, mother pet—mother darling; your own Hope won't let you die."

The restless eyes certainly grew quiet and calm, and the feeble hand tried to return Hope's warm pressure.

"I must send off the letter at once," she said. "There is quite time to catch the post."

She ran down-stairs and entered the drawing-room. It looked just as it did every evening. A bright fire shone and crackled in the highly polished grate. A pretty shaded lamp stood on a little round table beside her mother's empty chair. Jocelyn had crouched up in one corner of a large Chesterfield sofa; she was sobbing bitterly, and the doctor and Cecil Grey were both trying to comfort her.

"Ah! here comes Hope," said Dr. Marvel.

Jocelyn raised her face, down which the tears were streaming.

"Come here, Hope; how unkind of you to go away from me!" she half-sobbed, half-screamed; and rising to her feet, she held out her arms to her sister.

"In a minute, darling," said Hope.—"Dr. Marvel, I must write an important letter immediately. I must catch the post.—Cecil, will you fly with my letter to the post-office when it is written?"

"I knew you wouldn't break down, Hope," said Dr. Marvel admiringly. "Then she had a secret, and it is off her mind. Capital! Now no one must talk while Hope writes her letter. Would you rather write here, or in the study, Hope?"

"Here," said Hope impatiently. "There is not an instant to lose; I must not miss the post. Go away, everyone, please, for five minutes—I mean, leave me alone at mother's davenport. Go away, please, Jocelyn; I'll speak to you after I have written the letter."

"Oh! you are unkind," sobbed Jocelyn. "Oh, what an awful, awful evening this is!"

Hope did not take any notice. She scribbled away with burning spots on her cheeks:—

"Dear Aunt Margaret,—Mother had a stroke this afternoon. She is *very* ill. She cannot speak, but she wrote what I enclose. Please send it to save her life. It is the last chance.—Your affectionate niece, "Hope Karron."

CHAPTER III.

On Christmas Day Mrs. Karron died. Jocelyn had been in an almost stunned state since the first evening of her mother's illness. She had wept so long and so violently that her pretty eyes were nearly lost to view; she had refused to eat, refused to be comforted by anyone. When she did sleep, it was from exhaustion. No one could doubt the genuineness of Jocelyn's grief; the Downton people spoke of it as tragic, and the pity and admiration felt for the beautiful young girl was universal.

"Although she never do go near her mother's room," Jane was once or twice heard to whisper. "She couldn't abear it, she says; and the poor dear lady always and always looking out for her. But there 's no doubt she 's broke down, poor Miss Jocelyn is; and she 'll never be the same bright young lady no more."

Hope during the two days which intervened between her mother's sudden illness and its fatal termination kept up, in Dr. Marvel's opinion, bravely. She was never seen to cry. She ate her meals with composure; she did not sleep, it is true, for she had so much to do, and the terrible illness was so short and so quickly over that there was no time for sleep. But she was alert, watchful, capable. Instinct made her a good nurse, and the doctor, at least, was never tired of singing her praises.

The mother and daughter were mostly alone. Both knew the danger which was approaching, but both thought that it might be averted. Mrs. Karron clung in a confused kind of way to the succour which must surely come, and which would not only bring relief to her clouded brain, but would avert that domestic calamity which was killing her. Hope used to stand by her mother's side and talk cheerfully.

"Aunt Margaret's letter will come on Christmas morning, mother; and I am sending a messenger early to the post-office, so that there shall be no delay in our getting it. Of course she will send us what we want; there is no doubt about it—she is enormously rich."

Mrs. Karron could only smile with her eyes when Hope spoke brightly to her, but her faith was strengthened by Hope's faith, and after these warm emphatic declarations of her daughter's, she often dropped off into almost peaceful slumber.

Christmas morning came, and with it the letter. Jane brought it herself to her young mistress as she stood in the shaded light by her mother's side. Mrs. Karron was very weak at the moment. Hope gave her a restorative, then she tore open the letter, having no doubt whatever in her own mind with regard to its contents.

There was no cheque within, however, and the large writing on the thick sheet of notepaper was sufficiently brief to be quickly perused:—

"*Grosvenor Mansions, December 24th.*

"My dear Niece,—You must have taken leave of your senses to write to me as you have done, or to take any notice of the wanderings of a sick person. I am truly sorry for my poor sister; but what else could be expected? She has never lived on her income, and even a large capital comes to an end

when people fail to deny themselves. I am sorry, of course—very sorry—for this illness; but I dare say you have exaggerated its serious import. Give my love to Sophia, if she is well enough to receive it, and write and tell me how she goes on.—Your affectionate aunt,

"MARGARET SEATON.

"P.S.—Lotty sends her love. She *does* look so sweet, dressed for her first party. By the way, I am sending a hamper with some game and fruit to your mother as a little Christmas remembrance."

"What is it, Hope?" asked the eyes of the sick woman. "What does she say? Where is the cheque which is to save us, Hope?"

Hope's face was almost deathly. She folded the thick sheet of paper, replaced it in its envelope, and bent down over her mother.

"She has said nothing, mother—nothing that you would care to hear. She—she—— Mother, what is it?—Jane, come here; my mother is worse."

But no—for the moment she seemed better; the imprisoned tongue was loosened.

"Your aunt Margaret has refused to send me the money, Hope?"

"Yes, mother—yes. Don't let us talk of it any more."

"Never any more," whispered Mrs. Karron, in a confused way—"never any more. I 'd," she said, looking up at Hope with a glazed look coming over her eyes—"I 'd like you to read me the letter."

"Read it, Miss Hope," said Jane, who was standing behind the bed with her apron to her eyes. "Don't you refuse her; she 'll never want much more from you, Miss Hope."

"I 'll read you the letter, of course, dear mother," said Hope. "It is unkind, and I 'd rather you didn't hear it; still, I 'll read it if you like."

"Every word," whispered the faltering, failing voice.

Hope did read, from the first line to the last. When she began, Jane slipped out of the room, and returned with the frightened, shrinking Jocelyn. As Hope folded up her letter, Mrs. Karron's eyes rested with an expression of pleasure on her eldest daughter's face.

"Her first party," she began to murmur. "No, no, it 's Jocelyn's first party, and there 's lots of money, lots—and flowers—quantities, beauties. They 're bringing them in, in baskets; they are all for a girl's first party—no, they are for a bride. See, all the flowers are white, and Jocelyn is the bride—no, white flowers are for funerals, too. Never mind—flowers—money, all for Jocelyn and Hope. God bless them!"

The last words were almost whispered. A fleeting smile passed over the dying features, and Mrs. Karron never spoke in this world again.

"Come away, Jocelyn," said Hope.

Her sister was in a paroxysm of grief. Hope put her arms round her and led her down-stairs. There was a snug fire burning in the cheery dining-room, and an over-officious servant had even put up some feeble Christmas decorations.

"Jocelyn," said Hope, as her sister sank into an arm-chair and pressed her handkerchief to her face, "I do wish you would stop crying for five minutes, and let me speak to you. I 'll go away afterwards, and you can cry from morning till night if you fancy."

"You are unkind to me, Hope," sobbed Jocelyn.

"Oh no, darling, but my own heart is crushed, and I must say something to relieve my feelings. Do you know that when mother was taken ill she got me to write to Aunt Margaret—our rich Aunt Margaret—mother's own only sister? Mother wanted some money from her—well, a good lot; but what was that? It was the last chance for mother. I sent off the letter—you remember? This morning came the answer. She refused; she wrote scornfully. There, that is what has killed mother. This is the letter; I am putting it into the fire. Do you think, Jocelyn, that I would ever speak to Aunt Margaret, or take a farthing of money from her again after this? Do you, Jocelyn, do you?"

"I don't know, Hope; I wish you would not glare at me so. You quite frighten me."

"There goes the letter into the fire," said Hope. "Oh! my poor little Jo—my poor little Joey—we are motherless; and we are beggars, too; but we 'll always cling to one another. No one can ever part us from one another, can they, darling?"

When Jane slipped into the room, she saw the two poor things with their arms round each other, and Hope tired, and white as a sheet, but with her head lying on Jocelyn's breast fast asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. KARRON'S death caused considerable excitement in Downton; and not only her death, but the news which immediately followed—that pretty Jocelyn and Hope Karron were, to all intents and purposes, penniless. No end of compassion and sympathy was shown. Notes of condolence arrived at all hours. Officious but kindly meaning matrons tried to see the girls; and so many offers of help came in, and so many invitations arrived, that had the Karrons cared they could have lived on their friends for at least a couple of years.

Jocelyn, however, was in bed ill with a feverish and nervous attack, and Hope steadily refused to see all visitors except the doctor and Mr. Frost. Mr. Frost came down on the day of the funeral, and had a long talk with the young girl.

"It was not only," he said, "that your mother lived for some years past on her capital, but she was lately tempted to invest small sums in most unsafe speculations. She was weak enough to read those silly prospectuses which seem to flood every country house, and to be guided by them. I expostulated, and did all in my power; but as your father left her full control of everything, I could not do more than speak my protests. When I came to see her in a hurry the other day, it was not only to explain that all her reserve money had come to an end, but that £2,000 which she had rashly invested was irretrievably lost."

"That explains," said Hope, moving her lips slightly.

"That last news seemed to break her down; she cried out in the most heartrending way. Seeing what has occurred, Miss Hope, I am almost sorry that I paid that visit; and yet it seemed my absolute duty to warn your poor mother."

"You could not help it, Mr. Frost," said Hope; "it had to be told. I am only sorry that you did not come to me in the first place. I have always had more taste for that kind of thing than mother and Jocelyn."

"Poor child! How old are you, my dear?"

"Nineteen. Jocelyn and I are the same age. We are twins."

"Poor children!—poor children! Your sister is dreadfully broken down. I hear."

"She is. I don't think she'll ever be quite the same again. Now, Mr. Frost, what are you going to do for us?"

"Anything in my power, Miss Hope."

"Will you try to put affairs straight? I mean, are there any debts?"

"Bless the child—yes, there are heaps and heaps of debts."

"But is there money enough to pay them?"

"Yes, but it would mean making you and Miss Jocelyn penniless."

"Never mind that; pay the debts first."

"You're a brave girl, my dear. You take after your father—one of the most upright, honourable men I ever met. I am only sorry your poor mother was not more like him——"

"Please say nothing against mother; no one could have been better for us, or have made us more happy. May I give you some tea?"

Mr. Frost went away, and from that day kept up a brisk correspondence with Hope.

Jocelyn had been in bed for a week. She was now lying on a sofa, close to a luxurious fire in the girls' pretty bedroom. She wore a soft morning-gown of creamy white, with little pieces of black ribbon introduced daintily here and there. Her lovely golden hair lay in a rich mass against a dark velvet pillow; her eyes were fixed in alarm on Hope's eager face.

"Who did you say told you we were penniless?" she interrupted.

"Mr. Frost, of course."

Jocelyn laughed in a relieved way.

"You almost frightened me," she said. "Those tragedy-queen airs don't suit you, Hope. Please don't adopt the style, for it makes you forbidding. Mr. Frost told you all this? Then we can go on as we have always done; we need not believe a word of it. We are only poor in the kind of comfortable way we have always been poor. Mr. Frost has croaked as long as I can remember."

"It is true this time," said Hope. "It killed mother, and it will kill me too, if you don't believe it, Jocelyn."

Jocelyn stroked her sister's smooth cheek.

"Poor old worry!" she said. "Why, she will fret herself into an old woman if this kind of thing goes on. Frankly, however, Hope, whether your news is true or false, I am not strong enough to be teased about it to-day. Let us put it off for a week at least, and be as comfortable as we can be without poor mother.'



"'Who did you say told you we were penniless?'"

Jocelyn's eyes brimmed with tears; Hope's grew wide and bright. She poked up the fire, and sat down with a resigned expression.

"That is right, darling pet. Now I 'm going to ring the bell; Jane shall bring our tea up here. I feel better to-day, Hope; as if a kind of awful black cloud was lifted. It is not right to grieve without resignation, is it, Hope? I feel much more resigned to-day.—Is that you, Jane? Please bring our tea up here; and let us have nice thick cream, please, and tea-cakes. That will do; we 'll have tea as soon as you can get it for us, Jane. Oh yes, thanks, I 'm much better."

Jane withdrew, and Jocelyn almost laughed as she turned to Hope.

"Well, Gravity," she said, pinching her sister's ear, "aren't you glad to have your poor old Jocelyn reviving a bit? I am quite sure, Hope—quite absolutely certain—that if I had felt poor mother's death even the hundredth fraction of an inch more than I did, it would have killed me. It 's a dreadful misfortune to have such a sensitive nature. Dr. Marvel said he never saw anyone so sensitive. He was talking about you, and he said you were made of quite different mettle. Well, poor Hope, you take it out of yourself in other ways. Now let me tell you what I did this morning; you must not think that I am quite useless. I felt better; and I said to myself, I 'll do something to help that poor fussy darling down-stairs. So I wrote a long letter to Mme. de Pompadour—she has got our measures, you know—and I gave her a complete list of mourning to get for us both. Of course it pained me, Hope—yes, of course it pained me awfully; but I said to myself that you should not be worried about everything, and I did it; I wrote the letter. Good gracious, child, what an unpleasant habit you have of staring!"

"Is the letter posted?" asked Hope.

"Posted? Rather. Jane was going out, and I gave it her. That letter is almost in Mme. de Pompadour's hands by now. Poor little Hope! Why, you are quite trembling, darling. Yes, I knew this would be too much for you. I knew you did feel things, although you have scarcely ever cried, and you have kept up so; but I knew you missed mother, and I said you should not be pained. I ordered just the same for us both, Hope. Everything of the *very* best, and lots of crape. I ordered evening dresses, too, cut just prettily round the neck, and elbow-sleeves. We are sure to be asked to go on some visits, and we must have something. Poor little Hope! why, your hands are like ice. I think it has rather done me good to exert myself; so you need not fret for me, Hope. There comes Jane with the tea.—You posted that letter for me, didn't you, Jane?"

"Yes, miss.—Miss Hope, you don't look at all well, my dear."

"Give Jocelyn her tea, please, Jane," said Hope, in a stifled voice.

And she ran out of the room. There were burning spots on each of her cheeks. She rushed to the davenport in the drawing-room, took out a telegram form, and filled it in quickly:—

"Miss Hope Karron begs Madame de Pompadour not to execute Miss Jocelyn Karron's order. Letter will follow."

She had not shown herself in the village street since her mother's death; but this was no time to stand on ceremony, and she did not dare to trust her precious telegram to any other hands. She put on her hat, veil, and jacket, and went out.

It was growing dusk, and there was a slight sprinkling of snow when Hope reached the post-office. She sent off her message, and with a relieved heart hastened home. As she reached the little gate which led to Oakdene, Cecil Grey came up suddenly and spoke to her.

"You don't mind, do you, Hope?" he said. "I have been wanting to see you so often. You don't think that I am intruding, do you, Hope?"

"Of course not, Cecil. I am glad to see you again."

Hope held out her hand. The young man wrung it warmly.

"I know it 's very soon," he said, "but I didn't want to go away without. How is Jocelyn, Hope? Is there any chance, any chance at all, of her seeing me?"

"Not at present, Cecil; she is only lying on the sofa in her room to-day, but she is better, and I will give her your message. I will say that you called to say good-bye."

"But that isn't my message. I—if there is no chance of my seeing her—I will send her a message. You will take it for me, won't you, Hope?"

"Yes," said Hope. "Well?"

She was standing on her own doorstep, and raising her crape veil she looked full up at the tall young man by her side.

"Yes, Cecil, what is your message?" she continued.

She was feeling cold and chilly now, and longing to get into the house.

"Good gracious, I can't tell it to you here," said Grey. "May I come in? I won't keep you long. It is not really intruding, for we are old friends."

"Of course we are, Cecil," said Hope, her face brightening. "I didn't know you wanted to come in. I 'd have asked you, but it never occurred to me that you could want to, for the house is very gloomy now."

She rang the bell as she spoke, and Jane opened the door.

"Please, Jane, light the gas in the dining-room. We are not using the drawing-room just now, Cecil. Will you come in here?"

In the old times that had so quickly passed away, there never was a brighter-looking house than Oakdene. Candles in profusion, coloured lamps on every pedestal, crackling merry fires in every grate; and warm curtains and soft mats, and brightly dressed girls with laughing voices, and the no less bright and fascinating mistress of the house—all combined to make the young men, and the girls too, who lived at Downton, regard Oakdene, even in winter-time, as a sort of fairy palace.

Cecil Grey had always looked upon it in this light. As he entered the dark hall now, he was conscious of a sort of chill. The coloured lamps were nowhere to be seen; there was no reflection of cheerful firelight.

One dull gas-lamp only made the gloom of the wide square hall more visible. The bright girlish figures no longer flitted about; there was no gay laughter. Only one grave young voice asked him to come into a cold, half-warmed room, where the fire was nearly out, and the window curtains had not even been drawn. The young figure in its heavy black seemed like a ghost of the former brightness. Hope threw off her hat, when Grey came up to her.

"Thank you, Jane," she said, as the servant withdrew, having shut away the cold outside world. "Now, Cecil, your message. Cecil, you don't look well."

"I'm awfully worried, Hope. I said at last I'd come down and see you, and take my fate in my hand. The old people are put out, but they'll get over it. I told them what I was going to do. It isn't that they don't care, but there are always mortgages and things about a big place like ours, and fathers and mothers have such fads about rich wives clearing them off. You understand, don't you, Hope? I always said you were such an understandable sort of a girl."

"Rich wives, and your father and mother—and your fate in your hand—and mortgages—and you looking as white as a sheet! No, I don't understand. Honestly, I don't understand a bit what you mean, Cecil."

"Answer me one question first," said Cecil. "Is it true that you—you and Jocelyn—are poor?"

"Yes, that is quite true."

"Then here is my message in a nutshell. I love Jocelyn with my whole heart—my father and mother are rich—I am the eldest son—I have plenty of money now—I shall have more some day—I want Jocelyn to be my wife. I can give her comforts—I can give her about everything she can want—and—and—you know it, Hope—you must have always known it—there never was anyone in all the wide world like Jocelyn to me."

(*To be continued.*)

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

V.—HIS MANIFESTATION TO HIS PEOPLE.

"Beloved! now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."—1 JOHN iii. 2.

BOTH St. Paul and St. John dwell largely upon the "sonship" of believers, but they approach the subject from different points of view. To the mind of the former of these two apostles, this sonship assumes the appearance of a position of privilege. A boy running wild in the streets—untaught and uncared for, and in danger of utter destruction, is adopted into a benevolent and wealthy family. He has had no reason to expect such an advancement: nor has there been anything in his conduct or character to render him deserving of it. But the thing is done! Lifted up out of his degradation, removed from the perilous associations of the life he has hitherto led, the lad is introduced into circumstances most favourable to his moral and spiritual development, and everybody would regard him as seriously culpable if he did not avail himself of the opportunities placed within his reach. Here you have the Christian disciple according to St. Paul. He has been brought—through no merit of his own, but simply through grace—into the family of God; he has had bestowed upon him the position and all the advantages of sonship, and what he has to do is to obtain the Divine help, pledged to him (if he will honestly seek for it), and walk worthily of the vocation wherewith he has been called.

The other apostle pushes the matter a step further, and opens up what perhaps we may venture to call a profounder view of the subject. Looking beyond the question of privilege, he speaks of the disciple as deriving his spiritual existence from the Great Being into whose family he has been introduced. The man, according to the apostle, is born of God. A life which has made him a child of God, has been communicated to him from above, and it is by virtue of this life that he is in sympathy with all that is Divine, and out of sympathy with the maxims and feelings of the world at large.

You will see at once what a lofty idea of Christian discipleship the apostle St. John presents to us. It is much to be the saint of God: it is more to be the friend of God: we count it a higher blessing still to be the son of God by adoption: but how great must be the dignity, how advanced the position of him of whom it may be said, that by being born again of the Spirit, he has actually been made a partaker of the Divine nature!

"Beloved! now are we the sons of God." This is the starting-point. St. John does not tell us that we are to be or to become the sons of God at some future time. He affirms that we are such now. Whatever the blessing may be, we have it in present possession, provided, of course, that we be Christians in the true sense of the word—consecrated to God—born of the Spirit—members of the mystical body of Christ the Lord. This, I say, is the starting-point; and when we have reached it there emerge to the view three thoughts which I propose to consider with you to-night. First, that there is something difficult to

comprehend about the present spiritual position of the believer. It is seen, as it were, through a mist. In the next place, that this difficulty will be removed. The mist will melt away, and all be made plain when Christ appears. And lastly, that if we are really looking forward to the clearing up or manifestation, which is coming, the effect of the expectation will be seen in the conduct of our daily lives. We shall purify ourselves even as He is pure.

I. As to the first of the three thoughts, it is plain enough that the true disciple of Christ is misunderstood, and must be misunderstood by the world at large; and just because the world cannot possibly put itself at his point of view. St. Paul tells us that the spiritual man judgeth all things: whilst the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God. If you, being outside in a street, in a broad glare of sunshine, look into a room, in the window of which is a semi-transparent wire-gauze blind, you will have the very remotest and vaguest and faintest idea of the furniture of the room, and of what is going on in it, whereas those who are inside will be perfectly well able to note every movement of your body, and every expression of your face, and nothing will be hidden from them. They will judge you: but you will not be in a position to judge them. In some such way the Christian disciple is more or less of a puzzle to those who, not being born again of the Spirit, do not really belong to the family of God. Sometimes they will question his motives, and set him down as hypocritical, or fanatical, or as seeking his own advantage under pretence of regard for the glory of God. But the more kindly and generous portion of them—and these will probably constitute the majority—will content themselves with expressing surprise, or, it may be, amusement, at his devotion to Christ; at his deep regard for the Word of God; at his thirst for religious knowledge, and his value of the means of grace; at his dissatisfaction with himself, and his aiming at a higher and higher standard of purity and holiness; in fact, at all the experiences—the fluctuations and vicissitudes, the misgiving and perplexities, the joys and the raptures—of a spiritual life. And the reason of this is plain enough. You must sympathise with a man in order to be able to understand him. If you are out of sympathy with him, he will be an enigma, perhaps even "foolishness" to you. "The world," says St. John, "knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

But there is more than this to be said. The disciple himself—to put the opinion of the world aside—the disciple himself can only very dimly and imperfectly apprehend the future which lies before him. Partly because he is engaged in the tug and strain of a spiritual conflict. You may have your misgivings sometimes as to how the battle is going on with you. You may almost fear that you are being worsted, and that you will have to give way at last. And knowing what you do about the plague of your own heart—though you do believe that the Lord, in His mercy, has healed you—yet, when men express a doubt about the reality of your faith, and the sincerity of your religion, you may at times be inclined to suspect that their judgment is correct, and that your estimate of yourself has all along been in error. But though the confusion may arise—in part—from the fact of your being placed in the thick of a spiritual struggle, it may be attributed still more to the difficulty of realising the things of the eternal world: a difficulty for experiencing which we are surely not altogether to blame. You will remember the words of St. Paul (words which, by the way, he quotes from the prophet Isaiah), "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Are we to infer from this statement that it is impossible for us to form even a conception of the future state? that the glory of it is completely hidden from our eyes? Nay: not so! For the apostle goes on to assure us "that God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit." If, then, God has "revealed" them to us, we can—at all events, to a certain extent—understand what the future will be. We have some glimpses of it, though not a distinct view. We have intimations, surmises, presentiments; even though there be nothing more. The case seems to stand thus. The future—the eternal life—what will it be? It will be no new thing, but the expression and development of the spiritual life of which we are in possession at the present moment. In the next world we shall not be anything essentially different from what we are now. We shall be our present selves, but more completely, in a higher degree. And yet what the completion, what the fulfilment, what the development will be, we can only imperfectly guess, such is the limitation of our faculties. We are not expected to form just now a distinct and accurate conception of the subject at all.

II. I pass on to our second topic. There will be a time when all difficulties and confusions shall be removed, and that time is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. That coming of Jesus Christ is a moment of manifestation. What is your idea of the Judgment and the Judgment-seat? When you hear the words, do you not picture to yourselves the vast assemblage of all the countless myriads of the human race? The masses of glorious angels—assessors of the judgment—rising rank above rank in magnificent array, and lining the sky? The Great White Throne itself—the Throne white in its dazzling brightness, like the core of fire in the heart of a furnace—and on the Throne, the God-man—the Judge—from whose face the earth and the heaven flee away, and there is no place found for them; and then the books—in which the deeds of man are recorded—and the opening of the books, and the disclosure of the secret entries, and the balancing of the accounts, and the terrible hush of suspense and the gradual dismissal of the members of that boundless multitude to the one side or to the other—to the right hand or to the left—to the realms

of happiness or to the dungeons of dark and inevitable despair. Well, the images are Scriptural, and are intended, of course, not only to strike the mind, but also to convey important truths.

But may not the underlying thoughts which the imagery is intended to express, be something of this kind—that the Day of Judgment is simply a day of manifestation, in which every one of us, every human being, *is seen to be what he really is?* For my part, I am inclined to think this view a correct one. At present we are muffled up in various disguises. More or less, we are hidden from each other, and perhaps from ourselves. The mean spirit is sometimes clothed in dignity, and struts and fumes on the stage of life; and men bow down before its altar and chant its praises; whilst solid worth, not unfrequently, is clothed in rags, and is treated with contumely. Sometimes, too, the true Christian is misunderstood; and the man of loud profession, of unctuous phraseology, or of hard and rigid formalism, works his way to the front, and poses and passes as a saint. But in the keen, searching blaze of the Judgment-seat, all disguises will drop off, and the very essence of the soul will start out before the eye of the Judge. Is not this, then, what is meant by being manifested before the Judgment-seat of Christ—that our characters will be displayed, and that we shall take our place at our real essential value in the universe of God? or to express it more briefly, that angels and men, yea, and we ourselves also, perhaps, for the first time shall know what we really are.

If so, I must confess I see no need for long processes, and for balancing of accounts. Are you a Christian indeed? Is the life of Christ in you? Are you living for Him, and by Him? and striving to follow in the footsteps of His example? Well, your motives may be misunderstood, your character maligned, your endeavours ridiculed; yea, you yourself may be a poor feeble creature, and no such grand specimen of a Christian after all. But if your faith be true, and your Christianity real, depend upon it, a time is coming when the confusions and the mists that now gather round you shall have passed away, and the life of the spirit that is in you will display itself in its beauty and grandeur to all that are assembled together to behold. Such seems to be, in part, the meaning of the apostle in the text.

But we must go a little further with him. "When Christ," he says, "is manifested," *i.e.*, in His resurrection-glory, "we shall see Him as He is." It is possible to see Christ and yet not to see Him "as He is." There are few, I suppose, in Christendom, who do not form any idea of Christ; but in some cases it is unhappily a mistaken one. To some persons He is a mere man. To others a great teacher and nothing more. To others, again, a hard and exacting taskmaster. To others, a severe and formidable judge, to be dreaded and not loved. And perhaps to others He is a mere pretender, assuming an attitude towards the human race to which He is not entitled, and making promises which He is in nowise competent to fulfil. To see Christ in this way is to see Him to no purpose; indeed, I suppose I ought to say it is to gaze upon Him to the damage and detriment of our souls, because under such circumstances, instead of being attracted towards Him, we are in very great danger of being repelled from Him. But to *see Christ as He is*, is to contemplate Him with sympathy and love. We have been taught by the Spirit to understand Him—to understand Him, if I may use a homely phrase, "all round," to understand His person, His character, His work. At least we have been placed in a right position for understanding Him. We have some true knowledge already, and the knowledge is growing. We have been led, by the Divine Spirit, into an acceptance of Christ in His entirety—in all the various offices which He fulfils to His Church. We have put ourselves into His hands, and are submitting our wills to His holy and righteous will, drawing strength and blessing out of His fulness, living by His life. Now, He becomes to us an object of contemplation. Where do we behold Him? In the Holy Word especially. And this contemplation, being one, as I just said, of sympathy and love, has the effect of bringing us into closer and closer resemblance to Him, of gradually stamping His likeness upon our souls. "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord."

This I suppose to be seeing Christ as He is, so far as this present world is concerned. And they who are thus accustomed to see Christ, are ready to gaze upon Him with unspeakable joy when He shall come again to earth. We must have contracted, whilst here below, a likeness to Him (a spiritual likeness, of course), in order to be able to confront the beams of the risen Sun of Righteousness, in the plenitude and blaze of His resurrection-glory. Take this idea with you. And take this also. Upon the people of Christ, thus prepared for seeing Him, the vision of His glory will produce the most amazing effect. What it will be I must not presume to say. For, indeed, I know nothing about it. I had better quote without comment the words of Scripture: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "Christ shall change our vile body (the body of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Such statements point to some transcendently glorious transformation, which shall pass over the bodies and souls of believers, in the day of the appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

III. Our last point remains yet untouched. I do not wish to put it aside altogether, and yet, with so little space remaining at my disposal, I dare not attempt to discuss it. An illustration somewhat resembling that

with which I started, must serve me to place this part of our subject rapidly, but I fear not very perfectly, before you.

A young prince, stolen away in childhood from his father's palace, and brought up amidst unworthy and degrading surroundings, has been recovered and brought back again. By degrees, he comes to understand his position—he did not quite understand it at first—and he is full of gratitude when he contrasts what he is now with what he was some months or years ago. Yet he has difficulties. The habits of years of depraved life are not easily shaken off. But he contends manfully against the difficulties, and is climbing up slowly, but surely, to a fitness for the position in which he has been so happily reinstated. Now, two distinct considerations will influence the young man. First, he will desire to act worthily of his present princely state; and then, because he knows he is to inherit, at some time or other, his father's sceptre, and because wide dominions and large populations will then be placed under his sway, he will wish to qualify himself for the task and responsibility of ruling, whenever he shall be called upon to ascend the throne.

You see the application. We who are Christians have a *present position* to maintain. Christ says to each of us, "Be what I have made you! I have placed you where you are. I have made you children of God. Be children of God!" And then, there is *the future* to look forward to—the future Kingdom—the future glory, upon which we shall have one day to enter with Christ. And what is the result of our expectation of these things, if we really entertain the expectation? Let St. John tell us: "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

THE DREAMS OF DR. FAYDING.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," "THE VANISHING OPAL," "THE HEART OF THOMAS TITT," ETC. ETC.

WEARIED and worn with London life, Charles Domville was glad when the early autumn came, and with it the time of his release for a while from what had become the weariness of work.

He was in early middle life, full of ambition, full of conscious capacity—the eagerness, the enthusiasm of youth were still with him—the world seemed still to have much to give, and he was eager to get.

All his thoughts were associated with life—its energies, its successes, its gains, everything good was to be found in them—weaknesses, failures, losses, they all savoured of a region of death. What was to be expected from *them?*

It was a wonder now that the very need he felt of rest for both mind and body, at the time of which I write, did not suggest to him something about pauses, calm, repose, perhaps death itself; but I suppose the rush of life without, and within too, was overmuch for what was restful, for what seemed to have nothing in it. Such thoughts might do well for the river-*side*, but he was on the flood of the river itself—the flood that could carry great timber-trees down with it to the sea, that could scoop out great landslips from the river's bank, that could cover the meadow, and drown the wild flower, and that flowed in the channel where but little water trickles now. But the little can reflect the sun, and the little can make a sweet soft murmuring as it ripples onward on its peaceful way to the great ocean—the great deep which lies before us all.

Early middle age, and older middle age—he has passed beyond them both, and is at peace; and the way by which he has come to peace is by walking with Dr. Fayding in his churchyard.

Now, good reader, understand at the outset that I am not talking only of spiritual peace—the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding"—the peace of forgiven sin, which can come only by the bloodshedding of Jesus Christ—I am thinking of the "mind-calm," the "heart-calm" also, which come by the acceptance of what is our lot, of the pain, the sorrow, the bereavements, and the losses of life—by the breaking of the power of aught of earth to have *mastery* in our heart, or memory, or thought; so as to torment us with their stings, and make what we have of life the worst of all estates—a living death.

Charles Domville wandered about hither and thither, from one watering-place to another, until at last, wearied out with brass bands, and piers, and esplanades, and young ladies with no meaning—and some, he was bound to say, with a good deal of meaning—he determined to go off to some place where he should see as little of his fellow-creatures—at least, of such as he was used to—as possible.

And thus it was that he found himself at Daysford, a place of which the world knew but little, and which, in its own way, returned the compliment, by knowing little of the world.

The little village of Daysford lay on the side of a sunny hill; I dare say it might have contained some three hundred folk; but it did not boast of any inhabitants of much social account: the chief people were the parson—Dr. Fayding—and next

to him the churchwardens, who towered above their fellows in virtue of their office, and of that alone. Their glory stuck to them very fairly during the week, but on Sunday they shone; for, far removed as Daysford was from the world, it had a churchwardens' pew; and from time immemorial that pew had in front of it two black rods gilt at the top; and the ordinary bucolic mind could not make any separation between the men and the rods; and so it gilt-tipped, if I might so speak, the officials all the week through; and they were looked upon with becoming fear by little boys, and with respect by all well-principled and right-minded men.

After Charles Domville had established himself in tolerable comfort in the "Three Owls," the only place in which he could find a couple of decent rooms; he betook himself for a stroll, and soon found himself in the churchyard. It was separated only by a slight hedge from the garden of the inn, and passing through a little turnstile, there he was.

At first he thought he had the place to himself; but presently he came upon an old man putting a few late flowers upon a little grave, and as he thought he would ask a question or two about the place, he sauntered up to him.

This man was Joseph Drailes, the sexton, and he was nothing loth to have a chat with a stranger.



"Coming close up to him, and almost whispering in his ear."

"You be a stranger hereabouts," said the old man; "and what d'ye think of the place? Ye haven't seen much of it yet, no doubt. Folk say there ain't much to be seen about; but whatever there be, you won't have seen everything until you've seen our parson—aye, and I might a'most say our churchwardens too. You'll see their gilt sticks standing right up out of their seat if you wait till Sunday: or I'll show them to you now, if you like—the keys ain't three minutes away. But the parson! he's the principal person to see here. All Daysford says he's only fit to be put down in a book; and he'll be put in one some day or other, I make no doubt. If you walk much about here, you'll be sure to meet him; he often walks about in this churchyard. I've seen him from my window going up and down in the moonlight of a summer's night——"

"And not afraid of ghosts?"

"Ghosts! Bless you, the gentleman has a churchyard in his own house, in the very room he lives in—gravestones and all complete; and he's ower much to do with graves to make him afraid of ghosts. If he ain't afraid of them in his own house, he ain't likely to be afraid of them out of it."

"A graveyard in his own house!—that's out of the common, at any rate," thought Mr. Domville; so he asked the old man what he meant.

"I'll tell you," said the sexton. "I see by your dress and your watch-chain you're a gentleman; and if you'll give me your word, and your hand on it, that you won't let out, if you meet him, that I told you anything about it, I'll tell you what I know."

The stranger pulled out his watch, which was a handsome gold one, with arms and crest enamelled on it, to confirm the sexton's belief in his gentility; and he gave him his hand as he required. Then coming close up to him, and almost whispering in

his ear, the old man said, "What I knows is from Mrs. Dillwort. Mrs. Dillwort is first cousin to Mrs. Kingston's half-sister as keeps the 'Three Owls;' and she 's been with the rector, Dr. Fayding, nobody knows how many years. Mrs. Dillwort's husband lies buried in the third row from this; and that 's how she comes to be so friendly with me.

"Well, the vicar once went away for an entire week; nobody ever knew where he went, though everyone tried to find out: even Mrs. Dillwort doesn't know to this day. She says she hopes he won't die without making a clean breast of it; but he hasn't much on his mind, in my opinion, who sees him a'most every day; if he had, he wouldn't be as peaceful as he is.

"Well, when he were off a day or two, Mrs. Dillwort comes to my cottage yonder, and says, 'Mr. Drailes, I 'm uncommon low over at the vicarage; and if you don't mind dropping in, and Mrs. Drailes too, I 'll be glad.'

"When the time came, Mrs. Drailes had to go to her daughter two mile off, whose child was ill, and I went off by myself to Mrs. Dillwort's. Said she, after tea, 'Would you like, Mr. Drailes, to see the curiosities as come from the South Sea, where the vicar has a brother? they 're kept in the study, where the Doctor lives."

"I thought afterwards Mrs. Dillwort ought not to have taken me into that room, and I ought not to have gone into it; for I might have remembered that the Doctor, all the time I knew him, had never seen me there, but had always come to me in the hall or the dining-room. However, that 's neither here nor there, now; into the room I went, and looked at all the queer things on the walls; and at a lot of great books, with writing, or printing, or whatever it was, here, and there, and everywhere —only making out, what everybody said, that the Doctor was a very learned man.

"But the greatest curiosity in the room was in a deep window, near which our parson's writing-table was. There was a little brass rod, with green curtains on it; and what do you think was behind it? Why, the very thing I told you of just now. You wouldn't believe it, I dare say; but so it was, there was the very churchyard, to the bottom of which I never could get. And, sexton as I am, I 'm bound to say, I never saw a little churchyard kept neater in my life. There were the headstones, and something written on them, a deal too small for my eyes to see—and for Mrs. Dillwort's too. And there was a little church there too; 't was for all the world like a real church—only made of cork; 't was a great curiosity in its way, and the ivy all growing up it. I don't know what the make-believe was made of; but it was just as if it were creeping up, and would want trimming some day.

"Said I to Mrs. Dillwort, 'I is worth coming to tea with you to see this, to say nothing of the pleasure of your company;' at which, I can tell you, Mrs. Dillwort looked pleased, and no mistake; and this made her talk a bit, and tell me what she knew about this affair, which seemed a very queer one to me.

"'I never heard exactly what this was,' said Mrs. Dillwort; 'I can only tell you my belief—and my belief is that this is the church where master was before he came here, and that he's had its likeness taken when he left, gravestones and all. There's only one thing that I can't make out: all that's on the tombstones is in some strange language; so, for the life of me, I can't tell who 's supposed to be buried in those graves.

"'One day the vicar left lying about a glass of his that makes things look big; and I made bold to take a turn out of it, to see who was buried in those graves; but, bless you, I was none the wiser, and I never shall be. It used to trouble me at one time, for I didn't like secrets lying about the house here and there; one never knows the awkward ways they have of coming out into something dreadful; but said I to myself, "If there is any secret, it rests with the vicar; and it couldn't be with anyone better; for he's a good man; and he wouldn't let anything bad stay in the place."'

"'Graveyards is all very well in their proper place,' said I to Mrs. Dillwort; 'and as man is in this world now, we couldn't do without them. Folk like myself would miss them very much; but "everything in its season,"' said I, 'and everything in its place; and I don't think the house is just the place for all these graves. You never hear any strange noises about in the night, now, do you, Mrs. Dillwort? and you don't ever see anything out of the common, do you? You've never seen anyone walking, or anything white, or heerd anything out of the common—say, when the clock strikes twelve, or from that to daylight in the morning? There may be strange histories in those unknown tongues; and though I'll answer for all being fair and square in *my* churchyard, and no disorderly doings of any kind, I can't tell what might be going on in a place like this; it's out of my line. Unknown tongues is dangerous things; and what may come out of them at any moment, who can tell? If I saw a headstone coming to our churchyard with one on it, I'd beg the vicar not to allow it to be put up. There might be an explosion, or a something—I can't tell what; and "something" may mean anything, and anything may go as far as an earthquake, for all you know—and an earthquake is the very last thing I should wish to see.'

"'Well, we must leave it as it is,' said Mrs. Dillwort; 'it 's been here a long time, and no harm has come of it; and if it were no good, I 'm sure the vicar wouldn't have it here—and where it is, too—quite close to his writing-table, so that it might be said to be always under his eye.'

"'Yes, we 'll leave it,' said I. 'Some day everything will be explained, and this will be amongst the lot; in the meantime, we may hope

that as no harm has come of it up to the present, so none will in time to come. What will become of it when the vicar dies?—that will be the question. But we may leave that to those who come after him. He must look after his own graves, and I'll look after mine.'"

As you may well imagine, good reader, Mr. Domville's curiosity was highly excited by this strange story of the churchyard in the parson's house. The inscriptions in strange tongues—the evident value which the good man, and apparently the learned man, attached to what seemed to be a toy—it was something quite out of the common; and there *was* a *something* in it; that he felt quite sure of. And here, amongst these rustics, was something of interest—something worth coming to the bottom of; for that it had a bottom, he felt perfectly sure.

But how could he get at the parson, and how could he intrude into what, he felt sure, was a mystery—perhaps of his faith, perhaps of his family, perhaps of his life?

Circumstances were in Charles Domville's favour; for, the sexton had hardly done speaking, when he saw an old gentleman coming slowly along the walk, which led directly to the grave on which the old man had been putting the few late summer flowers.

"Here he is himself," said Mr. Drailes in almost a whisper — "here's the vicar;" and presently the owner of the private churchyard came up to them. He had a rose in his hand, and he had come to lay it on the little grave on which the sexton was bestowing his care.

I suppose the vicar had been tall in his early life, but he was now bent—the bent *bow* for the strong man to shoot with, the bent *back* when the strong man can shoot no more. There are graceful bendings of salutation; there are painful bendings of burden-bearing, and of burdens borne. The bendings of salutation rise up again; the bendings of burden-bearing—they seldom rise up more!

The old gentleman wore upon his body the usual habiliments of a clergyman; he wore upon his countenance a calm, a peace, a restfulness unusual: there was rest for one's spirit in looking into his face. The brawling stream of life, rushing between boulders, and leaping over stones, to which Charles Domville was accustomed, seemed in him to flow into a quiet pool, where a hush came over all; and where, in perfect reflection, there was an earthly home for the light of the faintest, farthest



"He was a troubled man; the tears were in his eyes."—*p.* 538.

glimmering star. There are some upon whom, even while on earth, Heaven traces the first outlines of its eternal, its unbroken peace.

A thought flashed across the visitor's mind: "Had this peaceful-looking face ever been in London? and if so, then how long ago? Had it ever looked on the whirl, and moil, and trouble of daily life? Had it seen what man is to his fellow-man, and what man does to his fellow-man—the pushing, the crushing, the throat-seizing, the drivings-out into the middle of the road, the crushings-up against the wall—which make up so much of man's days, and weeks, and years? Were the worst shadows it knew, those which floated over the neighbouring hills? the worst storms, those which flooded the streams, and bent the trees, and which convulsed nature, not man? Had the old divine ever known, ever felt, any of those things? and had he drunk some water of Lethe, which had drowned the memory of them all, flooding his brain and flooding his heart, so that he was no longer a prey either to memory or feeling?" "And," said Mr. Domville, "shall I ever be like him? I have come from the hot haste of life; I must soon return to it again. Will a time come—it may be, in the long future—when I, too, shall feel whatever this good man felt; or, to put it more fully, also not feel what he does not feel?" Often had he heard ministers end their sermons with the words, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." When this old man said these words, did he know more, did he mean more, did he wish more, out of his own inner heart, and experience, and realisations, than many other parsons? All these thoughts came rushing through the younger man's mind in almost less time than I take in writing them—whether they would be ever more than speculations he could not tell. He had no excuse for making the old gentleman's acquaintance; so he just made a slight salutation, and turned away.

Charles Domville had not, however, proceeded far, before he was overtaken by the old clergyman. He had sat down on a great square tombstone when the doctor came up to him, for he was on the direct path to the vicarage.

"You are a stranger here, sir," said the old gentleman. "We don't see many in these parts from the outer world. I hope you are comfortably lodged."

"Thank you, sir," said Domville; "I have all that I require; my wants are not very many."

"That is well," said the vicar; "the fewer our wants, the greater our chance of happiness, so far as the world's things go; though we might come to wanting nothing, and yet not be happy even then. I have my own doubts as to Diogenes being altogether happy in his tub. We must look for happiness not only in independence of *things*, but in attainment of that which is *above things*—in deaths and lives, in graves and resurrections, in the buryings of the past and in the resurrections of the future. See, all around us here are graves—the buryings of death, death put out of sight; death's work is done, life's struggles are over, all around this place is peace.

"I must introduce myself," said the old gentleman; "my name is Fayding: I am the vicar of this parish." The vicar paused, evidently that the stranger should do as he had done, and introduce himself, which he accordingly immediately proceeded to do.

"Permit me, sir, in turn to introduce myself. My name is Domville — Charles Domville, of Clement's Inn—a tired-out barrister, roaming about for a little change and rest; and doomed soon to go back to worry and turmoil again."

"Domville," said the vicar thoughtfully to himself; "and *Charles* Domville: there was a man of that name at Oxford in my day, but that was long ago; the name now is amongst the moulderings of the dead. Time was, when that name would have troubled me sore; but now, it has gone down into the place of peace.—You stay a few days here, sir?" said the vicar; "then I shall have the pleasure of calling upon you; and you have only to command me if I can do anything for you while you stay."

The vicar turned his steps homeward. The journey was from one churchyard to another. That evening the good man sat in his study, and his meditations were amongst the tombs. His humble supper finished, and Mrs. Dillwort being buried up to her nose in her blankets, the vicar drew back the green silk curtain, which hid the little recess, and looked intently at one corner of the little graveyard. He was a troubled man; the tears were in his eyes, and his hand trembled as he took up the big magnifier, with which he was wont to read the inscriptions on the tombs, when he desired so to do. Not that that was often, for he knew them by heart; but there were times when he read what was written on tomb and headstone, and meditated much thereon.

This agitation was very unusual with the vicar. It was now midnight: the time when ghosts begin to think of taking such exercise as their health requires, when they come forth to transact such business as they have to do; and there must be ghosts, or something of the kind, to agitate the vicar's generally untroubled calm. Yes, there were two ghosts abroad; there were two folk about, who ought to have been in their graves, according to the inscription on a tomb. They should have been there—why, then, should they be troubling this calm and peaceful man?

The vicar threw the light of his lamp full on the corner of the little churchyard where this tomb had place, and, taking up the glass, read the inscription on it. The inscription was in Greek characters, and, being translated, was simply this—

HERE LIES CHARLES DOMVILLE:
ALSO
DOROTHY HIS WIFE.

The old man said the Greek words aloud many times; he paused between each, as though he would rivet it in his mind. "Read," he said to himself; "read, Jonathan Fayding; read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest; read and believe; read and act as though you believed; be not like Saul of old, to trouble the dead, and call them up again. Where they have lain for many years, there let them lie still; the furrows which they ploughed in your face have been filled up long ago: why rip them up again? What seed hast thou, Jonathan Fayding, to sow in those furrows if they be opened once more? and when it sprouts, and shoots, and blossoms, and ears, and ripens, what sheaves will it give for the garner of your heart? Oh, Jonathan Fayding, once your garners were full of such a crop as this—long since they have been swept clean—fill them not again! There are garners which it were well, Jonathan, to have full, and there are garners which it were well to have empty. The day that you said, 'Earth to earth, and ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,' at this grave's side, you did not say—as how could you have said?—'in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection.' This grave covers death for ever: if it were given to you to have any grave opened in this churchyard, and to be able to say to its dead, 'Come forth,' this assuredly would not be the one."

It must have been between two and three in the morning, when the old man got up from his knees. He needed to pray long and hard, that night; but when he arose, the old peace was upon his face, his hand was steady, neither would he trouble the dead in their graves, nor would he allow their ghosts to trouble him. The vicar of Daysford was himself again, the man upon whose face was written the Past—was written "Peace." To make a "*Past*" is one great secret for making "*Peace.*"

Yes! reader, whether you care for such things, or not, whether you think that "preaching" should have no place here or not, be sure of this; the Author of all peace Himself, He who knows the preciousness, the power of peace, He bound it with the past; there can be no peace where there is present sin, and our sins and our iniquities will He remember no more. He casts them behind His back. He casts them into the depths of the sea. He has washed them out with the most precious blood of His dear Son Jesus Christ; that blood belongs to every one that believes; that is beyond all tales, and that peace cometh out of death.

The vicar of Daysford rose up strong from his knees, and went to bed, and slept the sleep of the just; the bed-clothes were almost unruffled when he rose in the morning; he had not tossed to and fro, nor had he been affrighted with any visions of the night. He had dreamed, it is true; but the dreams must have been unvexing to the spirit; for when he came down in the morning, the old peace was on his face; the sun seemed to have risen upon it even as it had upon the earth, warming with a gentle beam the autumn flowers; and brightening the deep pools in the stream which flowed at the churchyard's foot.

Time was, when a dream, such as the vicar dreamt, would have lashed his whole being into madness; and, in all probability, the pillows would have been found at one end of the room, and the bolster at the other; but it is not so now. It has done the old vicar good to tarry in the little churchyard before he went to bed, to read the inscriptions on some of its tombs and headstones, but especially upon one—the one which had on it these few words—

HERE LIES CHARLES DOMVILLE:
ALSO
DOROTHY HIS WIFE.

It was of Dorothy, this Dorothy, the wife of Charles Domville, that the old man dreamt; had he dreamed of Charles Domville too, his dream would very probably have been different from what it was. It was curious that, in that little churchyard of the vicar's, this was the only double inscription. There were several graves there; but their headstones in every case mentioned only one person, with the exception indeed of one stone which had three great names on it; but here, two lay buried out of sight. Why were there not two graves side by side—the one to Charles Domville, and the other to Dorothy Domville?

And why should the old vicar have dreamed only of the one; and that one, the Dorothy aforesaid? And when the vicar dreamed, what was it that he saw in the visions of the night? Just a sunbeam, then a lightning flash, and then a sunbeam again; and this last sunbeam was the same as the first sunbeam; and where he went, it went; and where he tarried, it tarried; and it shone round about him, and through him, and above him, and around him, and encompassed him with its light; just as one can imagine it is in the perfect fellowship of love eternal, as it shall be in the companionship of saints in light. It was all mysterious, all unlike earthly communings of any kind; and it left lingering traces of its radiance upon the old man's face, and more than lingering traces on the heart.

It was a part of Mrs. Dillwort's mission in life to make daily observations on her good old master's face, and to minister with utmost carefulness to his wants. What concerned him concerned her; that is, when she could know anything about it, and knowing, could enter into it. For, as you doubtless know, good reader, there are limits to all our capacities. Some things we can't even know; and some we can't enter into, even if we know that they exist.

Mrs. Dillwort was proud of Dr. Fayding. "Ain't he the heavenliest face in all the country round?"

said she many a time to her neighbours—and especially to Mr. Drailes, the sexton; always throwing up her two hands when she made such utterances, as the most appropriate action. "Ain't heaven shining in it, like the sun in our duck-pond?" exclaimed the good woman, when she ventured on the poetic. And when the educational, and the disciplinary, were strong upon Mrs. Dillwort's soul, she used sometimes to shake an urchin of two or three who was crying and making ugly faces in the act, and say, "Fie upon you! you 'll never be like the vicar, if you begin like this. I suppose the Doctor never cried in all his life—if ever he did, he 'd have spoiled the heavenly face he was sent with into the world." "All these here heavenly faces come slap down from heaven into cradles. You can't make 'em, John Drailes," said Mrs. Dillwort, waxing very energetic with the sexton one day. "Mrs. Drailes has had sixteen babies, and she 'll tell you that the only one as looked at all heavenly died a week after it was born; and if you 're for believing anything different from this, John Drailes, I go out from this house this moment, and never drink a cup of tea in it again."

"Well," said the sexton, "I 'll only tell you what I 've heerd an old man say, when I was quite a young chap: he was a man who had a face for all the world like the vicar's."

"What 's that you say, you wicked man?" cried Mrs. Dillwort, starting up; "you say that again, and I 'm off—I 'm out of that door, or through it, if it 's shut, as sure as my name is Dillwort and your name is Drailes. Like our vicar! and you the sexton too—that makes the matter worse. Ain't there any shame in our part of the country, Mr. Drailes—and if there be, ain't there any in our parish? and if there be, who next to the churchwardens should have it but yourself? Mr. Drailes, you 're a married man, and there 's your wife—I suppose she knows all about you; anyhow, she ought; 't would be much better for married men if their wives knew more about them than they do; and I ask Mrs. Drailes if she knows anything about this old man, and how he looked, and what he said."

It was Mrs. Drailes' interest, culinary and otherwise, to keep in with Mrs. Dillwort; so, not to offend her, she then backed all the responsibility on Drailes. "Let him answer for himself," said Mrs. Drailes; "he 's the one that says he heerd and see'd the man; so he 's the one to speak."

"Speak up, Mr. Drailes," said Mrs. Dillwort to her victim; it was a cat-and-mouse business, and the cat was willing to let the mouse go so far, before she put an end to it altogether.

"Well," said John Drailes, "if you 'll let me say it, this man was smooth-faced—there 's no harm in saying that."

"Maybe his wife ironed it," chimed in Mrs. Dillwort ironically.

"It was my own mother," continued the sexton, "who was talking to him, and she said, 'Master Salem, how is it that you look so peaceful like, when my face, and the faces of most of the folk a'bout, are as if they had been under the plough; and they were forgotten to be harrowed, or rolled, or anything else done to them afterwards. I suppose you 've kept always just exactly as you were when you were born; and you 've had nothing at all to vex you like, as you 've gone through the world.'"

"'Missus,' said he, 'I 've been in trouble like other folk—it may be in more trouble than other folk, but I let trouble do its work on me. It makes all the difference whether you work trouble, or whether you let trouble work you. Trouble is only a tool; no, many tools—every trouble a different tool; and the hand that 's willing to use those tools, and the only hand that knows how to use those tools, is God's. It 's my troubles that have brought me my peace; they 've cut off, and filed away, much which had need to go; and they 've brought, and filled in, much which I never could have had myself; and that 's how there 's peace in my face—because there 's peace in my heart.'"

"Humph," said Mrs. Dillwort, "that might have been all very good for *him;* but there 's roast and boiled in this world, and there 's hot and cold; and 't isn't because this was the way with *your* man, that it should be the way with that blessed man we have here. There 's that as comes 'spontaneous'," said the vicar's housekeeper, "and this heavenly countenance has come 'spontaneous' on our vicar. Take my word for it, and, if you don't believe me—now look at a mushroom; how does that come? Ain't the answer 'spontaneous?' and if that isn't enough, look at the mistletoe; how does that come? Ain't the answer to that 'spontaneous' too? D 'ye see that wart?" said Mrs. Dillwort, exhibiting an excrescence about the size of a grain of small shot upon her thumb; "how did that wart get there? The answer is 'spontaneous;' all which shows that things can come in that way; and if you and I, John Drailes, are to hold together in this parish, as I hope we may do for many a day, you 'll believe that the vicar's face is 'spontaneous,' and nothing else. If you 're inclined to hold to your own way of thinking, remember mushrooms, mistletoe, and warts are 'spontaneous.'"

John Drailes' wife looked at him; John himself smelt a long perspective of savoury smells in Mrs. Dillwort's goodnesses yet to come; he knew well that these must be spontaneous on her part; and so, to all outward appearance, at any rate, he fell in with the "spontaneous" now.
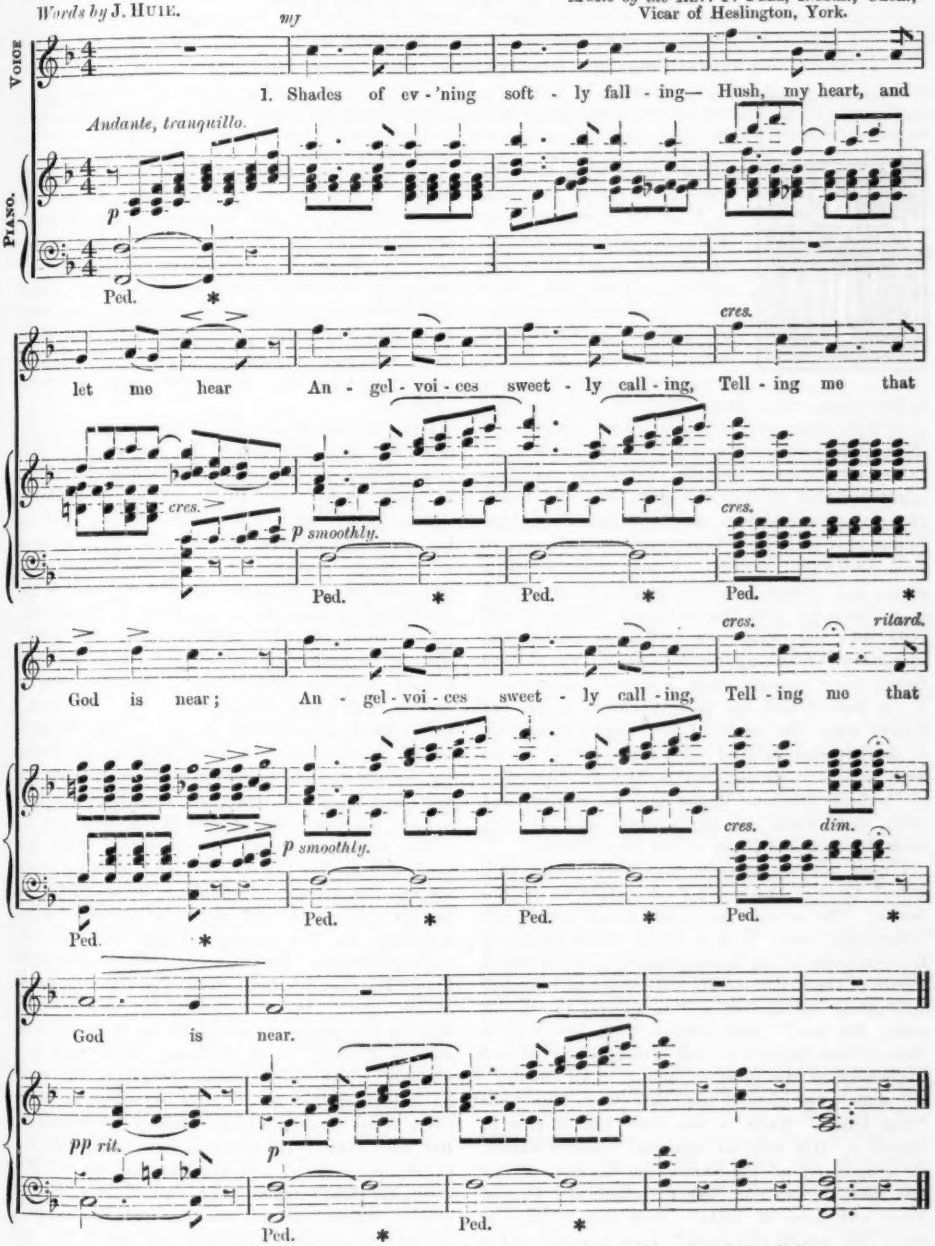
Mrs. Dillwort knew not the cause; but she thought this morning she had never seen the vicar's face so full of sweet soft light and peace.

(To be concluded.)

Evening Hymn.

Words by J. Huie.

Music by the Rev. F. Peel, B.Mus., Oxon., Vicar of Heslington, York.



2. Shades of evening, calmly closing,
Fold away all earthly care;
Let my heart, on God reposing,
Find its rest in praise and prayer.

3. Shades of evening, stars revealing
In the peaceful arch of night,
Peaceful o'er my spirit stealing,
Show me Christ, my Star of light.

4. Shades of evening, holier living
Bear me from the heaven above,
Rest in God's own sweet forgiving,
And the gladness of His love.

5. Shades of evening, slowly stilling
All around in rest secure,
Let me rest, and wait fulfilling,
Trusting God, for God is sure.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

(PREACHED BY APPOINTMENT IN A CITY CHURCH.)

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."—PSALM viii. 6, 7, 8.



THERE are times when the minister of the Gospel is called, as I am by special appointment this evening, to discourse on themes apart from the ordinary. There are topics which benevolence, or patriotism, or public utility suggest, which may seem, so far at least, out of place in the pulpit, as demanding or implying a departure from St. Paul's noble motto and vow—"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Let us not, however, brethren, cherish the erroneous impression that to such a subject as is now to engage our thoughts there can be imparted no evangelical tone, or that it is incapable of enforcement from evangelical motives. I have made selection of the text because I believe that the cause I plead is in harmony with the sublimest truths of our faith, and may obtain its loftiest arguments and illustration by linking it with these. I might have found many passages more rigorously appropriate to the topic which has been entrusted to me, but I have taken the words of this Psalm, conceiving it the bounden duty of the ambassador of Christ with regard to themes, not perhaps in themselves of highest religious importance, to connect and exalt them where he can, directly or indirectly, with the work and Name of his Great Master.

I need not stop to show that these verses, and, indeed, those of the entire Psalm, apply to the Redeemer. The second chapter of Hebrews is sufficient commentary here. It is a Psalm which speaks of the exaltation of the human nature in the glorified Person of the Mediator. He is described as "crowned with glory and honour, and having all things put under His feet." And sublime truth surely it is that the vast universe of God is designed to redound ultimately to the glory of Jesus. "All things," we read, were created not only "BY Him," but "FOR Him." While in one sense this is true in regard to His original essential Godhead-nature, it is specially as the Christ, the Saviour of our race, that He has thus been enthroned as "King of kings and Lord of lords." Who can attempt to grasp this wealth of empire? Look upwards to the firmament, and, as you hear the stars in their courses telling "nightly to the listening earth the story of their birth," let them tell, too, the story of their end and destiny. Let imagination climb her ascending way through galaxies of suns and planets and systems, and remember that this crowded concave is a vast coronal or diadem for the brow of the Mediator: no mere masses of dumb materialism, either, but doubtless teeming with intelligence and life. Before *Him* every knee is bending, every tongue is confessing, every lip is adoring; angel and archangel, cherubim and seraphim, veil their faces with their wings before Him; while the white-robed and palm-bearing multitudes of the Church triumphant add the Redemption note peculiarly their own.

But does this exhaust the host of dependent existences who own His sway? No. "One star differs from another star in glory." There are other revenues of praise from other orders and other creatures, which, though inferior in nature, are still part of the great commonwealth. "*Crown Him Lord of all!*" is the key-note struck by the loftiest worshippers; but it is caught up by every unit in the graduating myriads, down, aye, down to the lowliest. "*Thou hast put* ALL THINGS under His feet!" Who is to limit these *all things?* It is a stream flowing from the eternity that is past, and pouring its ever-deepening floods into the ocean. The tiniest rill is there to contribute its part. The archangel in his might, and the little child on its knees, thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers, man, and beast, and worm, *all* are there, the subjects of His sway, the denizens of His Kingdom.

The argument drawn in connection with our subject from this is: If the lower creation were not too insignificant or worthless to contribute to the glory of Jesus, they cannot be deemed too insignificant for Him to care for, and for us to protect and honour. We know it is said of His saints that "He that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of His eye." In other words, He feels what is done to His people as sensitively as if it had been done to Himself. And, of course, while there is a sense in which, using human language, He must be jealous of *them* as He is in regard to no other (they being emphatically the fruit of the travail of His soul), yet if all creatures have been entrusted to His sovereignty, and are the subjects of His sway, He must regard any wanton injustice or cruelty inflicted on the meanest and the lowliest as an unwarranted aggression on what the old divines call His "rectorial rights." It may seem to some an unnecessary straining of the subject: that it would be better to rest and vindicate it on principles of ordinary benevolence. It is well, indeed, that we can take up the lower ground too, and, for

those who would scorn the appeal to Gospel motive, address ourselves to the claims and sympathies of our common humanity. But I do confess it seems to me that the theme of to-night secures a far more commanding demonstration when we see the lower animals, whose oppression we are called to denounce, placed under the especial care and authority of the Redeemer; that as the living creatures were brought one by one to the first Adam to be named and placed under his protection, so the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who is to restore in every respect what the other forfeited, has had, among the "*all things* put under His feet," "all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, and the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea."

Though the members of the lowlier creation are represented in the text as subjected to the rule of Christ, they have been subordinated by Him to the care of man. To man, as high priest of creation, they have been made over at once for his use, and to secure his protection and kindness. In thus consigning them to his custody, this great Lord of Nature has given significant intimation of the treatment He Himself designs them to receive at the hands of their deputed governor. He has manifested on every side a desire for the happiness of His creatures. Pain is in no instance the law or condition of their being. The sport of the insect, the carol of the lark, the gambols of the quadruped, the gush of summer song in the groves and woods, all read the design and intention of a bountiful, beneficent, and benevolent Ruler. And if man, therefore, abuse his delegated authority, and instead of the merciful guardian and friend of the helpless, become the rigorous tyrant and torturer, does he not thereby set himself up in guilty defiance of the purposes of the Almighty, and do what he can to abridge the happiness he was commissioned to provide and promote?

And who can cast a glance around him and fail to see that man, in a thousand guilty forms, *does* thus seek to frustrate the great design of the Creator, and put a wanton arrest on the happiness of those below him in the scale of being? It were easy to present harrowing and common-place details. For many reasons I refrain from doing so. We may, in passing, advert alone to one, perhaps the most familiar phase and form of abuse, and which may be taken as typical of many others. How sad to witness even those animals which subserve the highest purposes of usefulness, and in no mean sense may be deemed at once the servants, the companions, and the friends of the human race, made the object of merciless exaction, vindictive passion, cruel and oppressive servitude. If the dumb could speak, how deep often the language of rebuke which a thing of mere brute instinct could utter against the tyrant immortal who frets and galls him! The yoke could tell many such tales of shame: aye, in the case often of those (and the outrage always seems here intensified) who have at one time been pampered and caressed. We always manifest peculiar sympathy for any of our own brotherhood or sisterhood, members of the *human* race, who have "seen better days"; who by one or more of what are called the throws of capricious fortune, are driven from comparative affluence to penury and want. How sad the spectacle which not infrequently meets us on the street, of the mother *singing* in order to save from starvation herself and the squalid infant she carries in her arms. SINGING! These joyous notes are in mournful contrast and disharmony with a smothered tale of misery and woe. But what is it, in *her* case, that awakes our tenderest pity and compassion? Is it not because the ear is quick to discern that the owner of that voice was once the inmate of no beggar's hovel: that these once jewelled hands were accustomed to something else than the stinted pittance of the passers-by? That pining withered flower once shed its blossoms in a genial sunny home; but the blast of adversity came, and it may be through no wrong-doing of her own she is now drifting an outcast on the cold, pitiless waters. She has seen *better days!*

Is it different (ought it to be different?) with the dumb creation—especially with the noblest and best known of our quadrupeds? Yet how many of these, once fed and fondled by gentle hands, the companions of a generous owner, the pets of his children—how often are such sent forth to spend the dregs of life in toil and torture! And, not to make the picture too realistic and repulsive, how frequently do we see this once friendly helpmate compelled to drag the heavy load for which strength is unequal, the heaving nostrils and palpitating sides and distended veins conveying silent but ineffectual remonstrance to the task-master! Nor is it the jaded and superannuated alone which are subjected to similar treatment. Fashionable stables and costly equipages must be included, we fear, in the indictment. Some of us have been too often the unwilling spectators—I include myself—of cruel wrong inflicted on creatures who can only resent the insult by restive plungings, or tossing the foam from their polished bits. I feel for a high-bred horse as I would feel for an insult poured on the cultured scion of a high-bred, aristocratic family.

But it would be alike unpleasing and idle to prolong. Alas! the instances, as you well know, might be painfully multiplied and diversified. We shall rather proceed to enforce, from a few brief considerations, the duty of abstaining from the infliction of pain on the inferior creation, and their paramount claims on man's sympathy, protection, and kindness.

Let us advert, at the outset, to a lurking and widely accepted fallacy with regard to the lower animals having a comparative insensibility to pain. That they are capable of a certain amount of suffering none dare dispute, but we question if there be not at the root of much of that reckless torture of

which they are the subjects, an impression that their wild and untamed habits of life and their iron frames make them proof against the physical anguish of which the human being is susceptible. I would ask what in anatomy, what in physiology is there to bear out such an hypothesis?

Is there aught in dying humanity so piteous, harrowing, and heartrending as some of their death cries? An officer walking over the bloody field of Alma the night of the battle, mentions that nothing to him was so terrible as the moan of the dying horses, and that look of unutterable anguish so truthfully depicted by the greatest of our animal painters in his well-known work, "Time of War." Or, when rude violence is done to the instincts of other members of the lowlier creation, as, *e.g.*, when the female quadruped is robbed of her whelps, how piteous the howl which follows the footsteps of the plunderer as he leaves behind him what was the scene of brute affection and tenderness! Injured instinct pines under its own torture, without those *moral* supports which the human heart has to mitigate and reconcile.

We do not profess ourselves qualified to enter on the niceties of the anatomical question, from the organic structure of the lower animals as compared with the human. This has been fully discussed, and what we are now seeking to vindicate established by medical writers in treating of the subject. There is, indeed, little need of any scientific investigation. The very look and expression of what are perhaps misnamed the "inferior creation" at the threatened infliction of pain, is enough to tell us that they can affect and afford no stoical insensibility. See how even the lordly lion in his den cowers and winces under the lash of his keeper! But am I not warranted in repeating and emphasising the remark just made: that where there is the absence of all *moral* sensibilities, the mere animal and bodily ones must be proportionally more intense! A human being has become the victim of cruel disease, or by sudden accident is racked in anguish. We know the kindly sympathies that gather around his couch. We know how far looks of tenderness and deeds of love at his bedside, and the kind and anxious inquiries from a distance, go to alleviate suffering. And even when there is the presence of no such soothing ministrations: as, for example, the soldier expiring on the field of battle, or stretched in a dreary hospital-ward in a land of aliens, where the music of home voices is separated by intervening oceans—even then, as life's pulses are fast ebbing, there are moral supports to divert his thoughts from being absorbed in mere excruciating physical pain. There may be the chivalrous consciousness of suffering in the discharge of duty; the feeling of high-toned patriotism, that in his country's cause he heroically fought and fell. Or if he be a Christian soldier and a Christian man, there are higher encouragements from the prospects of a crown of glory which fadeth not away. In many or most of the diversified cases of human suffering there will thus be found some such mitigations to blunt the edge of mere physical sensibility. But in the case of the lower tribes there is *a monopoly of brute feeling and pain*, without one ennobling element to assuage. The animal can think of its agonies, and nothing else. Man can find mitigation in looking forward to death as a relief from torture; but the brute, all unconscious as to what death is, knows not how long it may have to linger on in that mystery of endurance. The mother (the Christian mother), bereaved of her infant, can follow it in its arrowy flight up to glory: she can visit the grave which contains that treasure of her yearning heart, and dry her tears with the thought "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." But yonder bereft mother-bird, as she flies from bough to bough, wailing out her dirge of sorrow, has not one moral solace! She carries with her into her leafy chamber of solitude the most broken and disconsolate of hearts.

We would seek then, believing as we do in the sensitiveness of the animal creation to pain, and treating that as a false assumption that would represent them as callous and obtuse to it, we would urge on all, the obligation by every means in their power of diminishing the amount of physical suffering, and holding up to reprobation those who would causelessly augment these; we would call upon parents especially to regard it as a solemn duty to inoculate the minds of their children with a detestation of cruelty towards their inferiors, and to associate this (as it ought to be associated) with the mean, the selfish, and the coward! We believe it will be found that those readiest to inflict pain on the helpless would be the first to quail under it themselves. Such would be "the last infirmity of really noble minds." The manly boy would scorn to commit a piece of wanton, mean, and petty aggression on victims at once inoffensive and powerless. Beautifully does one of our old lyric poets put the words into the lips of the speaker:—

> "I have found out a gift for my fair;
> I have found where the wood-pigeons breed;
> But let me the plunder forbear;
> She will say, 'T was a barbarous deed.'
> 'For he ne'er could be true,' she averred,
> 'Who could rob the poor bird of its young.'
> And I loved her the more when I heard
> Such tenderness fall from her tongue." *

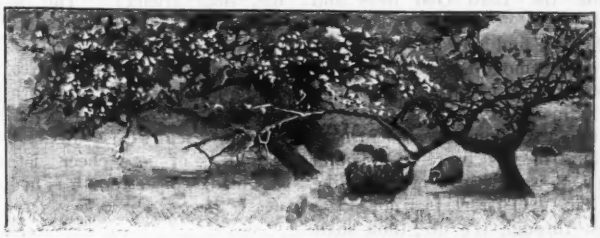
But, after all, dear brethren, the true *panacea* for these evils, the true, and real, and only cure for this widely existing cruelty, as for every other moral obliquity in our fallen natures, is to be found in the Gospel's power to elevate all that is debased and debasing, corrupt and corrupting—what is "earthly, sensual, devilish," to what is pure and

* The late Bishop Selwyn, of New Zealand and Lichfield, most heroic of men and of missionaries, writing in the distant colony, says:—"There are butterflies out here which flew across my path, glorious butterflies, radiant with the deepest blue and large as dragon-flies. Did I catch one? Not I. Never would I catch, much less impale upon a pin, that great type of the immortality of the soul."—*Life*, p. 440, 1.

ennobling and benevolent, lovely and of good report. It is this which has proscribed and banished the amphitheatres of Rome, and which brands with righteous stigma such spectacles as Spain can still exhibit amid the plaudits of her assembled aristocracy. Yes, it is by Christianity, and by the expulsive influence of its new-implanted affections, that the malignity which lies at the root of wanton cruelty is driven out. Filled with the love of God, that love would pour the tide of its benignant outflowings on all within its reach. It is the motives and principles of the cross of Christ enthroned in the heart which will prove the determined and successful foe to tyranny and oppression. We know, at all events, the day is coming when these exalted and beautiful influences will triumph, and when we may warrantably entertain high hopes of a brighter and holier economy; when the creature and the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and translated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

I have incidentally spoken of the treatment of a stern subject by a great master, where the power of his pencil is concentrated on the glazed eye and distended nostrils of a war-horse expiring amid blood-stained ruins. There is an equally noble and truthful companion-picture, familiar to many, by the same hand. A bright sky is above; a calm sea, with its peaceful port, is beneath. Nearer and more conspicuous in the sunny foreground reposes the shepherd with his fleecy charge. There are there also warlike relics and memorials of other days. *But a lamb, in fearless innocence, pillows its head on the cannon's mouth!* It is the artist's beautiful type and embodiment of the "Time of Peace," the modern reproduction of the inspired picture of the prophet-painter of millennial bliss—"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

How can I more befittingly sum up this subject than by a closing reference and reply? Some have ventured to assert that the lower animals, being infinitely beneath us in the scale of being, are unfit subjects and objects for any such special and exceptional tenderness as that for which we plead. I ask, Where should we have been at this moment if this were a recognised and universally-acted-upon law in the government of God—that a being, because superior in the scale of existence, should refuse to bestow regard or interest on those who are some degrees beneath him? Is not the whole scheme of Redemption one marvellous display of the condescension and kindness of one Being to those immeasurably below Him? *Man's* condescension to the lower animals! What is this in comparison with God's regardfulness of *Man?* The former is but the attention and kindness of one creature to another, both springing from earth, both hastening to dissolution. But the kindness of God to the human offspring is that of the Infinite to the finite, Almightiness to nothingness, Deity to dust! Oh, if God, *the great God Almighty*, thus visits the guilty with tenderness, shall we visit the innocent and unoffending with cruelty and oppression? when He has thrown the shield of His merciful, but unmerited, protection over *us*, shall we thus requite His kindness by acting toward the humbler creatures of His hands with contempt and disdainful neglect? No! as we behold His Kingdom stretching downwards from the pinnacles of glory to every living thing in the habitable parts of the earth, where from the beginning His delights have been, let us recognise the beauty and profound meaning of that magnificent vision which burst on the prophet by the River Chebar—significant exposition of the Mediator's sovereignty: the fourfold resemblances or images of creature-forms, of which only *one* was human, and the other *three* of the lower animals—the lion, the ox, and the eagle; while over all, in the sapphire firmament, we read, was "the likeness as the appearance of a man." It was the very truth and language of our text embodied and symbolised: the all-glorious and glorified Mediator presiding over the Kingdom of Providence, and demonstrating in the most extensive sense "His Kingdom ruleth over *all!*" Seeing, then, that all creatures thus wait upon Him, that He gives them their meat in due season, let the topic of our meditation (pleading, and pleading all the more earnestly for those who cannot plead for themselves) receive the loftiest enforcement by joining in with the loyal ascription of the Psalmist—"*Thou hast put all things under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.*"



"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE."

A PAGE FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



THIS message, that long ago came as the Master's whisper to the Apostle who entreated thrice that his own special trouble might be taken away, is an assurance of ever-present strength and comfort, that meets every step, every hour, every possible heart-ache.

"What aileth thee, beloved?" we seem to hear the Master say. "Art thou anxious and cumbered about many things—about thine own feeble health, thy loved ones, the needs and difficulties around? Yet, through every shadow, *My grace is sufficient.*

> "I know thy sorrows, I mark, I see;
> Think not thy God hath forgotten thee.

My ever-living, ever-mindful love hears the secret sigh, beholds the tear unguessed by others. My heart understands the full measure of thy cross—each pressure of the lingering thorn. My grace is sufficient for thee."

There have been others led through shadows besides ourselves, and the grace of God was sufficient to sustain them, and to bring the glorious daybreak at last. Think of Joseph, away from his kindred, imprisoned, blamed, to human sight helpless and hopeless—did God forget Joseph? "His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." David, flying before his enemies, knew weariness, depression, heart-sinking; was David left alone in trouble and darkness? In Psalm xviii. he exclaims: "By Thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is tried; He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him." Poor Hagar found herself of old in a desert-place, with none but God to care for her and hers. Ah, but we need not fear life's desert-places, while the Lord God lives and loves.

None of us will ever find ourselves worse off than Daniel, cast down among the hungry lions; yet He with Whom nothing is impossible forsook not His servant in his need.

Think, too, of that seven-times-heated furnace wherein the servants of God were cast, bound and helpless—but One was with them there, like unto the Son of God. "O Israel, fear not: . . . when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." So we see the Lord remembered His tried and afflicted ones in days gone by. Now, I should like to quote to you a few words written to one in trouble by Frances Ridley Havergal, who learnt amid the shadows herself to bear the light to others. "Whatever the *near* bothers or the far griefs may be, you and all your matters are in the dear Saviour's hand. He says, 'My grace is sufficient for thee'; and I like to take a still simpler Saxon word and say, 'My grace is *quite enough* for thee.' Yes, quite enough for the sorrows and trials, little and great—quite enough for you in spite of all."

A Christian visitor records that he was amazed at the restfulness and quietude of the father of a family, who lay upon a bed of weakness and pain. God had shown him at last that he could just leave Him *all* his anxious cares, and in perfect peace he said one day to the visitor: "I worry no more about my dear ones; the Lord who is so tender and good to me will supply their every need." There is no perplexity beyond the measure of this comfort—no sorrow so deep as to be beyond the reach of the Divine whisper, "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

Remember, the Apostle did the best thing he could with *his* trouble; he took it to the Master. Tell Jesus your every care, your utmost need; pour out your hearts before Him. That thrice-repeated prayer was not unheard, for the strength of the Lord shone through His servant's weakness, and made that thorn as a star of fadeless glory. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," is the Apostle's witness. Yes, all things can be done and borne when we think of God's grace joined to our weakness, His all-sufficient lovingkindness the pillow of our infirmity. I have read a minister's beautiful reminder how the bird-trainer covers the cage, to teach the little birds tuneful songs. Who knows what music God is teaching *you* in shadow? for no mist hovers round you that His grace has not blest. But how shall God's grace come down to you and me? How shall the Royal grace of the King bless our own everyday life, dear friend? "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." *Jesus Christ*—He is the Grace of the Father made human and alive, and clear and real, to the humblest heart that trusts and loves. He Whose glory-crown was woven in thorns, whispers still to each weary, anxious, heavy-laden one, "Soul, be of good cheer; let not your heart be troubled. My strength is made perfect in weakness; *My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

XUM

FENELLA.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. BY BEATRICE WHITBY, AUTHOR OF "THE AWAKENING OF MARY FENWICK," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.



AT a small railway station upon the Great Western line which curves through the lovely vales and between the rugged hills of South Wales, a little tragedy was being tragically enacted by two young people.

The morning express had just rushed alongside the platform, and paused in its hard-hearted career to engulf the owner of a most lugubrious face, which obtruded itself from one of the railway carriage windows. The face was a handsome one, with well-cut features, dark expressive eyes, meant for laughter, not tears, but now suspiciously humid, the whole arising from a pair of broad, well-drilled shoulders, the turn of which proclaimed their owner to be a servant of his country, a member of that profession dear to the female heart—in fact, a soldier.

That this soldier was dear to *one* female heart was very evident, for a girl, too miserable to care for the notice which she attracted from the solitary porter and the consequential station-master, or for the curious glances of ill-bred passengers, stood staring up into his face while the tears rolled down her rosy cheeks, and her lips quivered into those hideous contortions which most of her sex, unless rendered reckless by woe, are careful to conceal by their pocket-handkerchiefs.

The sun streamed down from a cloudless June sky upon her slim figure, clad in a blue cotton dress, and crept beneath the brim of her sailor hat, worn sprucely on a trim brown head, to illumine, with cruel frankness, round blue eyes drowned in tears and a forehead puckered and creased with a conflict of dismal emotions.

"Harry, you will write—you will write constantly? You won't forget me?"

The words were drowned in the hissing of the engine. Harry guessed their import, but dared not trust himself to speak. Notwithstanding his twenty-four years, notwithstanding his moustache, he had a lump in his throat and a pain at his heart which were momentarily increased by the undisguised wretchedness of his hitherto high-spirited and sprightly lady-love.

"Harry, you won't f-f-flirt going out; because I know the girls who go to India are so f-f-fast."

The whistle very properly blotted out this last petition by a prolonged shriek. Harry raised the hands which he held in a desperately tight grasp to his lips.

"Good-bye, Ellie! God bless you! good-bye, dear."

One last kiss: the tear on his cheek must have been hers; he brushed it away, and as the carriage began to move slowly alongside the platform, he leaned still farther from the window watching that forlorn blue figure until the ever-increasing speed of the train whisked him out of sight.

These two—Mr. Lewis, Lieutenant in Her Majesty's 220th Regiment of Foot, and Miss Fenella Yorke, were engaged to be married, but between them and their anticipated wedding stretched a long year of parting. Fenella had neither mother nor sister; her father, who acted as land-agent to one of the finest properties in Bradnorshire, was engrossed by his profession; and though in all relations of life he bore an unimpeachable character, one necessary quality was missing from the catalogue of estimable virtues which he owned; he lacked sympathy. That fatal deficiency was a barrier to popularity; Mr. Yorke was universally respected, but not loved, and his daughter's affection for him was tempered by fear. When, three months previously, Mr. Lewis had taken up his quarters in the village inn, ostensibly to fish, in reality to see Miss Yorke, whose acquaintance he had made at the house of a mutual friend, Mr. Yorke had asked him to the house and patronised him as the true sportsman he had proclaimed himself to be by facing the discomforts of that primitive inn for the sake of his craft.

However, the young man had disappointed him; though he lingered on week after week in the village, he proved himself a wretched and apathetic fisherman, and added to his offences by one morning entering the library, upon an occasion when Mr. Yorke was more than usually busy, to inform the astonished father that Fenella had consented to marry him.

"If you mean to keep her upon the fish you catch," said Mr. Yorke severely, "it won't do, for Fenella has a remarkably large appetite."

But such was not the young man's intention. He had inherited an ample income from his parents, now dead, and he was, he urged, in a position to marry at once; indeed, the wedding must be celebrated immediately, for he was obliged to return in June to India, where he was stationed until the following summer.

"Fenella is under age, and I do not wish her to marry yet," Mr. Yorke responded, thus implying that his wish was indeed law. "India ruins the health, disposition, and appearance of women. Next year you will probably have got your company; certainly you will have returned to remain for some time in England. You will both be older, and, I hope, wiser by the delay; therefore wait to be married until then. No real affection was ever damaged by keeping."

Mr. Lewis was a more ardent lover than sportsman; he argued hotly that in so short a life a year of happiness was too long a period to be wasted; but he argued in vain.

"Pooh! my dear fellow, don't be so impulsive. A year of the anticipation of happiness will possibly prove more agreeable than a year of marriage. You and she are too young to know your own minds; you

are a boy and girl, and matrimony is too serious a matter to be undertaken without serious contemplation. I do not object to you as a son-in-law, but I do object to my daughter marrying you until you have proved the sincerity of your affection by a period of probation. I will consent to your engagement, but only on this stipulation."

And thus it came to pass that upon this lovely June day these two young people had bidden one another a long good-bye, and had, for almost the first time in their lives, learnt practically, or rather physically, the unpleasant meaning of that expressive term, "the heart-ache." Hitherto—until, indeed, the acute pain of parting had wrung some token of deep feeling from them—they had been a most undemonstrative pair of lovers. For sentimentality and converse of the soul they cared nothing; practical jokes usurped the place of embraces, a fire of banter and repartee ousted tender speeches, and most wild and mischievous escapades had absorbed the attention of this harum-scarum couple. As the gardener had one day remarked to his wife: "Deed to gutness, Betsy, they are like the young pooppiess, all their trouble afore them."



"'Harry, you will write constantly? You won't forget me?'"—*p.* 547.

Now their troubles had begun. Fenella, as she waved her hand to the vanishing train, and then stood gazing down the valley until the last faint streak of smoke had melted into air, felt that the sunshine was no longer cheerful, nor the air sweet, nor the country good to look upon, nor the flowers worth picking, because he with whom she had shared such things had gone, and taken with him the

brightness and the beauty from them. But, being a brave girl both by nature and habit, she mopped her eyes with her soaked handkerchief, choked back a sob, and told herself with decision that a year was a very, very short time; only, oh, cheerful thought! fifty-two Sundays, and she should again be waiting on that very platform—in a brand-new frock which should be pink, because pink was his favourite colour, with a rose in her waist-belt which should match her cheeks, flushed with the thought of meeting him; and the train would come winding up the valley, and that very head which had just disappeared would again be thrust from the window, and in the delight of the meeting all remembrance of the parting would be obliterated.

By the time Fenella had cheered herself by these reflections, she had left the station far behind, and had approached the stile which led to a short cut across two fields, by which was reached Capel Issa, the ivy-covered house where Mr. Yorke, his daughter and his boy Bertie, lived. Upon the stile Bertie was seated swinging his feet, and whistling a lively air—a very lively air, because his spirits, too, were strung below their usual pitch, for, with his future brother-in-law's departure, he had lost his ideal of manly perfection, and a source of constant wealth.

Bertie Yorke, to his own and his neighbours' sorrow, suffered from delicate health, and although he was a tall boy of twelve, he was not considered strong enough for school life, but remained at home, where his lessons became the daily trial of the middle-aged vicar, who had, at Mr. Yorke's earnest petition, undertaken his tuition. He, Mr. Pierpoint, the vicar, was a bachelor, old, staid, and retiring; but ever since Fenella was a baby he had thought her face the sweetest, her manner the most winning, and herself the only woman in the world whom he desired as his wife. For her sake he patiently endured for three mortal hours each morning the presence of the most restless, most idle, most mischievous of boys, and even drew some satisfaction from the infliction because Bertie's blue eyes had a look, and Bertie's voice had a tone, of his sister's. His perceptions, sharpened by his love, foresaw, with Harry Lewis' arrival, the collapse of the dream of his life; but when the engagement had been announced no congratulations had been heartier, no hopes for her happiness had been so sincere as his. Nature delights in contrasts; she had formed the outward man most awkwardly—he was shy, ungainly, ugly; within, every attribute was perfect—no truer, more constant, more unselfish heart ever beat beneath a shabby waistcoat. The tougher and rougher the rind, the sweeter and better preserved the fruit.

"Halloa, Ellie, here you are at last! The train went off an hour ago. Do look sharp! Old Pierpoint's waiting."

Fenella found her voice with difficulty; it quavered as she spoke.

"It is so naughty, Bertie! This is the only day I have not taken you down to the vicarage, and you have not gone at all."

"I'm going, ain't I? I meant to have gone down to the station with both of you, only Harry gave me half a crown not to come. Fenella, you have been blubbing."

"I *have* been crying," said she; she spoke with dignity. To weep was so unheard-of an emotion with her that she could not treat the circumstance lightly.

"It will be pretty beastly without Harry," the urchin continued, wriggling down from his seat on the stile, and beginning to walk very leisurely along the high road which led to the vicarage; "but he will turn up again next year; and if he don't, why, we did very well without him until now, so I shouldn't blub if I were you."

This young philosopher's words annoyed his sister.

"You do not understand what you are talking about, Bertie. Of course—of course—of course he will come back; I should die if he didn't."

She finished her outburst with a sob which amazed the boy.

"Don't be a fool!" he said, thrusting his hands far down in his pockets, and staring up into the sky; "he will come back all right if he isn't killed, and if he doesn't meet some jollier girl than you."

"Bertie, if I thought it would hurt you," Fenella cried, exasperated, "I would box your ears. You need not laugh—I mean it."

As she spoke they reached the corner of the road where an iron gate, set open, disclosed the short drive leading to the vicarage. Upon this drive stood the long, lean figure of a clergyman, surmounted by a face which looked out thoughtfully from beneath an untidy head of hair and above an unkempt beard. In one hand he held a basket high piled with ripe strawberries, in the other a great bunch of roses.

"Oh, Mr. Pierpoint," said Fenella, addressing him eagerly, "Bertie has kept you waiting again, but this time it was not my fault. He promised to go to you punctually, so I went down to the station and left him. I am so sorry!"

"I haven't done that Latin exercise," Bertie admitted candidly. "Ellie was tattooing F. Y. with gunpowder and a needle on Harry's wrist, so she would not help me." To Bertie's intense surprise, his quiet tutor reproved him sharply.

"Can you never do your duty, Cuthbert, without the assistance of your sister? Do you expect to have her at your beck and call through life? Is she to be constantly employed in urging you to perform your tasks, and must she not only undertake your responsibilities but apologise to me for their non-performance? Go on into the house; go on. I say, this moment, and get to your work." Mr. Pierpoint energetic and angry was so novel a spectacle that Bertie, awed, slunk off obediently and immediately in the direction indicated, while Fenella fell back a pace, and raising her tear-stained blue eyes to his in wonder, looked at him from under the brim of her white sailor hat.

"My dear Fenella, I know you have enough to bear to-day," he began, his manner and the tone of his voice altering to one of gentle solicitude, "and your little brother's unbridled tongue is trying at times—I know it." Then, with a sudden uncouth gesture, he thrust the basket of fruit and the nosegay of flowers towards her: "I have gathered strawberries and the

Maréchal Niels for you. Nay, don't thank me; I cannot wait to hear you. I only wish they were a thousand times better, so that they might be more worthy of your acceptance;" and, turning away, he hurried into the house, tripping over a stone and stumbling up the low step which led into the house in his hurry.

Fenella watched him with an indulgent smile; what a kind and thoughtful man he was, and yet how ungainly. Until lately she had never remarked his deficiencies. It was with Harry's self-reliant bearing, his prompt, decisive movements, his spruceness, his sleek head and clean-shaven face, that she now contrasted the clumsy and dowdy vicar, to the latter's appalling disadvantage.

Although women will not allow it, and men do not believe it, the razor has a mighty influence in affairs of the heart, and the want of a barber may ruin the happiness of a lifetime. When an unkempt beard is connected with awkwardness of manner, then woe to the possessor of the combination if a-wooing he would go.

How slowly three months pass when into them are pressed such wretched moments as poor Fenella experienced during the period which lay between that June morning and the following September! How hope deferred can make the most buoyant and elastic young heart ache! The girl, as I told you, was brave, and to her sturdiness was added a pride which compelled her to keep her trouble to herself, and to let no one guess why she had grown silent and sedate, why her laughter was never heard and her smile seldom seen, why she came down to breakfast heavy-eyed and pale, why her restless hands rattled the tea-cups behind the urn as her father unlocked the post-bag and tossed its contents upon the breakfast-table. But, as everyone knows, truth will out, and so, upon one morning in September, poor Fenella's secret became public property.

Mr. Yorke, between his professional work, which was considerable, and the sport that occupied his spare hours, had not much leisure in which to notice the growing alteration in his daughter's mood. It was Bertie who drew his attention to her in the following manner. He stood in no awe of his reserved father, and had invaded the library uninvited, and addressed his parent abruptly.

"I say, dad, old Pierpoint says that if you don't look after Ellie she'll die, and then you'll be sorry."

"What, Bertie?"

"That's all. I can't stop: Ellie's waiting for me on the drive."

Breakfast was just over, and it was the hour when the boy and his sister usually started for the vicarage.

"Wait; I forbid you to move. Come over to me and explain what you mean."

"It's old Pierpoint, father. He talks about Ellie all the time. That beast Harry was going to write from Gibraltar, and from Malta, and from Suez, and from India, and he has been gone for ages and never written a line. If," with a significant gesture of his little clenched fist, "I was a bit older, I'd give him *such* a licking. Ellie's no good at all, now; she don't care about anything but the post."

Mr. Yorke glanced down at the open account-book before him on the table, and carefully wrote down an entry; then he closed the book and rose.

"You may go now, Cuthbert, and send Fenella to me. Send her to me immediately; you can walk to the vicarage by yourself for once in your life."

"All right! but old Pierpoint will be awfully disappointed."

Mr. Yorke was extremely disconcerted by this news of his son's, and when the door opened to admit Fenella, he turned towards her with some irritation. The irritation arose from perplexity, for he felt that to console a love-lorn maiden was a task altogether beyond his powers. But Fenella was perfectly composed and cheerful. Her short upper lip, which seemed formed for laughter, was drawn down, and met the nether lip in a firm straight line; she held her head high, and looked wonderfully pretty in her covert coat and cloth cap; her appearance was reassuring—consolation would be superfluous.

"You want to speak to me, father, Bertie says. I paid the butcher's bill last night, and put the receipt upon your desk."

"Yes, yes, my dear, I saw it; but it was not on that subject I wished to consult you. On a less—nay, I should say a more—important business. This young Lewis, to whom you are engaged: Bertie informs me that—ahem—he is not a good correspondent. Ahem! in fact, you have heard nothing from him since his departure. Is that true?"

"Perfectly true."

"How do you account for this preposterous defection?"

The probing of a fresh and bleeding wound is a painful operation, but Fenella bore it without wincing.

"I cannot account for it, father."

"Do you consider the man is a scoundrel? Or that he is incapacitated by illness from holding a pen or dictating a letter?"

"He is well. I thought he might be ill, and I wrote to his sister. I got the answer yesterday."

"Let me see it, if you have it here."

In silence she drew the letter from her pocket and handed it to him. This was it:—

"DEAR FENELLA,—Many thanks for your note; it ought to have been answered before, but my children have been ill, so I was busy. I heard from Harry last mail—a very cheery letter, full of picnics, polo, and all kinds of festivities. You were a weak young woman to let him go to India without you, because, you know, Harry is a great ladies'-man, and such a flirt, though the dearest boy in the world. I hope you will come and stay with us in the winter. I do not see why Harry should be the only one to enjoy himself, and I am very anxious to make your acquaintance. Yours affectionately,

"MADELINE WYNNE."

Mr. Yorke frowned as he read the letter.

"Did you tell—this person of her brother's extraordinary behaviour?"

"No."

"Then on what subject did you write to her?"

Fenella had written merely as a means of extracting an answer in which it was probable she might

hear some tidings, however disastrous, of Harry Lewis, and she said so.

"Then sit down there, and write to tell her that her brother is a most unprincipled young man, who has behaved to you in a way so disgraceful as to be actionable. Tell her that the engagement is at an end, and that if your father could break his stick across the fellow's shoulders it would be the proudest moment of his life," etc., etc., in the same strain. Mr. Yorke relieved his anger by violent language, to which his daughter listened with head still held high, though her face, and her lips even, grew as white as her linen collar. As soon as the tirade was over she answered—

"I cannot write, father; he must tell her himself. I will never see his name, nor hear it, nor think of it again. I have quite forgotten him already."

And she stamped her little foot on the ground, and her beautiful blue eyes were as cold as her voice.

An hour later this frigid, proud young woman lay upon the floor of her bedroom with her arms round the neck of a black poodle, which had been her faithless lover's last gift to her; and with tears rolling down her cheeks, and sobs jagging her breath, she told the sympathetic dog that she loved him—him—him, better than the whole world. Whether "him" meant the poodle or his master, she did not say.

CHAPTER II.

SUMMONING her courage and her pride to her aid, Fenella Yorke bore unflinchingly that cruel kind of notoriety which a girl who has been jilted acquires in the eyes of her neighbours. Officious inquiries after her health, commiseration over her pale cheeks, suggestions for change of air and scene, assailed her from all sides, and were dreadful to her. She shrank from pity, and consequently from society, choosing for her chief companion the quiet vicar, who had never by word nor look approached that painful subject which was too fresh to bear the most delicate handling. She had selected Mr. Pierpoint as a friend because of this forbearance on his part; she had no idea that he had more affection for her than he bestowed upon the flowers in his garden (her only rivals), and at which he looked in much the same indulgent, tender way as he looked at her.

Upon one winter day, when the flowers were dead, and Christmas was close at hand, Fenella, on her way to the village post-office, passed the church, and, seeing the door standing open, she wandered through and stood in the dimly lighted aisle coloured by the stained glass of the window, looking about her with sad eyes. Every spot was full of memories, but the church was the fullest of them all. Her thoughts rebelled against her control, and rushed back to the time when that stalwart, upright figure—a prince of men amongst the rough country folk there—had sat, and stood, and knelt beside her in that dark pew in the chancel. She clenched her little hand and swallowed a great sob. Then a voice, deeper, softer, fuller than any voice she had ever before heard, addressed her—

"My darling," it said, "I have suffered as you are suffering now for years. I love you with my whole heart, Fenella. Yes, my dear, this is a sacred spot, I know, but these words hallow it—they are sacred too."

How the Fenella of old days would have laughed at such words, and of such surprising import, from Mr. Pierpoint! But the Fenella of to-day had changed; she was silent, and in silence they left the church and walked across the churchyard side by side.

"I am too old for you, my dear—too old in looks and ways, if not in years, I fear. But, if you can, give me hope, only the faintest ray of hope, that some day in the future you will remember what I say. I understand my flowers; they thrive under my care—I might learn in time a way to make you happy. You should have everything you want. I have money, more—much more, than I need. That is nothing, I know; I should not have even mentioned it to you, but that I love you so much that I try in every way to win you merely to think of me, Fenella."

Not a word of the old time had he spoken; she had shivered for fear of it, but she might have known him better.

"Do you want to marry me?" she said. (What a contrast—her calm question to the agitated manner of the first speaker!)

"I have told you that I love you very dearly."

"Then," turning her blue eyes to his white face and looking at him anxiously, "I will marry you. Of course I will: you are so kind to me. And we," speaking rapidly, "could be married soon—at Easter; we will put the wedding in all the papers—all of them, every one. We need not live here, need we? At least, we might go away for months and months. Bertie might come, too; you would not mind that? for he would miss me if I left him."

And so it came to pass that Fenella Yorke's engagement to the Rev. Andrew Pierpoint was duly announced in the papers where such notices appear. And the neighbours talked, and wondered, and laughed. The women said, "Foolish girl; she is marrying out of pique!" and their husbands answered, "Nonsense! the vicar is the best fellow in the world, and the woman who marries him is the luckiest woman in it." But they repeated, "*She is marrying out of pique.*"

Neither the expectant bridegroom nor the bride-elect was troubled by the gossip. If the bride-elect's spirits flagged, her gentleness and sweetness had increased. Her manner to Mr. Pierpoint was perfect in its way; she treated him with deference, and was always ready to yield to his wishes. The little coquette, whose pranks and uproarious spirits had once fascinated and captivated Mr. Lewis, had gone, and in her place was a calm, indifferent girl. Only the poodle knew from what a tempest of sorrow that calmness and indifference had grown.

It was a pleasure to look at the vicar. Happiness is a cosmetic which rarely fails to beautify the plainest face. He had grown both handsome and energetic, and, if he still stumbled over steps and foot-stools, knocked over tea-cups, and bumped against his neighbours whenever he could find an opportunity of so doing, Fenella never noticed it. He might be graceful or awkward; it was one to her.

Bertie was the only person who found fault with her engagement.

"*That* old chap your husband?" he said. "Bosh, Ellie! Why don't you wait? Someone smarter than he might turn up. I wouldn't marry at all if I couldn't find anyone better than an old Father Christmas like that."

"You are only a silly little boy, Bertie, or you would know that one doesn't marry a person because he is young or—or—smart, as you call it."

"I ain't a fool," he growled. "You should marry a fellow because you like him; but you *don't* like him; he is such a funny old chap, with black teeth."

"Hush, Bertie! Mr. Pierpoint is much, much too good for me."

"I daresay he is, but, all the same, Har——"

But Ellie had gone out of the room, so he said no more.

The last days of blustering March had arrived; the dreary long weeks were nearly over, and the expected wedding was close at hand.

In the vicarage library the vicar was sitting over the fire with a book in his hand, but he was not reading; his happy eyes were fixed dreamily on the blazing coals in the grate, among the caves and caverns of which he saw blissful pictures of his future life. An hour before, he had parted from his sweet lady-love. She had gone out into the hall at Capel Issa with him, and had assisted him to wriggle into his great-coat. She had laid her white hand on his sleeve, and had not drawn away when he kissed her pale cheek and smoothed her brown hair.

"Can I make you happy, Fenella?" he had whispered brokenly, and she had answered back, with a brave smile—

"I shall be hard to please and most ungrateful if you cannot, Andrew."

Yes, he would make her happy; she was so young; as the years passed she would surely forget that—— He shut his teeth hard, and looked the anathema he would not utter—and he, steadily, unceasingly persevering in his effort to win her love, must succeed; he was confident in his own powers; nothing should resist him.

A rap at the door roused him. His "Come in" sounded impatient; he was loth to be disturbed from the building of his stately air-castles.

"If you please, sir, you are wanted at once. Mrs. Williams, poor woman, is dying. Indeed, it 's sad, sir, for she was as well as you or I this morning."

"Did she send for me, Keziah?"

"Yes, sir; her son, poor fellow, has come for you; 'deed now, he ran every step of the way. She is asking for you all the time, he says, and won't rest till you go."

With alacrity the kind-hearted vicar rose.

"Fetch me my hat and coat, Keziah; I will go immediately. Make up a good fire; I have some—ahem—work to do when I come home."

He would return shortly to those pleasant day-dreams, and sit far on into the night while he indulged them; but he was concerned to hear of his old parishioner's sudden illness; life was so sweet a thing that it was sad to leave it.

Three hours later, on the stroke of midnight, the vicar re-entered his library. Keziah had made a glorious fire: red-hot caverns, blue flames, black mountains, were all there ready to minister to his fancy, but he never saw them. With a drawn face which worked and twitched from the force of some powerful emotion, he slowly dragged his awkward feet over the threshold, and sank upon his knees before the writing-table, bowing his rough head upon his clasped hands.

The caverns and the mountains of the fire had sunk—as though they themselves had been no better than day-dreams—to grey ashes before he moved, and when he lifted his face it was wet with tears, but calm, steadfast, and passionless.

He seated himself before his desk, and taking a pen he began to write rapidly; he filled sheet after sheet, but, as soon as he re-read what he had written, he was dissatisfied with his work, for he tore the paper into fragments and began again. The dawn had crept through the chinks of the closed shutters before he relinquished his pen. The result of that night's labour lay within an envelope directed in a firm hand to

"MISS YORKE, CAPEL ISSA."

This envelope was brought to Fenella the following morning while she, with her father and Bertie, were having breakfast. Such notes were of frequent occurrence; she finished her porridge and cracked her egg before she opened and read it:—

"MY DEAREST FENELLA,—A circumstance has arisen which will prevent our marriage taking place at Easter. The circumstance is one that it was impossible either to foresee or to prevent. My presence is required in a distant land to transact a business of urgent importance and necessity, upon the immediate performance of which the happiness of those most dear to me depends. As this is the case, I cannot choose but hasten to discharge my duty—a duty which compels me to leave you for a period of many weeks. I have seen your father this morning, and have explained my meaning fully to him. He agrees with my decision. To-day I leave the vicarage, to-morrow I set sail from England; I will not bid you good-bye in person, Fenella—I could not bear to do so; nor shall I write to you during my absence; but, God willing, I shall return to England in June, at the latest, and then you will hear again of one to whom your goodness has given the happiness of his life. God bless you, dear. "ANDREW PIERPOINT."

Mr. Yorke watched his daughter attentively as she read these words. He had lately parted from their white-cheeked, haggard-eyed author, and now he expected to see a corresponding gloom spread over her pretty features. But, no; a smile crept round the corners of her mouth, a colour rose into her cheeks; she dropped the letter upon the table and looked up eagerly.

"You have seen Andrew, father—you know he has gone away; the wedding is put off until the summer."

"What?" screamed Bertie. "Gone away? Old Pierpoint? Has he chucked you over too, Ellie?"

The idea of being "chucked over" by Mr. Pierpoint amused Fenella; she burst out laughing—a laugh that was nearly a cry, for that *too* of Bertie's hurt her.

"You are most heartless, Fenella," said her father sternly. "Pierpoint is a vast deal too good for you."

"I know it, father, I know it," she cried; "but Easter is so near, and I should have had to leave you both—and everything; I can't help being glad to stay on a little longer."

"You didn't seem to mind leaving home," began Bertie, "when you were going to marry Har——"

"Cuthbert, be silent. You are speaking with your mouth full, sir."

As the weeks rolled by, Fenella became ashamed to find how she grudged their departure, and how content she was to have a *locum tenens* at the vicarage, and her days to herself. Mr. Yorke was very kind to her; they were more together than they had been hitherto. She often found him watching her anxiously. Of what Mr. Pierpoint's urgent business consisted Fenella was not told. Her father said that for the present it was a secret. Some day she should hear every particular. She was content to wait. Indeed, she thought very little of her lover, and that period of their short engagement which they had spent together seemed almost like a dream.



"She heard a distant step upon the road."

The spring had faded into summer, and June, the month of roses, had come, when upon one lovely morning, bright with sunshine, gay with the singing of birds, and sweet with the scent of flowers, Fenella received the following note:—

"My dearest Fenella,—I arrived in England last night, and shall reach home to-morrow. Will you, upon the evening after you receive this, meet the seven o'clock express? Do not go to the station—I have a particular reason for requesting this—but wait at the stile that leads to the path across the fields. Do not fail to be there, my dear, or you would grievously disappoint one who loves you with a deep and constant devotion. "Andrew Pierpoint."

All through that day Fenella was never still. She wandered from room to room in the house, she roamed the garden, she went down to the vicarage and cut bunches of the early roses blooming in the flower-beds there, with which to decorate the rooms in readiness for their returning master. She tried hard to rejoice over the anticipation of the reunion, but she was sick at heart.

How sad and still the summer evening seemed, as she reached the trysting-place appointed by her lover, and took up her position, leaning against the stile in a listless attitude. Fenella, only a year ago, had stood in that very spot waiting for someone else: someone who had proved himself unworthy even of her thoughts, someone who had forgotten her, but whom, alas for her! she could not forget. The thrush was calling his name, the very air breathed of him. She heard a distant step upon the road, and could have fancied the tread was his. Impatient with herself, she turned her face to the fields, and leaning her elbows on the top rail of the stile she supported her cheek upon her hand. Tramp, tramp

sounded along the road. The alertness of that bounding step was familiar. It *was*—it *was* (her heart beat fast at the fancy) like Harry's step. Shame! It was treachery even to remember his name at such a moment. She would turn to see the comer—she must break this illusion which had set her trembling and flushed her pale cheeks. She would turn, she must turn. The steps were not ten paces distant. Slowly and reluctantly she withdrew her arms from their support and moved round. If her ears had deceived her, then her eyes were traitors too. Close to her, at arm's length merely, stood he who had been her first, and who, she knew, would be her last love. For a moment they looked at each other, and then he was at her side.

"At last, Ellie!" he cried, catching her hand in his, "at last, my darling! If you only knew how I have longed for you!"

"*You* speak to me like that!" She drew herself away from him, and held up her small head high, speaking steadily, and in a cold and constrained voice. "*You* dare to speak to me like that! I do not know you; I am waiting for my lover, to whom I shall be married soon."

Though Fenella's dignity was strange to him, the young man was not awed; he put his arm round her, and drowned her words with his kisses.

"He is here, Ellie! your lover to whom you will soon be married is here. I am he."

"Let me go; you do not speak the truth. I am going to marry Andrew Pierpoint."

"No, dear, no; you are going to marry *me*. It was Andrew Pierpoint who sent me to you, God bless him! Don't cry, my sweet. It 's all right. It 's all settled. There, let me dry your eyes. If you will give me a chance, I can explain everything."

"Then go over to the other side of the stile first," sobbed Fenella. "I would rather you were the other side of the stile."

But Mr. Lewis did not fall in with this mandate; he stood before her, and holding both her hands in his he told her his tale—not just as I have written it, for my space is limited, and I must condense the explanations. The superfluities of his discourse I have omitted, though Fenella remembered every one of them.

"I was awfully down when I left you, Ellie, and the only pleasure I got for the first week or two was in writing you letters. There wasn't much to write about on board ship, but hardly a day passed that I didn't find something to dot down for your benefit. Before I got to Bombay I was rampant for a letter from you. However, none arrived. Mail after mail came in—never a line from you. I wrote you an awfully sharp letter to ask what on earth you meant by your silence, but I got no answer. I began to be afraid you were ill, dead—I had all sorts of fears about you: and then Madeline wrote and told me that she had heard from you, and that you seemed very cheerful. I felt pretty mad, I can tell you, and when I saw your engagement announced in the *Universal Post* I was desperate. I went to a party that night and proposed to the first woman I met. Luckily she was engaged to another chap, or I shouldn't be here. None of our fellows knew what was wrong; I hadn't the pluck to tell a soul that I had been jilted, so they thought I was off my head, I was so precious bad-tempered and disagreeable. I had believed in you so thoroughly; you had seemed so true and good (as well as such a darling), that it nearly broke my heart to think how you had hoodwinked and deceived me. One night when I was, as usual, sulking alone in my own quarters, in a mood the reverse of amiable, imagine my amazement when the door opened and the vicar, Andrew Pierpoint, walked in. Ellie, he is a splendid fellow! how you can care for me when you know him is wonderful. He had come out to India to put things straight between us. He had left you, giving you up of his own free will; and for fear of delay or renewed misunderstanding he came to me himself. It seemed that he, as a clergyman, had been called to see a dying woman, one of his parishioners, the postmistress in the village here, and had received a confession wrung from her by the consciousness of coming death. The woman was a widow. She had a son, an only child, to whom she was passionately attached. He was a wild fellow, harmless enough, but reckless, and an inveterate poacher. At your father's instigation his movements were carefully watched by the keepers, the consequence being that he was caught in the coverts with the nets and game upon him. He was brought before the bench and sent by the magistrates, one of whom was your father, for a term of imprisonment; a severe sentence, I believe, but one which he probably deserved, for he had handled the men who apprehended him very roughly. His mother, who held her head high and was as proud as Lucifer, felt the disgrace acutely, and conceived a rabid and unnatural hatred of Mr. Yorke, and, through him, for you all. The chief thought of her life was how to revenge herself upon you. The anticipation of sorrow for any of your family became her delight. When I left you, revenge seemed at last in her power. Your letters to me, my letters to you, passed through her hands; they, at least, should never reach their destination. Each letter as it came she flung into the fire, and waited eagerly to see what trouble would come of her action. It came soon enough, wretched woman; but *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. She made what amends she could by confessing to Mr. Pierpoint what she had done."

An hour later, the Yorke family and Mr. Lewis were seated round the dinner-table. Dinner was over, and the two men were talking seriously and with animation over the past months, and about the coming wedding. Fenella was pensive and subdued, but her eyes were bright with a light that had not shone from them for many a long month.

"I tell you what," Bertie broke in upon his father's discourse, "I should like half a glass of lemonade, dad, to drink old Pierpoint's health and happiness."

"Poor old Pierpoint!" said the happy lover with a sober smile.

"Health and happiness to him," said Mr. Yorke; "and he will have it too—mark my words; such a heart as his is a bank from which stores of health and happiness can be drawn *ad libitum*."

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

73. On what three special occasions were the Apostles St. Peter, St. James, and St. John alone allowed to accompany our Lord?

74. What was the subject of discourse between our blessed Lord and Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration?

75. Which of the Evangelists speaks of the glory of the Transfiguration as coming in answer to prayer?

76. In what Epistle do we find a reference to the Transfiguration?

77. To what places did our Lord send the seventy disciples?

78. What city was condemned by our blessed Lord for its unbelief after the "mighty works" which had been done in it, and yet we have no mention made of Jesus having ever visited it?

79. Mention any occasion on which God appointed seventy men to be His ministers, as recorded in the Old Testament.

80. What lesson do we learn from the instructions given by Christ to the seventy disciples?

81. What great lesson do we learn from the Parable of the Good Samaritan?

82. Why did the Apostles ask our Lord to teach them to pray?

83. What illustrations have we of special answer to prayer in the Acts of the Apostles?

84. What woman is mentioned whose conduct was an example of perseverance in prayer?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 480.

61. St. Luke vii. 44, 45.

62. St. Luke vii. 48.

63. The cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. (St. Luke, viii 14.)

64. Demas. (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

65. Martha, the sister of Lazarus. (St. Luke x. 40, 41.)

66. By restoring to life his only daughter. (St. Luke viii. 54, 55.)

67. 1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 35.

68. Both Elijah and Elisha prayed to God to restore the dead to life, whereas our Lord by His own power commands the dead to rise, saying, "Maid, arise." (St. Luke viii. 54.)

69. 1 Cor. xv. 22; see also Eph. ii. 1.

70. In a desert place belonging to the city of Bethsaida in Galilee. (St. Luke ix. 10.)

71. That the people were arranged in companies of fifty. (St. Luke ix. 14.)

72. St. John vi. 35.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT.

THE manly motto of the Keiths, Earls Marischal of Scotland, of "They say; what say they? Let them say," too often gives place in these days to, "They say. Oh, do they say so? Then we shall, or we shan't do it." We follow the multitude to do evil, and bend our knees to tyrant custom. Few of us dare to be different from others, for our aim is respectability rather than goodness. When others are crying, "Not this man, but Barabbas," we join in the cry in order that we may not appear "queer" or singular.

WHAT HE CAME INTO THE SERVICE FOR.

In the days of the second war with England, a young midshipman named Joel Abbot was serving under the United States flag. He was ordered to the frigate *President* as aid and signal officer to Commander Rodgers. Winning the good opinion of the commander, he was put in the way of promotion by being commended to Macdonough, then controlling the forces on Lake Champlain. He was exactly the sort of man on whom the eye of a leader would fall if ugly work had to be done—smart, brave, self-reliant. Considerable energy was being put into the struggle, and Macdonough received reports that the English were accumulating a large supply of spars at Sorel. Could they not be destroyed? Who would undertake the task? Joel Abbot was sent for. Grimly the commander asked him if he were willing to die for his country. "Certainly, sir; that is what I came into the service for," was the prompt reply. Entrusted with the dangerous commission, Joel Abbot fulfilled it in the spirit of his words. The perils and privations of his exploit were so great that although he came back alive he was completely prostrate for a considerable time, and his recovery was slow. Later, a sword of honour was voted him for his gallantry; and the recognition was surely deserved. How is it with soldiers of the Great King—workers for Christ? The test-word of this service is "Self-surrender." If the call to sacrifice comes, shall it not be obeyed? Is not this the fitting answer—"That is what I came into the service for"?

FOR TEACHERS.

Is not teaching the hardest, most useful, and noblest work in the world? In planting beans,

the old practice was to put three in each hole—one for the worm, one for the crow, and one to live and produce the crop. In teaching children, we may well give the lesson once, expecting the child's frail memory to lose it; twice, reckoning that the devil, like an ill bird, will steal it; thrice, hoping that it will take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward to the glory of God. See our Lord's explanation of the parable of the sower.

A HELPFUL LETTER MISSION.

An excellent feature in connection with the Theatrical Mission (Macready House, Henrietta Street, W.C.) is the letter mission, whereby each girl and child is provided with a lady to correspond with her every month. Letters are eloquent messengers, often finding a hearing in the quietude of rest after toil, coming sometimes just when the heart, by reason of trouble, is open to the message of uplifting and grace. Mr. and Mrs. Courthope Todd relate an encouraging incident of the good wrought by means of correspondence. One bright afternoon they were assisting in a picnic for the young at a seaside resort, and one young lady made herself busy as a voluntary assistant among the children. They thanked her, and presently entered into conversation with her. "You do not seem to remember me," she said; "I'm Madge—I used to be a ballet-girl." For two years she had been governess to a minister's children, and she was teaching them to trust in Jesus, having been brought into the joy of believing by the earnest letters of her "lady correspondent." Teachers and Christian workers, whether able to visit those in whom they are interested or not, will find in letters powerful weapons for good. The young have not reached that experience which sometimes in maturity prompts the busy life to excursionise beyond reach of the familiar post; they rejoice in receiving letters, and the silent page has often become an instrument used by Heaven to turn from evil and lead to eternal decision for right.

FROM THE FAR WEST.

The following interesting communication from "Daisy Croft" has reached us from the far West of Canada: "I have been in this country now nearly eight years, and for over six years could have counted on one hand the numbers of times I had attended a place of worship. We were over twelve miles from the nearest place. Last winter . . . we had a service of the Church of England opened in a neighbour's house about three miles away. The services are held in the afternoon, one Sunday by the clergyman, the other by a lay reader. They are like 'rivers of water in a thirsty land.' How one misses here the 'gathering of ourselves together'! Here we have no meetings except those I have spoken of; the



"Assisting in a picnic for the young."

people are too scattered. In winter, the time when in England these meetings are in full swing, our roads are often almost impassable. Last Sunday week the clergyman and myself were over an hour going the three miles, and he had a good horse and light cutter or sleigh. We have such large drifts of snow. But these have their compensation, because the more snow in winter the more grass in summer. But I wish mainly to encourage you by letting you know that even in this distant land your work carries balm and gladness, and lifts up the weary hand. In my youth I was engaged in work for God, but here I am like Moses in the middle of his life, cut off from work for God, and I can only leave myself in His hands. May your work prosper and grow, and still be more and more a blessing in the earth. I often think of the many advantages of my youth, when I never thought that I should be so far away from the ordinances of God's House. How it should stir us up to use our advantages when we have them, for we know not what lies before us in the future." Is there not a lesson for all of us in this message from the New World?



HOW THE WEDDING-RING WAS USED.

HOW THE WEDDING-RING WAS USED.

A beautiful and suggestive romance of home has for its heroine the wife of Avisseau, the potter of Tours. The secret of enamelling gold had perished with the great Palissy. But Avisseau determined to rediscover it. Such were his eagerness and resolution, that he went on experimenting until he had spent his whole substance; and the object of his close quest still eluded him. One day as Avisseau sat in his bare hovel, plunged perhaps in despair, his wife noticed a sudden change. His manner became agitated; his frame quivered. It was an idea that shook him. The poor potter, so often baffled, was almost sure that he had mentally hit on a combination that would succeed. But gloom was soon back upon his brow. Like the ancient alchemists, he needed gold to cast into his crucible. He had neither money nor goods. Avisseau's wife divined the need. She drew her wedding-ring from her finger. "It is our own; take the gold and melt it down," she said. Surely in a new humbleness of hope Avisseau worked again at his problem. His guess had this time gone to the mark; the brave sacrifice had won its recompense. A supreme love had found the opportunity to serve and save. Occasion came when most likely unexpected; and it is often so. The crisis may be a very small one, but if wife, or sister, or dear home friend of either sex, has the gift of insight and the will to forget self for a little space, well will it be for all who make up the family circle. Moreover, many a spring of Christian and philanthropic work has possessed the power of leaping into beneficent life before men, because of the systematic use of home opportunities of help and encouragement.

TEACHING ALL NATIONS.

Stay-at-home Christians have but a very faint conception of the dangers and difficulties that have to be faced by those who go out, in fulfilment of our Lord's last command, to teach all nations. Some idea of their sufferings from heat and from cold, from savage beasts and more savage men, may be gleaned from "Conquests of the Cross," of which the first volume has just been issued by Messrs. Cassell. The work is a fully illustrated record of missionary life and enterprise, and, as such, should find a warm welcome in every home, and in every school library. And while the claims of mission work abroad are before us, let us not forget that nearer home, in the highways and by-ways, the Lord's servants are hard at work, and need all the assistance and encouragement we can give them. "In His Name" is the title which Mr. John Kirk gives to the record of two years' work of the Ragged School Union; and, apart from its interest as an account of good service rendered, the volume is made more interesting by the many portraits and biographies which it contains of

those who have been connected with this and similar labours of love. And, at the same time, we have on our table the report, just issued by the National Temperance Publication Depôt, of the congress held at Birmingham in October last year. The volume has been kept back by a variety of unavoidable causes, but the practical papers it contains should be none the less useful to those who are labouring in the temperance cause.—How can we expect our ministers to be helpful teachers of others if we do not supply them with all the assistance that may be derived from the printed works of their fellow-labourers, above all in these days of broadly sown doubt and distrust of Christian truth? To supply this want is the object of Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund, the report of which for 1889 has recently been issued by Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster in a form as attractive as is the spirit that animates the work it records. Everyone who is in a position to do so should help the Book Fund, which is always ready to come to the aid of those desiring its assistance.—Probably no part of the Gospel story is more bitterly attacked by those who do not accept it than the accounts of our Lord's miracles. Great teachers who have been taken from us, and some who are still with us, have given to the world the results of years of thoughtful study in works on this subject; and yet the point is not exhausted, so full is it of teaching. The latest volume on this topic is from the pen of Professor Laidlaw, of Edinburgh, who has given us in "The Miracles of Our Lord" (Hodder and Stoughton) a series of most able and scholarly chapters on the various miracles recorded by the Evangelists. Perhaps the introductory chapter on the "arrangement and significance of the miracles" is as valuable as any in the book; but, throughout, the comparisons and contrasts which the Professor draws are most helpful and suggestive, and the work is one that all preachers should study. In a pretty volume, published by Mr. Elliot Stock, are collected the poems of a gifted young Scotchman, William Leighton, whose life was prematurely cut off some twenty years ago, but whose work is still remembered and loved by many readers. The verse is unequal, perhaps, but through it all there is a rare beauty of feeling that cannot fail to commend the volume.

A WORK THAT PAYS.

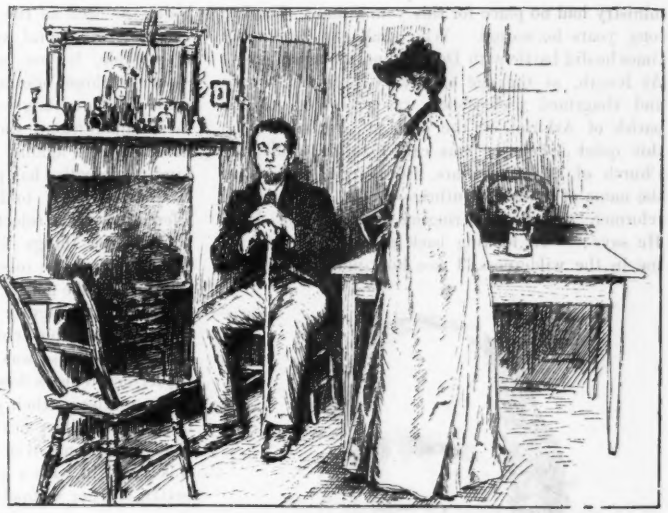
"Don't leave out the boys," is a motto to which Christian enterprise is giving heed at the present day; and those who know boy-nature best, acknowledge gladly that care for such is a work that pays. A teacher had been discouraged concerning the witty, wild, indolent one in a Bible-class of boys; nothing seemed to fix his attention or to gain his heart, yet when Christmas arrived Master Merryface of all the class distinguished himself by a dainty gift, and a gorgeous card of greeting—tokens that, where least expected, kind words had been appreciated, and affection met with inward response. The friends who manage the Christian Institute for Lads, 9, Cumming Street, Pentonville Road, believe in the hopefulness of boy-nature, and have a record of success and cheer. A short Sunday evening service (when two or three boys made their appearance on the scene) led to an overflowing meeting, till the necessity arose for a club wherein the elder lads could spend their week-evenings. A loft over a stable was painted and decorated, and here for a time the work went on; but still it continued to grow, till the halls in Collier Street were taken, an additional house having lately been opened. The attractions at this institution include a gymnasium, penny bank, reading-room, "games room," lending library, and refreshment room. There are also Bible and educational classes. When we remember the throngs of lads hanging about street-corners and learning evil lessons every evening, and when we consider from what a small beginning this helpful institute has arisen, we long to plead earnestly with some who may be seeking some work for the Master, to go and do likewise, and bless the lads for this life and the life which is to come.



THE "GAMES ROOM" IN CUMMING STREET

USE HOSPITALITY.

The social entertainments that are given in "church parlours" in America are much needed in England. Dinners are said to "lubricate" business; but if it is not possible for a congregation to dine together, the young might occasionally be brought together under the shadow of the Church by some less elaborate entertainment, and allowed to enjoy themselves in an innocent way. We hear of an army chaplain living abroad who, feeling that soldiers, in a country where they cannot speak the language, are very friendless, has an "at home" for them at his house one evening in the week. They are received in the drawing-room just as officers would be received, talked to in a friendly way, and shown books, photographs, and curios. Then they have tea, sandwiches, cakes, fruit, and such-like light refreshments. Afterwards there are recitations and music, and a hymn before parting. As these are social entertainments, for the purpose of getting upon a friendly footing with the men, the chaplain does not invite more on each occasion than can be talked to individually, and he keeps from lecturing and asking impertinent questions as much as he would if he were entertaining officers. He knows that soldiers are of the negro's way of thinking—"If you floggee, floggee, and if you preachee, preachee; but no preachee and floggee both."



"Take the blind by the hand."

LIGHT IN SHADOWLAND.

The Somers Town Blind Aid Society maintains its helpful and devoted work. The report tells us that about two hundred members have been the recipients of Christian care and practical sympathy. "Many a home," say the workers in this mission, "has been made more homelike, and many a sad life better." The blind have been led to help themselves, pensions are granted, pleasant evenings and treats arranged, medical advice is supplied, country trips are provided, homes regularly visited; and by these and various other kindly ways, the great object of the Society is furthered—namely, to influence the blind Christward and heavenward. Friends interested in these labours of love are cordially invited to the weekly meetings, held on Thursdays at seven o'clock, at the Aldenham Board School, Hampden Street, Ossulton Street, Euston Road. The Society (of which Mrs. Starey, 53, Hilldrop Road, N., is honorary secretary, was started several years ago in connection with Regent's Square Presbyterian Church, and it has won many earnest helpers, who with tender solicitude "take the blind by the hand" and smooth for them life's rugged places. Many of these have seen better days: blindness comes sometimes to those who work with brain and pen, comes with mysterious and sorrowful clouds, and the way of plenty is darkened apparently for life. "But God has been good to us all through," testifies the wife of such a sufferer; Christian sympathy has reached their case and lifted the shades of despair.

CONCLUSIVE REASONS.

An official said to George III., "I have the most conclusive reasons for supporting your Majesty's policy; in fact, I have eleven such reasons—a wife and ten children." If these are reasons for a married man to serve an earthly Sovereign, whose policy can sometimes only be supported by the sacrifice of principle, how much rather ought he to serve the King of kings, who only wishes him to do what is right, who gave him his family, and to whom he must account for their welfare here and hereafter!

HOW GUTHRIE WAITED.

At the beginning of the second quarter of the present century a young Scotchman, who was duly licensed to preach if only he could obtain a charge, was, as he phrased it afterwards, "waiting by the pool." At one time he might have been found in Paris, studying medicine at the Sorbonne. At another time he pored over bank-ledgers in his native town. It seemed as though the Christian

ministry had no place for this young man. For five long years he waited. Who shall say how many times he did battle with Despair and his myrmidons? At length, at the age of twenty-seven, the weary and chagrined probationer was presented to the parish of Arbirlot, on the coast of Forfar. From this quiet sphere he was called to the Collegiate Church of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh. And soon the name of Thomas Guthrie—orator, philanthropic reformer, writer—was ringing through the land. He says:—"In looking back on the way God led me in the wilderness, I see how much better He



DR. GUTHRIE.

chose for me than I would have chosen for myself." Guthrie recognised that his probation years were, after all, growing years, and therefore good years. There are many who are being bidden, by unpropitious circumstances to-day, to bide God's time before He gives them the fruition of quite lawful desires and hopes. There are Midians for us, as in a past age for Moses. The question is, How and in what spirit do men wait? If the waiting is patient, and wedded to persistent labour, the probation time will be a power-perfecting season.

PRAYER AND PRACTICE.

A well-known recitation tells of a poor widow with whom a benevolent gentleman came to pray, but whose thoughts seemed far from his earnest petitions. All she was heard to utter was the one word "potatoes," and it struck the deacon at last that he had better send her in a supply from his own plentiful store. After that, he found *she* too was in a prayerful spirit, and her heart was open to derive benefit from his ministrations. The religious work of the present day imitates the Master in caring for the bodies as well as the souls of the needy, and providing for temporal as well as spiritual necessities. If possible, let us not go empty-handed to our poorer brethren, offering them religious advice only, while they are hungry and cold. The Master knows their human frame, and sees how often the heart is hardened even against the sound of His name, till kindly sympathy has practically mirrored His love. A district-visitor told us that in one house the offered paper was rejected with the words, "We have no time for things like that." Some might have been inclined to rebuke with sternness the cold refusal, but she gently tried the force of persuasion, and soon the dignity broke down. "We have no time to read; our child is dying." The one little lamb of the house was very ill, and all the visitor's tender-heartedness flowed forth to her new acquaintances, taking up their grief as her own, and offering them aid. When next she called at that house, a change had come over the manner of reception; she was asked in with a glad welcome. The child was better, but her sympathy in their straits had paved the way for the religious literature and Christian work they had coldly opposed at first. System and method, and so many houses in so many hours, are praiseworthy indeed in their way; but heart must touch heart, and ministering hands must smooth life's rugged pathways, if the work of Christian visitation is indeed to reveal to the people the Lord of Love.

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from February 24th up to and including March 21st, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month.

Anon., Lairg, 2s.; J. W., Camden Town (9th donation), 10s.; A Friend in India, 5s.; Charlton, 2s.; J. J. E., Govan (29th donation), 5s.; A Glasgow Mother, 1s.; J. H., Birmingham, 2s. 6d.

"THE QUIVER" FREE GRANTS FUND.

We have received the following donations from February 24th up to and including March 21st, 1890:—

S. L., Hastings, 5s.; Charlton, 2s. Collected by H. Smith, Liverpool, 8s.

Grants have been made on the recommendation of the following subscribers:—

Mr. William Day, Ipswich; Miss Cissie Whittingstall, Middlesbrough; The Rev. S. Chorlton, Sheffield; Miss Banks, Ramsgate; Miss Harris, Leicester; Mrs. A. E. Shepperd, Glasgow; Mr. A. M. Thomson, London, E.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of 5s. from Three Little Children, Leeds, and 5s. from J. E. P., for the Homes.

We are also asked to acknowledge the receipt of 5s. from A Reader of the "THE QUIVER" towards the Ashley Mission.





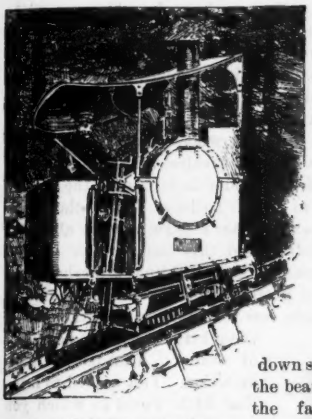
A SUMMER THOUGHT.

(See p. 616.)

A SKYWARD JOURNEY.

THE ASCENT OF MONT PILATUS: EMBLEMATIC OF THE HILL OF LIFE.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "EVANESCENT PHILOSOPHIES," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," "CONSECRATED INFLUENCE," ETC.



AN ENGINE ON THE MONT PILATUS RAILWAY.

WHILE thousands were attracted to the famous Eiffel Tower in the overcrowded Paris Exhibition, the claims of the new railway up Mont Pilatus, the rugged and serrated mountain that looks down so defiantly upon the beautiful shores of the famous lake of Lucerne, were comparatively forgotten. My wife and I were returning from Italy by the unrivalled St. Gothard route; we had made the ascent of the Righi by the cog-wheel railway, and feasted our eyes on its glorious views at sunrise and sunset; and the result of living and travelling in such high altitudes led us to attempt the ascent of Mont Pilatus by the new railway which was opened in June last during our stay in Lucerne. The wonders of the Righi railroad are familiar to many tourists; but, as compared with the Pilatus railway, the Righi is a level road. The Righi gradients never exceed 20 per cent. On the Pilatus the mean gradient is 42 in 100, and the maximum gradient 48 in 100. These figures will be sufficiently astonishing to the ordinary British reader accustomed to the simple gradients in the United Kingdom. The Pilatus railway has been constructed to take the passengers to a height of nearly 7,000 feet above the sea-level. The highest peak of Pilatus is 6,998 feet (the Righi is 5,905 feet) above sea-level; and the terminal station on the summit of Pilatus is 6,791 feet. Instead of following the capricious windings and irregularities of the mountain-side, the railway leaps boldly over all the intervening hollows and ravines, and, rather than make a troublesome détour, tunnels through the solid rock itself whenever it threatens to bar the way. To effect the ascent, a rack-rail runs midway between the two smooth rails, but at a somewhat higher level. It is of wrought steel, and has a double row of vertical cogs milled out of solid steel bars. Every engine and carriage has two *horizontal* cog-wheels which grip this raised rack-rail from either side; the brake can be applied to them at any moment; and they are also fitted with vigorous automatic brakes. We took our seat in the carriage, which is divided into four compartments, enabling the train to carry thirty-two passengers, and began the upward ascent of nearly three miles, going at a speed of 65 yards a minute, which is maintained both in ascending and descending.

We have undertaken a journey of terrific steepness, and as we slowly rise above the steep rocky sides of the mountain, we gaze down into its fearful precipices, and then again look upwards to points at so great a height above us, and to rocks of such terrific steepness, that we involuntarily ask ourselves whether it is possible for a train to reach that point. But the next moment we realise the possibility as we turn our gaze downwards, and see below us peaks which but a short time ago, as we viewed them from the lake, were soaring skyward so haughtily and defiantly. I overhear the remark, "It seems wrong and suicidal to attempt so dangerous a journey." But, paradoxical though it may appear, the danger is so great that there is really no risk. Every precaution has been taken; and, to my mind, it suggests how wonderfully God has endowed man, and enabled him to bring into operation the law of mind, and thus to triumph over the law of matter. As the engine slowly pushes our carriage up the mountain, we have two constant views—retrospect and prospect. Now the train stops at a halting-place to take in a supply of water before continuing its upward course; and as we gaze down into the ravines and see, on the one side, a dense forest of beech, and on the other, though much lower down, the fruit-trees and walnut-trees interspersed among the meadows—while some 3,000 feet below are the placid waters of the lake, with its steamers looking like rowing-boats—a feeling of thankfulness that we have been brought safely so far steals into the mind, bringing with it confidence as we contemplate our further skyward journey, and look, with sombre and awe-inspiring feelings, at the bleak heights above us.

The ascent of Mont Pilatus seems to me emblematic of the hill of life. Many readers may share my mountain reverie. As we journey along life's upward path, it is well to look back and review the track we have trodden, while we look forward hopefully to that which lies before us. Life is made up of two looks—RETROSPECT and PROSPECT. It is well to look back on the road we have traversed, to remember our mercies, to take note of our deliverances. As we look back upon the past, and review all the way through which God hath led us, we shall find much to call forth our gratitude, and to give us hope and confidence in the future. Before us all there may lie cloudy and dark days—

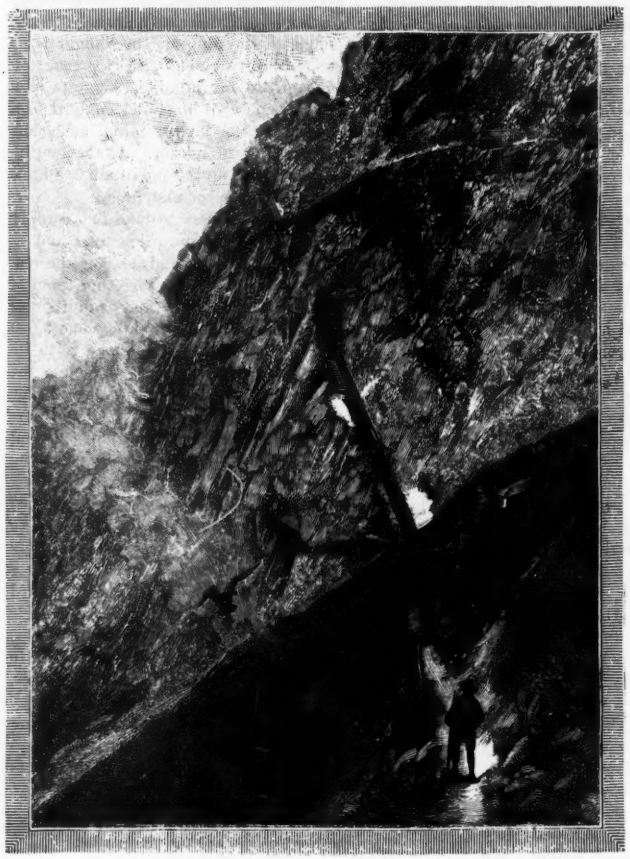
> "When life is low,
> When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
> And tingle, and the heart is sick,
> And all the wheels of being slow."

Our path in life may lie along some wildly precipitous incline, or (so to speak) along some savage mountain mass, whose steep sides are scarred by many a dark cavern and gaping chasm. But if we have Christ for our guide, no road will be insuperably rough, no declivity excessively steep, and no mountain-peak wholly inaccessible. "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne."

In climbing the hill of life you and I may never have been in circumstances of much peril, but we have none the less had our deliverances. It is well, therefore, at times, to look back upon the past history of our lives, to remember our deliverances, to take warning by our falls, and to thank God for His mercies. Thus doing we shall be the better prepared for the ascents that lie before us.

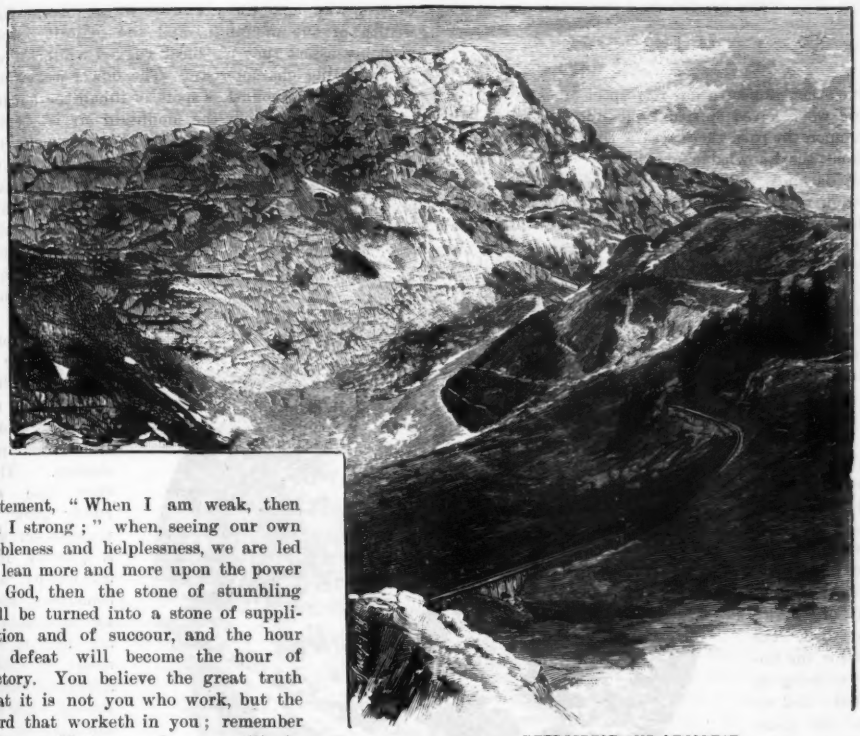
Yonder is the ravine we traversed amid sickness and suffering. When the foot was heavy, the hand weary, the head aching, and the heart sickening, we felt as though our daily work was a burden to us, and our ordinary care more than we could bear. Yet God in His mercy raised us up again, and now we rejoice in health and strength. Shall not the health and strength we now possess be gladly and gratefully given to God's service? Shall not that ravine of sickness speak to us of His mercy and love in the months to come, and in the journey that yet remains before us?

Yonder in the valley are the rocks which we might christen "stones of stumbling and of succour." Here is the place where we stumbled, and where God's mercy alone held us up. Here is the place of suffering and supplication, and here also the place of succour. The hour of defeat became the hour of triumph. In secular history we often find that where the greatest defeats had been sown, there the greatest triumphs have been subsequently raised. And this is true in the lives of individual men as well as nations. My brother, have you no such places in your mind's memory along the track you have traversed this last year or month? What! Have you had no stumblings? Perhaps you began with many good resolutions. You determined to be less irritable, less selfish, more charitable, more thoughtful for the happiness of others. You had a noble ambition. You wished to make that little world in which you move happier, brighter, and better. If you say that you set out without a single good resolution, then you confess at once a terrible defeat. But I will not think so badly of you as this. You did form resolutions. Trouble in your home, or perplexity in your business, or the sudden death of a friend, arrested your thoughts, and you perhaps said, "I will turn over a new leaf; I will try and lead a good life."



"We look upwards to rocks of terrific steepness."—*p.* 563.

Brother, you did well. You made a good start. Did you succeed? Thank God if you have been able to persevere. But be honest with yourself. Back, as the echo of your own resolution, comes the mournful word "Defeat!" Or perhaps you were a decided Christian. You were determined to live for God. You faced many foes, and by God's grace overcame them. But in an unguarded hour your temper was not controlled, or one word of sarcasm wounded a friend, and you knew at once the pain and the reality of defeat. Yet, in spite of this, I ask you, as you read this message, to raise your Ebenezer, and to make it a real stone of help in your pilgrimage of progress. When we enter into the truth of the Apostle's



RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

statement, "When I am weak, then am I strong;" when, seeing our own feebleness and helplessness, we are led to lean more and more upon the power of God, then the stone of stumbling will be turned into a stone of supplication and of succour, and the hour of defeat will become the hour of victory. You believe the great truth that it is not you who work, but the Lord that worketh in you; remember this steadfastly, and you will be enabled to overcome all evil powers, and to strengthen and confirm your resolutions. Don't be afraid to look at and confess your defeat; and then you may be able to raise an Ebenezer of victory as you cry, like Israel of old, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

God leads us forth to the place of sorrow to wean our hearts from self and sin and all earthly aims, that we may say, "Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into Thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble." And as we manfully and cheerfully march on with staff in hand through the dark night of life, we find ourselves insensibly surmounting obstacles, scaling precipices, and piercing the overhanging clouds of doubtful fear that brood over us, introducing us to the realm of golden sunshine, whence all mists are dispelled and the eye can see with clearer vision.

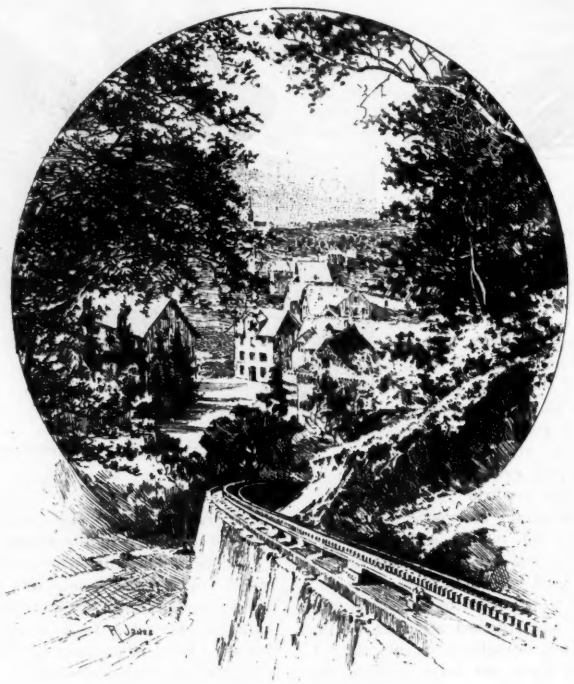
> "The darkest cloud is not all darkness,
> The roughest wave hath white foam near it,
> And sparkles through the gloomiest night,
> Some solitary star to cheer it."

The difficulties we have faced, and the deliverances we have experienced, should call forth the homage of a grateful heart while inspiring us with fresh courage and hope in the future.

Yonder is the valley where we suffered our bereavement. We were climbing the hill of life together when death crept near and struck down a sweet child, a beloved wife, a loving mother, or a dear father. In that moment we fancied that life had lost all its brightness and joy for us. We felt sorely stricken. Yet God gave us grace to bear the blow; and though our heart still aches, we have a clearer vision of the inheritance upon which these loved ones have entered, so that we are now, perhaps, beginning to say, in humble submission and childlike confidence, "It is well." Then let the heritage of those dark days cheer us if the future bring us trials, and if we are called to weep over those who have "gone before." "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good," has a talismanic influence. Here is the soul's anchorage while it looks forward to the thought of reunion in the Resurrection. This hope is a tonic to the soul. It reminds us that we are pilgrims on earth, emigrants to the heavenly country. It bids us cultivate deeper views of self, clearer views of sin, brighter views of Jesus, and nearer views of heaven. And ever and anon, as we press onward and upward on the hill of life, there lingers, perchance, with our march the refrain—

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er:
I'm nearer home to-day
Than e'er I've been before."

One other glance in our retrospect takes in the hill where we received spiritual blessing. As we look back upon the past, there was a time when we were without the knowledge of Christ. "Ye were sometimes darkness." This was then our condition. Our question to the earnest believer in Jesus was: "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" But now through trial, or the preaching of the Gospel, or the words and pleadings of some Christian, or the quiet perusal of some tract, or the silent example of some loved one in the home, we have been drawn to the Saviour. The load of sin has rolled off; we have been melted, subdued, and won by the love of Jesus, who died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God; and we have the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, guarding our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. And as our retrospective glance shows us the various stages of our spiritual progress, if the recollection of the past does not stimulate to greater earnestness, louder praise, more fervent prayer, and stronger faith, the knowledge that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever" most assuredly will; and these past tokens of His grace and love will become so many additional pledges of His presence and His power as we face the future leaning upon His promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."



LOOKING BACKWARD.

The flora of Mont Pilatus is scarcely surpassed by that of any other of the Swiss mountains. As many as twenty-three different species of orchids may be found on the mountain, and its garment of flowers includes nearly five hundred different species, making it among the gayest and loveliest of those which deck the countless peaks of Switzerland. Yet comparatively few of those tourists who make the ascent are aware of the floral wealth of the mountain, and the majority would probably assert that a "bleak rugged wildness" was its prevailing characteristic. The flower-seeker may feast his eyes at countless spots, or inhale the delicious fragrance with which the mountain air is scented, while almost every step reveals some new object of delight. And so in climbing the hill of life, there are many who see nothing of the beautiful blossoms or peerless petals which stud life's journey; they travel through this world as though it were a weary wilderness, an arid desert. They are often unconsciously afflicted with a species of mental hemiopia, in which they only see one side of the hill of life, and that the worst side. Hence their pessimism. Thus they lose the ruddy glow of joyousness; and a gloomy misanthropy, and sometimes mental decrepitude, are apt to derange all their affections. Others indeed, while not unconscious of the rugged aspects of life, pursue their journey as through a well-watered garden, delighting in the green mountain pastures, resting amid delicate fronds and ferns, and enjoying the constant and ever-changing hues and fragrance of multitudinous flowers. Now what is the talisman by whose aid we may climb the hill of life? It all lies here: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Life apart from God is a mere existence; all is dark, gloomy, cold, and cheerless. But "He careth for you" has a talismanic influence. It strengthens, stimulates, and invigorates the whole being. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that *now is*, and of that which is to come." And as we toil along life's rugged hill, the prayer of one of old becomes our own, "Hold up our goings in Thy paths, that our footsteps slip not;" and thus praying we pass through the changing scenes of a changing life, assured that if we can only hear the Master's voice whispering,

"This is the way, walk ye in it," all life's trials shall be sweetened, and life's burdens lightened, and crosses and losses be working together for our good.

Here, then, is our wisdom. "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe," is the prayer that swells from the heart, as with fresh energy and courage we climb the hill of life. Our way may lie through a labyrinth of dark ravines and deep glens, of rugged ridges, sharp crags and lofty pinnacles enshrouded with heavy clouds, but committing our way unto the Lord, and following where He leads, we may trustfully face all trials in the spirit of the beautiful words of Robert Browning—

> "I stoop
> Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud.
> It is but for a time. I press God's lamp
> Close to my breast; its splendours soon or late
> Will pierce the gloom. I shall emerge some day."

The future may have dark days in store, but there are brighter beyond. The guarantee of the believer's hope lies in the word of the Lord Jesus, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Two women of old, when approaching the tomb of their risen Lord, discussed the question how the stone, which was too great for them to remove, should be rolled away; yet, undeterred by this, they advanced with their spices, and found the difficulty gone, and the stone already rolled away by an unseen hand. And every honest and true heart when advancing to duty in the face of appalling difficulties has the like gracious record of experience—the stone of difficulty has been rolled away, the rough path has been made smooth, and the formidable hill surmounted. "Forward!" then, be our watchword, "Excelsior!" our motto.

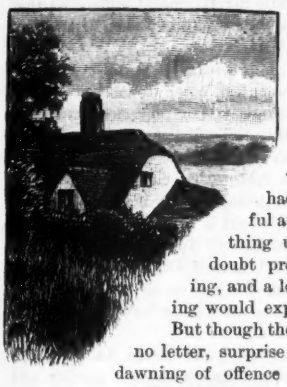
WORTHY TO BE LOVED.

BY E. NEAL, AUTHOR OF "MY BROTHER BASIL," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FOR PITY'S SAKE.

"For Pity is sworn servant unto Love."—Daniel.



AVICE had been surprised rather than alarmed by her lover's absence on the day which Caillot's visit and the fire had made so eventful at Verecroft. Something unforeseen had no doubt prevented his coming, and a letter in the morning would explain what it was. But though the morning brought no letter, surprise and the faintest dawning of offence was all she felt.

"He might have written, I think," she said, when Mrs. Meredith had left the breakfast-room; but Daisy did not answer. She was reading the war news in the morning paper, and had neither eyes nor ears for anything else.

Suddenly she looked up with dilated eyes, and uttered a sound of such acute distress that her sister's arms were round her, and Avice was soothing and comforting before she even understood what the trouble was.

"Read it," said Daisy, pointing to the official list of "Killed and Wounded" that recorded the British loss at Tel-el-Kebir. "Oh, Avice, Avice! do you think he will *die?*"

Avice looked down the column, where Captain Hallam's name appeared in the list of wounded, and pointed out that the asterisk which meant "dangerously" was not attached to his name.

"But slight wounds *hurt*," said Daisy, shuddering. "I know how it felt when I cut my hand."

"You little goose! Do you suppose a soldier minds a little pain? One ought to be thankful his life is spared."

"I am, I *am* indeed! But I can't bear to think of his suffering, and no one with him who really cares. And even if it is a slight wound, it may *get* dangerous in that hot climate, and he may die, and—and never know!"

"Know what?" asked Avice gravely. "Would you wish him to know, dear, unless he cared himself?"

"But he does—he *does!* You don't understand, I know, and I can't explain—but oh, Avice! he loves me—he told me so! And I was so—so *horrid* to him! And now he'll never know."

Daisy gave way to a fresh burst of grief, and Avice regarded her with a very puzzled face.

"'Horrid'?" she said, with a faint sad smile. "I don't believe you could be that if you tried; and I'm sure I don't know why you should have tried. Oh, Daisy! how could you be so foolish? If two people love each other, it seems to me that they should let nothing—*nothing*—ever come between them."

Daisy said nothing. She could not defend herself without betraying the secret that was not only hers but her mother's also. She let her head drop in her clasped hands, with a hopeless, despairing sigh that made Avice only anxious to console.

"Don't grieve so," she said gently. "It will come right in time. And if it did not, you could bear it, I think, now you know he cares. Oh, Daisy! one could bear *anything* if one were sure of that!"

Avice clasped her hands and gazed before her with a wistful, far-away gaze, and a long, envious sigh, and Daisy looked at her wonderingly.

"But you *are* sure, are you not?" she said simply. "Surely you don't doubt Ray just because he did not come when you expected him yesterday?"

"Ray? I was not talking about Ray, or—or myself," stammered Avice, with a painful burning blush. "Ray is only too good, too loyal and honest and true. I wish I were worthy of him."

The sigh that Avice breathed came from her very heart. The sense of unworthiness, of disloyalty, almost of baseness, increased with every returning day. She told herself that it was impossible to break off her engagement: that to do so would wrong Sir Raymond even more than to continue it; but the hopeless struggle to conquer her love for Lancelot, and the painful consciousness that every thought she gave to him was a wrong to his cousin, was a perpetual humiliation and reproach. Sometimes she thought that she must break it all off, or at least tell Sir Raymond that affection was all she had to give him, and leave it to him to decide. But how could she pain him so? She would be patient, try a little longer, and fight with herself a little harder, and surely peace would come at last. But even as the thought, that was rather an aspiration than a hope, passed through her mind, the little parlour-maid announced, "Mr. Vereker," and as Lancelot came in, Avice knew that if peace were some day to be won, she was very far from having won it. She stood up to receive him with outward composure, but her heart beat like a caged thing in her breast, her head swam, her hands were like ice. She felt herself turn pale, and then crimsoned with shame at her own agitation.

Lancelot was too much agitated himself to notice it. He had ridden in to tell the news of the fire, and of the injuries it was feared Sir Raymond had received, and was only anxious to get his news told with as little shock and pain to Avice as he could. "I believe he is better than the doctor thinks," he said confidently. "I have telegraphed to London for Sir Baldwin Smith, and I shall take a doctor back with me from here. There are no broken bones, at all events, and a sprain always seems worse than it is. But Ray, poor fellow, fancies himself badly hurt, and wants to see you—if—if it would not be too trying or painful for you?"

"I will come, of course," said Avice quickly.

"Thank you. He will feel it very kind. We have telegraphed for Lady Vereker, and she will be at Verecroft this afternoon. I thought that if you would come, the carriage that will meet her at Warwick might call here first for you."

"Tell him I will come, please—and—and give him my love."

She could not say less, and even to herself, in the access of new emotion, it did not sound insincere. Sir Raymond, gay and happy and aggressively demonstrative, and Sir Raymond stricken down and injured in the heroic effort to save his cousin's—to save *Lancelot's*—life, were two quite different things. Her heart was divided between a gratitude that might not be spoken, that might hardly be acknowledged to herself, but that transfigured Sir Raymond into something between a hero and a martyred saint, and a flood of pity for the young man, struck down in his prime of youth and strength, and appealing to her from his couch of suffering for the love and sympathy in which he so entirely believed.

In the onrush of pity, and perhaps of remorse, a great tenderness awoke in her breast. Was it only an hour ago that she had seriously contemplated breaking off her engagement? She did not contemplate it now; she only thought with shame how best she might quicken her cold half-hearted troth into a vital reality, and so make the future atone for the past.

It was characteristic of Avice that neither when she first accepted Sir Raymond's offer, nor now, when she dedicated her life to him afresh, had his title or position weighed as much as a feather in the scale. Whatever her faults, a vulgar ambition was not amongst their number. When Lancelot walked by her side in the fair sweet fields so many lovers' feet have trod, and pleaded his cousin's cause, it was not the thought of being Lady Vereker that won her consent—it was the hope of keeping her miserable secret, and proving her indifference to himself. It was pride then; it was pity now. Her duty, it seemed to her, was plain. Whatever might happen, Sir Raymond must not be agitated by painful questions, and anything she could do to further his recovery must be done, at whatever cost to herself.

She was so gentle and sweet, as she bent over Sir Raymond's couch for the kiss she could not refuse, that Lady Vereker felt, with a thrill of tender delight, that it would not be difficult to love her daughter-in-law; while Sir Raymond whispered that it was worth while to be hurt to have her look at him like this.

"You must come again," Lady Vereker said, "as soon as he is well enough to come down-stairs;" and Avice promised willingly. For pity, while it is in the ascendant, is hardly to be distinguished from love. She need not fear to meet Lancelot, she told herself, if she could always feel to his cousin as she felt to him to-day. The throbbing of her heart as Lancelot put her in the carriage told a very different tale, but as she drove home in the soft dusk of the September evening she persuaded herself that it was only the reflection of a bygone folly, even as the flush in the western sky was but the after-glow left by a vanished sun.

When she reached home she found Lady Rosalie Finch in the drawing-room with her mother and sister, and as anxious as they were to hear how Sir Raymond was. Lady Rosalie had only come back from Scarborough an hour before, and had come into the Hermitage to hear and relate whatever news she could. She was, indeed, burning to deliver herself of a piece of intelligence she had carefully kept out of her letters, but the absorbing news of the Verecroft fire and Sir Raymond's injuries engrossed them all till Avice's return.

"Internal, are they?" she said, when Avice had given her report of the doctor's opinions. "I hope it isn't as serious as it sounds! Is Lady Vereker very much cut up?"

"She is much grieved, of course; but the doctors are hopeful, I believe, and he is so good and patient——"

"And will have everything done that money can do; so he ought to pull through. How much of the

house is really burnt, Avice? The servants told me Verecroft was burnt to the ground, but your mother says it isn't as bad as that."

"Oh no; it is only the right wing. But that is quite wrecked, and the water has done a great deal of damage to the other part of the house. The pictures——"

"Oh, what do pictures matter? They won't mind about them if Sir Raymond gets on all right," said Lady Rosalie, who was getting a little tired of the Verecroft fire, and was, besides, too anxious to tell her own news to dwell too long on any other topic.

"What do you think?" she cried. "I've such a piece of news for you! I've been dying to tell you the last three weeks, but I've bottled it up, and not given you the tiniest hint. Now you shall guess—I'll give you three tries."

"That is the way people tell wedding news," said Avice. "Is Miss Jackson going to be married?"



"Turning the ring he had given her round and round."—*p. 574.*

"She *is* married!" cried Lady Rosalie, enjoying their astonishment. "She was married last week, and she and her Ruggles are in Italy, billing and cooing, and doing interminable picture-galleries, poor things!"

"Mr. Ruggles? Oh!—I thought you didn't think him *quite*——"

"A gentleman? I don't believe he is—in fact, my dear, I *know* he isn't—but that's her affair, isn't

it? He's very well off; and so he ought to be, considering what his profession is!"

"I thought he was in the Commissariat Department?"

Lady Rosalie broke into a laugh that echoed through the little room.

"So he *said*, my dear! But—you'll never tell, will you? Hilda would kill me if she knew I'd let it out! I found out all about him through a man who was staying at the 'Grand,' and knew him. In the Commissariat Department!—he's a sort of glorified contractor, and supplies the Government with pork!"

Lady Rosalie's laughter was infectious; but when she had gone they all owned to a good deal of disgust at the man, not for being what he was, but pretending to be what he was not.

"Lady Rosalie will miss Miss Jackson dreadfully," said Mrs. Meredith; "but I don't think a woman who could make a marriage like that can be really *nice*."

"She isn't nice," said Avice, "and Lady Rosalie will be a great deal nicer without her. She was always making her do things she only half liked."

And, indeed, though Lady Rosalie deplored her friend's departure as if it were the greatest misfortune that could have happened to her, the release from Hilda's overbearing presence was probably a relief. Lady Rosalie flooded her rooms with photographs of her absent friend, and declared she missed her more than ever she had missed her "poor dear Charlie"; but she was able now to come and go as she pleased, to enjoy her maid's undivided services, and to get out of debt. Before she had been home a month she confessed to Avice, with a guilty look that amused her very much, that she would not have had Hilda back again for the world.

CHAPTER XXX.

DALRYMPLE PASHA.

"Innocence shall make
False accusation blush."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE statement which Private Franks had made to Captain Hallam, as they watched the Khedive's triumphal entry into Cairo, was so extraordinary that the astounded officer looked at his companion to see if he had taken leave of his senses.

"*You* forged it?" he cried incredulously. "You don't know what you are talking about, my poor fellow! Have another pull at the seltzer, and lie down quietly. You've no business to be sitting up like this."

The concern in Philip's honest face made the other smile, though it was a smile that had more bitterness than merriment in it.

"I know what I am talking about quite well," he said quietly. "I forged the endorsement of that accursed bill, and I've never been able to look an honest man in the face since. I've just gone down—down—down—and here I am."

"And Dalrymple is innocent!" said Philip. "Franks, if you can prove that——"

"I am not Franks, and therefore I can prove it. I told you I am Ned Fazackerley, Mrs. Dalrymple's brother. I shall never see her again, but I'd like to clear her husband before I die. I'll tell you just how it was, if you care to hear."

If he cared! Was it not Daisy's father whose innocence was to be proved? He assented eagerly, and Fazackerley proceeded, not unwilling, perhaps, to unburden himself to a friendly ear.

"Hugh and I were brothers-in-law, as you know, and very good friends. My father, however, hated him, for he'd been against the marriage from the first. Madge was a beauty, and no mistake, and he had always meant her to make a great match; but she could be as obstinate as he was, and stuck to Dalrymple through thick and thin. The end of it was they ran away together, and my father vowed he'd cut her off with a shilling. It was rough on Dalrymple, who had nothing but his pay, but he took it very coolly, and said it was Madge he wanted, and not her money: which was true enough, I dare say; but the money would have been extremely convenient to a man more or less in difficulties, as it turned out Dalrymple was. We all thought my father would come round, but he wasn't built that way, any more than Madge. He would have nothing to do with them; but I saw a good deal of them from time to time, though the governor would have been furious if he had known. Well," said Fazackerley, moistening his dry lips, "it is no use laying one's sins on other people's shoulders; but I think if the governor had not been the harsh and stern man he was, all that misery would not have happened. I was frightened of him, and when I found myself pressed for a considerable sum of money I had lost on the turf, my great anxiety was to keep the whole matter from my father's ears. He had paid my debts once, and vowed that if ever I laid another shilling on a race, he would turn me out of doors."

"What did you do then?" asked Philip.

"I got Dalrymple to back a bill for me; but the money-lender had got wind of his difficulties, and wouldn't be satisfied without another name. I knew well enough I couldn't get one that would satisfy old Moss, and I forged one that would—though I swear I had no thought then of hurting poor old Hugh."

"But you must have known——"

"Not then, I tell you," said Fazackerley impatiently. "I knew it afterwards, of course; but I always hoped to find the money before the bill came due. As it turned out, everything went against me, and when Dalrymple was arrested, I—I—— Well, you see, the long and the short of it is, no one could clear him but me, and—*I didn't!* I told you to shake hands with me first—I knew you wouldn't afterwards!" ended Fazackerley, turning his face to the wall.

Philip sat looking at him in silence, divided between pity for the man and horror at his crimes. It seemed to the upright and honourable Philip that the forgery was as nothing compared with the turpitude of letting his friend suffer in his stead; and, as he looked at the wasted hand with which the perjured

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man had covered his face, he felt that Fazackerley was right in saying he would not shake hands when he knew. It was true. He could not have taken that hand in friendship now, though it was the hand that had saved his own life.

The silence lasted long, but at last Fazackerley spoke.

"I knew how it would be," he said bitterly. "I was a gentleman myself once! I don't know why I told you, except that I felt as if I couldn't die with that on my mind. But perhaps it would have been better if I'd kept it to myself."

"No—oh no!" said Captain Hallam earnestly. "I'm no parson, but I know it must have been best, even for yourself; and think what it may be for him! Think what it will be for his wife and children to have his innocence proved at last!"

"Yes," sighed Fazackerley. "It's been rough on Madge—such a lot as she thought of Dalrymple. Poor Madge! And how fond she was of me once! I wonder what she'd think if she could see me now!"

"How long is it since you saw her?"

"Not since the trial. I couldn't have faced her after that. I'd give a good deal to know what became of her."

"I can tell you that," said Philip. "She is living in Leamington with her daughters. They call themselves Meredith."

"My mother's name! Madge was christened Margaret Meredith. I might have guessed she would call herself that, if I'd thought of her changing her name; but somehow I never did."

"You didn't know where they were, then?"

"No; I lost sight of them when I enlisted."

Again there was a silence in the room. Outside, the square was still crowded with people, though the procession had long since gone by, and the early Egyptian twilight was already falling, and a *muezzin* from each of the four hundred mosques was calling the "faithful" to prayer.

There was no perceptible diminution of the motley crowd in the Mahmoudieh Square. Ever changing, it seemed ever the same, with the same confusion of race and dress, with the same polyglot babel of tongues, and the shrill Egyptian voices rising harshly over all.

But Captain Hallam and Fazackerley had neither eyes nor ears for outside things. Hallam was urging on the wretched man the duty of making such reparation as he could before he died, and considering how best Dalrymple's innocence might be established. He wished his father were there—his father, who had tried the case, and would know just what needed to be done. That something should be done, and at once, Philip was determined. In any case he would have felt it an imperative duty to do his best to help to right an innocent man, but the thought of Daisy quickened the natural impulse into immediate and energetic action. What might not a man hope for who could bring to her the news of her father's innocence, who could say to her, "He is restored to his country and to you *through me*"?

He insisted sternly that he would not sleep till Dalrymple knew the truth, and Fazackerley alternately promised to do whatever he asked and shrank from every plan that he proposed. See his injured brother-in-law he could not and he would not, he declared. He would repeat his confession before any witnesses Philip liked, or sign any paper he pleased; but he would not see the friend he had betrayed, or utter a word if he was brought into his presence.

And so, while the illuminations that testified the fickle Cairenes' joy at the return of the Sovereign they had rebelled against were turning the shabby old town into a fairy city, Captain Hallam made his way up to the Citadel, and asked for Colonel Selby, and was lucky enough to find him in his quarters.

"They do these things better in France," said the colonel, looking down on the twinkling lights below. "I've no fancy to risk my neck amongst all those howling blackguards, but you youngsters will go anywhere for a lark."

"It isn't for a lark I'm out to-night," said Philip gravely. And then he told his story, and found the colonel ready enough to go anywhere and do anything he desired.

Half an hour later, the two officers and an English chaplain they had brought with them stood by the dying man's pillow; and when at length Colonel Selby and Captain Hallam retired to another room and left him to the chaplain's ministrations, Philip felt, with unutterable thankfulness, that he held in his hands such proofs of Hugh Dalrymple's innocence as could not fail to win for him his full vindication before the world.

He lost no time the next morning in applying for an introduction to Dalrymple Pasha, and though he found it a more difficult matter than he expected, he obtained an audience at last, and was ushered into a room fitted up in the usual Egyptian manner, with a blending of Eastern luxuriousness and Parisian adornment.

A man dressed in Turkish uniform was writing at a table in the centre of the room, while two or three others stood around him, and as Philip entered, he rose and bowed rather stiffly. Dalrymple Pasha seldom saw his fellow-countrymen, and never encouraged their visits. With those who did not know his previous history he felt in a false position, while to those who did, a morbid sensitiveness made him fancy himself the object of a vulgar curiosity he had no inclination to gratify. He looked rather haughtily at Captain Hallam as he inquired his business, and was evidently profoundly surprised when Philip replied that it was of too private a nature to be explained before the Pasha's attendants.

"They do not understand English," said Dalrymple, shortly; "and I must warn you I am a busy man, and have little time for private affairs. I, can indeed, scarcely imagine what business of a private nature a stranger can have with me," he added, looking curiously at Philip's agitated face; "but whatever it is, I must ask you to be as brief as you can."

Philip did his best to comply with the injunction, and in a very few minutes Dalrymple was aware that his innocence had come to light, and that the man

through whose crimes he had suffered so much had made a full confession of his guilt. He received the news with a dignity that impressed Captain Hallam very much.

"I always believed the truth would come out," he said quietly. "It has come too late for happiness, but not for honour, and I thank you with all my heart. I do not know why you should have taken so much trouble on my behalf——"

"Oh!" cried Philip, "I am thankful—more thankful than I can say—to have been of use to you."

He spoke in a tone of such genuine feeling, that once more Dalrymple looked at him in surprise.

"I did not know you in England, did I?" he asked. "No, you are too young for that. But your name seems not unfamiliar to me. Hallam? Why, that was the name——"

He stopped short, and a dark flush covered the bronzed cheek.

"Yes," said Philip, entirely understanding it, "my father, Lord Blackstone, was Mr. Justice Hallam, the judge who tried you for the crime you never committed. No one, I am sure, will be more rejoiced to hear that your innocence is established."

"He only did his duty," said Dalrymple, "and I bear him no grudge, I assure you. Is it because of your relationship to him that you have given yourself all this trouble for me?"

"Partly," said Philip, with an ingenuous blush. "But I believe I did it chiefly for the sake of your daughters."

"My daughters? Is it possible you know them? Oh, why did I never meet you before? The years that have passed without seeing them, without knowing even if they were alive or dead!"

He was profoundly agitated, but, like another Egyptian ruler of alien blood, he "refrained himself," and speaking a few words in Turkish to the Orientals round him, he waited till they had gone before he gave way to his emotion, or inquired further of the children he had not seen for so many weary years. Hallam was very willing to tell him all he knew, and unconsciously betrayed a good deal more of his own feelings than he was at all aware of; but Dalrymple made no remark.

"Please God, I shall see them again soon," he said, shaking Philip's hand; "my wife will hardly wish to keep them away from me *now*."

The next moment he repented of the bitter speech.

"I do not blame her," he said quickly. "The evidence was too overwhelming, and who could dream of perjury in a boy like that? I declare that as I looked at him, standing up in the witness-box, with his fair, boyish face, and innocent blue eyes, swearing away my liberty and honour, I almost began to think I must have done it after all!"

"You will write to Mrs. Meredith—to Mrs. Dalrymple, I suppose?" said Philip, stumbling over the unfamiliar name.

"No," said the Pasha, laying his hands upon the proofs of his innocence. "She did not believe my word before, and she might not again. I will say and do nothing till I can stand before her face to face, and show her *these*."

CHAPTER XXXI.

DOOMED.

I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says I must not stay,
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away."—TICKELL.

"BETTER, thank you, *much* better," was Lady Vereker's unfailing reply to those who inquired after her son; and indeed, it seemed as if Sir Raymond were struggling slowly back to health and strength at last. He had begun to come down-stairs, and even to go out a little in a pony-chair that had belonged to Mrs. Kenyon; and Lady Vereker and Lancelot hailed every little advance towards convalescence with a rapture no one had the heart to damp. No one ventured to suggest to them that convalescence ought not to have been so long in coming, or that Sir Raymond was looking thinner and paler from day to day. Sir Raymond was quite aware of it himself, and had his own thoughts concerning the future which Lady Vereker and Lancelot were fond of painting for him in such glowing colours, but he did not try to undeceive them. They would know soon enough, he thought. There was no need to make them unhappy before the time. He was not unhappy himself. He felt that the position into which he had been forced was too strained, too full of difficulties to be bearable or even tenable for long. If he got well he did not think it would be possible for him to be really happy in so false a situation. Always he would feel a pretender and impostor in the dear old home, a defrauder accepting love and honour and respect to which he had no right; but *this* would make it all easy, and meanwhile he could rest in their love as he never could have done if he had been going to get well. Avice was at Verecroft again, and he lay on his couch and watched them from day to day, the three who were each and all so dear to him, and felt that for Lady Vereker and Lancelot, at least, it was best that he should go. Who could tell that Caillot would not return, that Dr. Fletcher and M. Martel would keep silence? Who could say how long a secret that was known to three people would be kept? He had not felt at liberty to contest Lancelot's decision, but how full of peril, of strained relations, of impossible situations, the future was! Even for Avice—for Avice, whom it was impossible to leave in ignorance, and to whom it was equally impossible to reveal the truth—even for her it was best, the young man thought, looking at his betrothed through a dew of tender tears.

For the thought of Avice was the bitterest drop in the cup of renunciation he drank so uncomplainingly that no one knew how entirely he realised that he had done with life, and the hopes that this life holds. Sometimes he thought of winning her consent to an immediate marriage, that she might reap whatever advantages might attach to the position of his widow; and then a bitter smile answered his own thought. Of *his* widow! Could he saddle the estate—the estate that was not his, but Lancelot's—with charges for a fictitious Lady Vereker? It would only be perpetuating the fraud of which he was as much a victim as Lancelot himself. He could do nothing, nothing but commend her to Lancelot's care; and one day, when

Avice had gone out with Lady Vereker, and Lancelot was sitting by him, he laid his hand on his cousin's, and looked up at him with an earnest appealing gaze, that made him wonder what was coming.

"I want to speak to you, Lance! I want to talk to you about Avice."

He was too absorbed in his own ideas to notice how Lancelot changed colour, or the look of startled apprehension that came into his face. Had he betrayed himself, Lancelot wondered, and was his cousin *jealous?* He came round to the head of the couch, where his own face was out of Sir Raymond's sight.

"What about her?" he asked shortly, not trusting himself to speak her name.

"I want to tell you just how I feel about it; and, Lance, dear Lance! be patient, please, and let me say all I want. You think I am getting better, and perhaps I am, but I want to talk now as if I were not. I want to think what will be best for Avice if I do not get well."

"Well?"

"I mean—I know that though I am Vereker of Verecroft in name, I have nothing *really* of my own——"

"Bosh!" said Lancelot briefly.

"And I would have liked to leave her a little, just to show how much I love her——"

"Raymond," said Lancelot earnestly, "as far as I am concerned, I can only say you are free to act as if Caillot had never been here to spoil our peace. Forget that he has! Do what is right and fitting for Sir Raymond Vereker, do whatever is in accordance with your own wishes, and believe that the more you do for *her*, the better I shall be pleased."

"How good you are!" answered Sir Raymond.

"Good? Not at all! Did you think I wanted you to be a dummy in my place? You are Vereker of Verecroft, to do what you will, and I am more than content. There is only one thing in which I will be master, and it is this. I have given in to an invalid's whim once, but I will not do so again. Make your will, and welcome—it is what every sane man ought to do, well or ill—but dismiss the idea that you will not get well. You will, you *must*, for our sake and for *hers*."

And then Lady Vereker and Avice came back, and nothing more could be said. Sir Raymond never alluded to the subject again, but he made a will leaving to Avice a sum exactly equivalent to that which Mrs. Kenyon had left to Lancelot, and which was to revert to "the young man known as Sir Raymond Vereker," should he be in need of it while Lancelot was not. No doubt she had foreseen that the truth might come to light, and had intended to provide for the innocent agent of her own fraud, should he be dispossessed of Verecroft. This he might fairly regard as his own, and this he might leave to Avice without wronging Lancelot. It was a great relief to him to have the matter settled, for he had dwelt on it with all an invalid's persistence. There was nothing on his mind now, he told Lancelot, cheerfully, the first time they found themselves alone, except that he could not quite rid himself of the idea that he ought perhaps to do something for Caillot.

"For Caillot?" exclaimed Lancelot. "My dear Ray, you need do nothing for him, unless you like to take out a warrant against him for arson. I wouldn't say anything before, but I've pretty good proof that it was he set fire to the house. Wait a minute." They were sitting in the garden, but Lancelot went into the house and returned with a singed and blackened newspaper printed at Geneva. "This was part of a sort of slow-match found amongst the ruins, and it's a little odd that M. Caillot has neither been seen nor heard of since."

Sir Raymond shuddered, and turned his eyes from the coarse and badly printed sheet, and as Avice approached them Lancelot took it away.

"Ray gets on famously, doesn't he?" he said, as he came back to the bench where the lovers were sitting in the sun. "We shall have him hunting before Christmas, you will see."

"He doesn't look very fit for hunting," said Avice, with a sigh.

"Nonsense! He doesn't know what he can do till he tries," said Lancelot, almost roughly. "You spoil him, Avice, you and Lady Vereker together. He wants rousing, and a good gallop would do him all the good in the world. He'll have to be careful at first, of course.—You mustn't try to lead the field, Ray, till you're thoroughly strong again."

"All right, Lance, I won't," Sir Raymond promised, with the faint ironic smile that was yet so pathetic and so sweet. "I'll not lead the field till I'm well enough; but I think we'll go in now."

He put his arm round Lancelot's shoulder, and, leaning on that faithful, firm support, crept back into the house and sank on the couch that always stood ready for him in the hall; while Lady Vereker came to meet him with anxious looks, and asked Avice to pour him out some tea.

Sir Raymond lay back amongst his pillows, and let himself be waited on with a smile of full content, whose inner meaning no one quite understood. "How good you all are to me!" he said, as Lancelot brought him the tea Avice had poured out, while Lady Vereker arranged his pillows, and pushed back his hair with soft, caressing touch. "I wish I could make you understand how grateful I am."

He was grateful indeed, this poor Giuseppe Balmano, who was yet Lady Vereker's son, and Lancelot's cousin, and Vereker of Verecroft to the end—the end that was so much nearer, he felt, than any of them knew.

The westering sun streamed into the hall, and shone on the armour on the walls, on Avice's bright hair, on the gilded organ-pipes, and the little gold locket that hung from Lancelot's chain, and concerning the contents of which Sir Raymond professed a good deal of curiosity. Lancelot had admitted that it was to recover his watch that he had gone back to the burning house on the night of the fire, but Raymond wondered if the locket concerning whose contents Lancelot was so impenetrably silent, had not had as much to do with that perilous return. If he could have known that the portrait it

contained was one of Avice Meredith! Daisy had given Lancelot a photo of her sister and herself, taken together, and Mr. Vereker had ungratefully cut out the face he wanted, and committed the other to the flames. No one would ever know, he told himself, and it could do no harm to Sir Raymond. If he gave up the original, his cousin could not grudge him the poor presentment of the face so dear to both.

That it was dear to both was an idea that had only lately crossed Sir Raymond's mind; but eyes that know and feel they are looking their last on earth are often gifted with a curious clearness of vision. Rigidly as Lancelot guarded himself, there were moments when the mask dropped unawares, moments when his soul looked out of his eyes, moments when his hand trembled at Avice's appearing, and his voice thrilled with the utterance of her name. It was by faint and imperceptible degrees that Sir Raymond arrived at a suspicion of the truth; but when once suspicion was aroused, it leapt unerringly to certainty, and every little incident of their daily lives seemed to confirm the truth. He noticed how silent Lancelot was when she was by, how he avoided everything that was likely to throw them together, and one day, coming into Lancelot's room with his noiseless invalid tread, he saw Lancelot standing by the window, with a look on his face he had never seen before. The passion and the pain in it, the struggle and longing and suffering, were so unlike the calm and equable Lancelot, that Sir Raymond stood arrested in the doorway, too surprised to speak. What was his cousin looking at, he wondered, that could move him like this?

And at that moment Avice, *his* Avice, crossed the window, with downcast head and musing eyes, and his question was answered.

"And he pleaded *my* cause, he won her for *me!*" he thought, with reverential wonder, as he went back as noiselessly as he had come. "Oh, Lance, Lance, Lance! was there ever anyone like you in this world?" He said nothing to anyone of the discovery he had made. He only lay on his couch and watched them both with the sad, calm eyes from which all earthly passions seemed to have been purged away, and so grew to know as much as—nay, perhaps more than they knew themselves. And so the quiet days of Avice's visit rounded to a close, and the last afternoon came. For the last time they gathered round Sir Raymond's couch, and watched the sober glories of the autumnal sunset, till the shadows crept along the floor, and the glory paled to grey, and a star shone clear in the fading west.

"Won't you ring for lights?" asked Lady Vereker, as Lancelot stirred the fire into a brilliant blaze.

"Not yet," entreated Sir Raymond. "Let us have some music, Avice. It will be my last chance."

"Avice will come again," said Lady Vereker, in a voice sharpened by anxiety and unacknowledged dread; but he only smiled at her affectionately, and reiterated his request.

"Sing 'Angels ever bright and fair.' There's nothing I like so much, or that suits your voice so well."

Avice obeyed, as she obeyed all his wishes now, and her voice rose in the grand old air, pure, and clear, and sweet, and high, as an angel's voice might be. Sir Raymond lay and listened with rapt exalted gaze, and Lady Vereker stole away, overcome by emotion she could neither hide nor repress. Lancelot stayed till the end, and then he too disappeared, and Avice and her lover were alone.

"Come here," he said suddenly. "I have something I want to say."

She felt that it was a farewell, and came and knelt beside him, touched and awed, and the lean brown hand, that was so unlike an Englishman's, closed gently upon hers. For a moment he was silent, turning the ring he had given her round and round upon the thin white finger, and looking at her with a tender searching gaze she could not meet.

"I want to thank you, dear, for all your goodness to me, for the kindness and affection that has been so much more than I deserve. It is not your fault that you could not give me love——"

She started, and looked up in crimson astonishment, but something in his glance made her eyes fall.

"Oh, Raymond! I tried, indeed," she faltered.

"I know," he said gently. "I am not reproaching you. I know that you tried your best—and *failed*. I have been wondering lately if you would be happier if I asked you to give me this again"—holding up her hand, where the diamonds flashed in the flickering firelight; "but I think there is no need. You will not wear it long in *this* way, but I should like to think you will wear it always in remembrance of me. Even when a nobler and better love is yours——"

"Oh, hush! hush! No other love will ever be mine," she said, in a voice of such exceeding pain, that he drew her head to his breast, and stroked her hair, as he might have comforted a child.

"Will it not? Well—it is not for me to say. Only, if such a day ever comes, I should like you to remember that I want no thought of me to come between you and happiness. If I had my life before me, I could not have given you up. I am not great and noble, like someone we both know, and I would have loved you so, I must have won your love at last. But now——"

"Oh Ray, Ray! don't talk like that," she murmured, in such distress that for very pity he bent and kissed her brow. "I do love you—I *will!*—only get well, and you will see."

"Shall I, I wonder?" he said dreamily. "I shall not get well, my dearest, but perhaps I shall be allowed to see. I can at least guess how it will be, and I am glad to know it. I shall not say good-bye now"—as the sound of wheels showed that the carriage was coming round to the door—"I shall see you again, I hope, yet. But when the end comes you will be good to my—to Lady Vereker, will you not! And Lance, my poor Lance——"

He broke off. He could not trust himself to speak of the comfort he believed she would bring to Lance.

"I will do what I can," she whispered brokenly. "Do—do they know?"

"They will not believe it! And I cannot tell them

how sure I am; they love me so much," said Sir Raymond simply.

The unconscious reproach smote her to the quick. How her indifference must have pained that loyal, loving heart!

But when she had gone, and he lay musing on his couch with a little leather case that contained her likeness in his hand, his face wore an expression of such serene content that Lancelot was quite struck by it.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked, not seeing the photograph he held.

"I am thinking how happy you will be some day," said Sir Raymond, looking up at the man whom Avice loved.

* * * * * *

And meanwhile, Avice was driving home, in a whirl of contending emotions and conflicting feelings. She dared not let herself dwell on her talk with Sir Raymond; she scarcely dare confess, even to herself, all that it meant.

He had divined one half her secret, she admitted, but surely—surely he had not guessed the rest? He knew that she did not love him, but how could she ever meet him again if he knew she loved his cousin? And then the thought forced itself upon her that they might never meet again—that she had perhaps looked her last on the face that had become even dearer than she knew. She did not love him as she could have loved Lancelot; but if there was no desolation, there was real affection and sorrow. She wept as she had never dared to weep at Verecroft, till the familiar towers of Warwick warned her that she was nearly home.

By the time she reached the Hermitage, she had regained her self-control. She put down the window and let the cool breeze blow on her hot, glazed cheeks, and hoped they would cool down enough to escape notice. She need not have distressed herself about it. Neither her mother nor Daisy came out to meet her; but Lady Rosalie came flying down the garden in a state of incoherent agitation and delight.

"My dear girl, I'm so glad you've come. He 's dying to see you, but I said I 'd come and break it to you, to avoid any shock."

"Break what? Who is ill? Not mamma?" cried Avice, in alarm.

"Oh, no, no, *no!* No one is ill here—but really I don't know how to begin! No, you must *not* go in the house yet—he 's there!"

"He? But who is it?" said Avice impatiently.

"Now, keep calm, dear, keep calm," said Lady Rosalie, who was trembling with excitement herself. "It is Dalrymple Pasha, your father, you know—no, I mean you *don't* know—but it 's quite true, and Mrs. Meredith is nearly out of her mind with joy, and Daisy too. But come in now, and they 'll tell you all about it. He *never* did it, and is as innocent as an unborn child, and Hilda ought to be ashamed of herself, and I 'll never speak to her again!" Lady Rosalie was laughing and crying in a breath, and Avice looked at her in utter bewilderment. Had she taken leave of her senses? she wondered, as she followed her soberly into the house. "They 're all in the drawing-room," said Lady Rosalie. "Go in, dear, and I 'll run away, and leave you all together," added the kind little woman, with a delicacy she did not often display. She was indeed burning to go and spread the news, but Avice was not thinking of Lady Rosalie or her motives. The drawing-room door was open, and through it she could see Captain Hallam and Daisy side by side, and looking at her with radiant faces; and on the hearth-rug a tall, soldierly man, who held her mother's hand in his, and came to meet her with eager, expectant eyes.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AFTER.

"After long storms and tempests overblowne,
The sun at length his joyous face doth cleare;
So when as Fortune all her spight hath shownе,
Some blissful houres at last must needs appeare."

SPENSER.

It is high summer at Verecroft once more, as it was when Sir Raymond came of age, nearly a year ago. Sir Raymond himself—or more truly, the man who was known by that name—has been sleeping in Buddington church-yard for many months now, and Verecroft has been shut up all the winter, for Lady Vereker and Sir Lancelot have been travelling abroad ever since his death, and have only just returned. Lady Vereker is in very deep mourning, and her face is pale and sad, but she cannot help feeling it sweet to be at home again; and though the first visit she pays is to the grave in Buddington church-yard, she presses Lancelot's arm as they turn away, and whispers through her tears—

"I have you, Lance, still, thank God!"

They had both dreaded coming home to the blank, empty house; but the new baronet had business that could no longer be put off, and Lady Vereker was one of the home-loving women who are never happy away from the familiar hearth. Verecroft, though it is Sir Lancelot's house, is home to her still, and will be all her life.

"Your home now and always, so long as you will bless it with your presence," he assures her, and she rewards him with one of the gentle smiles that have always been so precious in Lancelot Vereker's sight.

"I should like to think so, Lance, but I will not let you make rash promises. You will marry some day, I hope, and your wife may like to have her house to herself."

He does not protest, as he once did, that he will never marry. He only smiles gravely, and says: "My wife, if ever I have one, will feel as I do about that."

The Dalrymples have left Leamington, and gone to London, where, to his infinite amazement and disgust, Dalrymple Pasha, as people persist in calling him, finds himself dividing the honours, as lion of the season, with a negro prince and a New York stock-jobber of fabulous wealth.

Hugh Dalrymple is not a Pasha now. He has left the Sultan's service, loaded with decorations and honours, and is a simple colonel in the British Army, a position he values as immeasurably higher. The request to send in his papers, which followed on his conviction in the courts of law, was harder to bear



"She did not see the door unclose."—*p. 577.*

than the sentence of penal servitude, and when he came home with the proofs of his innocence, he lost no time in laying them before the military authorities. There was enough romance in the story to make him an object of interest even to those who did not know him, and the announcement that Hugh Dalrymple had been gazetted to a colonelcy in his old regiment gave general satisfaction in the mess-rooms where the "Dalrymple Case" was once more the staple topic of conversation. Dalrymple never saw his brother-in-law alive. Fazackerley persisted in his refusal to see the man he had so deeply wronged, though he seemed grateful for the messages of forgiveness he received through Captain Hallam, and died with expressions of contrition on his lips.

Then the two men, whose destinies had been so strangely interwoven, came home together; and one night as they paced the deck side by side, while the blue waters of the Mediterranean lapped against the vessel's bows, and the stars shone overhead, Philip told his companion of his love for his younger daughter, and received his full approval of his suit. The more he thought of it, the more Captain Hallam felt sure that his love had not been unrequited. Something had come between Daisy and himself, and if only that unknown impediment could be removed, her answer would be very different from the one she had given him in Lady Rosalie's drawing-room.

It was not long before he tried his fate again, and Daisy owned, with many artless blushes, that only the fear of bringing her father's disgrace upon him had constrained her to refuse him.

"Was that it?" the happy lover cried. "Then, Daisy, you must have cared for me a little then?"

"A little?" said Daisy earnestly. "Oh, Philip, Philip! I cared so much that I would not have married you for all the world."

"You poor little thing!" said Philip tenderly. "If I had only known! See if I would have gone to Egypt then!"

"It was all for the best," said Daisy soberly. "If you had not gone to Egypt, Phil, my father would never have been righted, and we should never have been married at all."

It was so indisputable that Philip had nothing to say. He silenced Daisy's logic in the manner peculiar to lovers, and then he went home and told his father that he had proposed to "the Duodecimo Edition" entirely to please him.

The wedding would have taken place sooner if Lord Blackstone and his son could have had their own way, but Daisy declared she should not feel properly married unless her sister was one of her bridesmaids, and Avice would do nothing that seemed to fail in respect to Sir Raymond's memory.

She made no parade of grief, but she mourned him as she might have mourned for a favourite brother, and grieved sincerely for the stricken mother who had no other child, and for the cousin who had loved him so well; but her mother felt that she did not grieve as those who have lost their all, and again she confessed that she could not understand her child.

It was evident that all her thoughts and interests clung to Verecroft still, but when she was informed of the legacy Sir Raymond had left her, she could scarcely be persuaded to take it.

"You cannot hurt them by declining it," Mrs. Dalrymple told her. "Have you forgotten how kindly Sir Lancelot wrote about it?"

"He does not understand. He thinks I should have married poor Raymond if he had lived."

"My dear! Do you mean that you would not?"

"I did not tell you, mamma—somehow, I *could* not," said Avice, in a low, troubled voice; "but for some time I had felt that I ought to break it off. I should have told him, only it seemed so cruel when he was so ill; but—but he found it out, and I can't tell you how good and kind he was. He said there was no need to do anything—oh! mamma, I know he felt and knew how near the end was, though no one would believe it—but if he had lived, it would have been broken off."

"And Sir Lancelot did not know?"

"*Lancelot?* Oh, no—no indeed! And now he never need. What would he think of me? Oh, pray, never say a word—promise me!"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Dalrymple quietly.

It was all she said, for habits of reserve are difficult, if not impossible to break. She let her daughter go with a silent kiss, but she looked after her with eyes that were full of tears.

"So it was the cousin, was it?" she said. "My Avice, my poor Avice! What you must have had to bear!"

She remembered, with a thrill of sympathetic emotion, that Sir Lancelot Vereker had been bidden to the wedding, but she knew too little to be able to surmise if his coming would give Avice pleasure or pain. Avice herself betrayed neither, even to her mother's watchful eyes. She went about with the quiet, subdued manner that had become her usual one now, and seemed as absorbed in the preparations for her sister's marriage as everyone else in the house.

But when the last night had come, and the house was full of the bustle and excitement that precedes a wedding, Avice stole away to the deserted drawing-room, and sitting down by the open window, looked out into the soft greyness of the warm summer night, and lost herself in memories and dreams.

To-morrow—she would see him to-morrow, she knew; and if there was humiliation in the thought that his coming could move her to such passionate expectation, to a joy keen as pain and "wild with all regret," at least there was no longer the sense of wrong-doing to embitter every thought. She wronged no one by the thoughts she gave to Lancelot now.

Presently she went to the piano, playing softly in the dusk, and passing idly from one theme to another, till almost unconsciously she found herself playing the same melody she had sung in Lady Rosalie's drawing-room when Lancelot came in. It was full of the associations of meeting, and the thought of to-morrow had no doubt suggested it to her. Outside there was the tread of hurrying feet, the roll of wheels, the distant roar of the great city; but within, the room seemed very still. There was no fear that anyone would disturb her, and Avice's voice rose softly in the words that always brought Lancelot to her mind—

> "Ask me not how much I love thee,
> Do not question why——"

She sang it through, and if her voice faltered over the suggestive words, there was no one to notice how they moved her—

> "I am thine,
> While the stars shall shine,
> To the last—to the last!"

She did not see the door unclose, or hear the powdered footman, who had replaced the little parlour-maid of Leamington days, announce a visitor. She only raised her eyes as she struck the last sobbing chords, and saw Lancelot Vereker standing in the doorway, as he had stood at Lady Rosalie's, and looking at her as he had looked at her then.

For a moment her heart leapt in her breast, and then she came forward and gave him her hand with the quiet smile she had learnt to wear.

"Mamma is busy to-night," she explained, "but she will be here directly. They will be sure to tell her you are here."

"I think not," said Lancelot, keeping her hand in his. "I did not ask for Mrs. Dalrymple, Avice—I asked for *you*."

And then she understood. And the dusky London room was full of the light of Paradise, and to the man and woman walking therein came the perfect happiness that is so seldom known in human lives, because so few human hearts are capable of perfect love.

THE END.

A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER ROBERTS, D.D., PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS.

"He went away sorrowful."—ST. MATT. xix. 22.
"He went on his way rejoicing."—ACTS viii. 39.

IF we think of those with whom we were intimate in early life, and whose course was, for a time, almost coincident with our own, we shall feel how very widely our paths have, since then, diverged, and how very different are the destinations which we have ultimately reached. Let us call up before us the companions of our youth—those with whom we were most closely associated both in work and play, who read the same books, attended the same school, took part in the same amusements—and we shall see how far they and we have now been separated from each other. Many of them have perhaps entirely disappeared from our view; we have not heard of them for years; and were they now to address us, a strong effort would be necessary to recall their very names to our remembrance. Others of them whom we do recollect are, nevertheless, now no more to us than strangers. Our former intercourse with them has completely ceased, and we are severed from them by barriers which can never be crossed. Some have gone to distant lands which we have no chance of ever visiting; some, again, may have risen so high in the world as to be altogether above the circle in which we move; some, on the other hand, may have sunk so low that we never meet them; and some, while on much the same level with ourselves, have formed such different connections from ours, that our paths, though once almost identical, are now hopelessly distant from each other.

Now, what is thus apparent in the outward earthly experience of us all seems also to find an illustration in the moral and spiritual history of the two individuals referred to in the passages before us. For a considerable distance they are seen walking on the same road, and exhibiting the same spirit. They go hand in hand, so to speak, for a time; but then they part, never more, so far as we can trace them, to meet, and reach conclusions, the one of which forms a complete antithesis to the other. We shall look first at the points of *comparison* between them, and then at the separation which took place between them, with the *contrasts* which they present.

We glance, then, in the first place, at the similarities which this young Jewish ruler and the Ethiopian eunuch display.

I pass over those of a merely external or intellectual kind. Both were manifestly men of good position in the world. The one was noted for his wealth among the Jews; the other occupied a place of high dignity in the court of Ethiopia. Both were also, beyond doubt, men of superior intelligence. The young ruler indicates this by the evident pains he had been taking to solve the great philosophical question of his day, and attain to an acquaintance with "the good;"* the other shows it by the earnestness with which, though he was by birth a heathen, he devoted himself to the reading of the Jewish Scriptures.

But, passing over these and other points of resemblance which might be mentioned, let us notice, especially, those of a religious character existing between these two persons, and it strikes us at once that both *were impressed with the importance of salvation.*

The slightest glance at them is sufficient to convince us that such was the case. We see the young ruler eagerly running to the Saviour, and kneeling down before Him on the public highway, while we listen to the anxious question which then issues from his lips, as he exclaims, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" That man, we feel at once, is in earnest; there is truth in that upturned look; there is sincerity in these ardent words; there is deep anxiety about the future in the pointed inquiry of that youthful heart. Nor is it less plain that the Ethiopian stranger had been deeply impressed with the great realities of eternity. The ancient Scriptures had doubtless found their way into his hands through that Greek translation of them which was made in Egypt more than two centuries before the coming of Christ. And they had so greatly affected him that he could not rest in his own country, but, in spite of the long journey of hundreds of miles, had come up to Jerusalem to worship. Yes; both these men had evidently got a view of the eternal world. They had seen how brief and insignificant is human existence upon earth when contemplated by itself. But they had also seen what an unspeakable importance attaches to our present transient life, when regarded as the precursor of eternity. Their eyes had pierced into the distant future; they had perceived those unending ages which lie before mankind hereafter; and, knowing that now their destiny in the next world would be fixed, they were both thoroughly in earnest as regarded the attainment of salvation.

Again, both the persons here spoken of *took pains to obtain information.*

As to the young ruler, there was not probably another individual of equal rank in Judæa who made such efforts as he did to become acquainted with the way of salvation. He had manifestly exhausted every means of obtaining instruction. The writings of wise men belonging to the Gentile world had probably been consulted. The Word of God, as possessed by the Jews, had evidently been studied. And the appointed teachers of religion among the people—Rabbis and priests—had doubtless been applied to in quest of the desired information. Nor did repeated disappointment

* R.V. reads at ver. 17: "Why askest thou me concerning *that which is good?*"

induce this young man to abandon the pursuit in despair. No sooner did he hear of Jesus, and of the extraordinary wisdom which He possessed, than he came to Him with that momentous question which had taken such hold of his heart. Caring not what mocking eyes might rest upon him, or what derisive speeches might be made regarding him, he came and knelt before Christ, and cried, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" As to the Ethiopian eunuch again, it is plain that he took all possible pains to become wise unto salvation. Not satisfied with having simply performed some ceremonial observances at Jerusalem, we see that, on his homeward journey, he is busily engaged in reading Esaias the prophet. The inspired page is to him very mysterious, but he is doing his best to understand it, and no sooner does he perceive a chance of obtaining some spiritual instruction than his chariot is ordered to stand still, and the stranger, who seems capable of shedding some light on the subject he has been pondering, is courteously invited to "come up and sit with him." Thus, then, it is clear that both the persons before us were further agreed as to the trouble they took to be instructed in spiritual things.

Once more—the two individuals here spoken of *both received the plainest information.*

Our Lord replied in no hesitating or doubtful tones to the question addressed to Him by the young ruler. He referred him, first, to the original law of works, and said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." This test having failed to convince him of his deficiencies in the sight of God, the Saviour next addresses to him a precept which had a direct tendency to demonstrate his imperfection, while, at the same time, a promise was given him, if he followed Christ, of the sure attainment of eternal life. There was no ambiguity in the instructions which were conveyed to him, but in the plainest and most decisive terms, our Lord declared:—"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." The first part of this precept was fitted to deprive him of all trust in himself, since it led him to feel how far he was from being animated by that perfect love to God and man of which he had deemed himself possessed; and the second part taught him the necessity of coming to Christ, that he might discharge the duty and secure the privileges pertaining to the Saviour's followers. The two grand essentials of salvation were thus taught this Jewish ruler. He was convicted of his own deficiencies on the one hand, and enjoined to follow Jesus on the other—the two things absolutely necessary in every case that eternal life may be obtained. So, again, God left not the Ethiopian eunuch in perplexity. Knowing the obscurity which seemed to that earnest inquirer to hang over the way of salvation, the Lord directed Philip to go to his assistance. And it was providentially arranged that, when the evangelist reached the chariot in which this man sat, he was engaged in reading that very passage of the Old Testament which referred in clearest terms to the Messiah. The wonderful 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which seems more like history than prophecy, engrossed his attention, and furnished an admirable text to Philip for bringing before him in the fullest and most forcible manner the way of salvation. Accordingly, we read that the evangelist at once began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus—showed him how these ancient predictions had been fulfilled in Christ, and what they implied as to the means of obtaining eternal life.

Having seen the resemblances existing between the persons referred to in these two passages, we are now to glance at the *contrasts*, both with respect to conduct and consequences, which may be marked between them.

Let it be noted then, first of all, that the young ruler remained *silent* on listening to the instructions which were conveyed to him by Christ. He had professed, and truly, great eagerness to be made acquainted with the way of life; but now, when the desired information has been given him, he shows no inclination to act upon it. The truth is that he now beholds himself in a light which he had never seen before. Our Lord has probed his heart to its very depths, and has brought into view feelings which the young man had never suspected of existing within him. He had no doubt fully persuaded himself that the desire for eternal life was really the most powerful one in his bosom, and that there was nothing he would not do—nothing he would not sacrifice—in order to obtain it. But he is now brought face to face with an aspect of himself which he has never before contemplated. He sees that, after all, he has mistaken his own character, and that, notwithstanding all his professions, *this* world has a stronger hold of his affections than the next. Instead, therefore, of promptly following out our Lord's instructions as might have been expected, he stands inert and silent—having nothing to say *against* the directions which had been given him, but feeling utterly incapable of acting upon them.

How great the contrast which is presented when we turn to the history of the Ethiopian! *His* sincerity is conclusively established by his conduct. *He* has no latent passion lurking in the secrecies of his soul, and which, on being detected and brought to light, puts an end to his pursuit of salvation. On the contrary, every fresh word he hears from the lips of Philip only stimulates his desire to belong to Christ. The Evangelist describes to him the nature of the Saviour's work, and what is required of all who would share in the blessings which it has secured. He is told that a public profession of faith is necessary—that he must stand out prominently as an avowed follower of Jesus—and must begin this course of decided action by submitting to the initiatory rite of baptism. There was much in this teaching which might have startled him to whom it was addressed. He was perhaps the only one in his nation who knew about Christ. At any rate, he was certainly the first Ethiopian who had been taught that Jesus was the Messiah; and, if he now yielded to the instructions of Philip, he would find, on returning home, that he was severed from all his former friends, and had to stand alone in his profession of Christianity. He might, therefore, have shrunk from any decisive step

on this occasion. He might have said that he wished longer time for inquiry, or that he was not yet prepared for openly avowing himself a Christian. He might have told the Evangelist that he was deeply impressed with all he had heard, and would give it his most serious consideration, but that he could not at once make up his mind to accept of Christ. However, he did nothing of the kind—he was, on the contrary, ready even to anticipate his teacher in the decisive course which he adopted. Having been told that a public profession of faith in Jesus was needful, and that there was a special ordinance appointed for this purpose, we read that, on their coming to a certain water as they journeyed, the eunuch exclaimed, "See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptised?" It was done: the decisive step was taken; the seal of Christ was visibly impressed upon the courtier's forehead; and whoever might marvel or whoever might mock, he should henceforth be known as the declared and determined follower of Jesus.

And now let us note the different consequences which followed.

Of the young ruler we read that "he went away *sorrowful*," and of the Ethiopian eunuch that "he went on his way *rejoicing*." Whence the sorrow in the one case, and whence the joy in the other? We shall experience little difficulty in replying to these questions.

The young ruler was sorrowful because he *could* not obtain eternal life. True, the way to do so had been plainly set before him, but he turned from it as one too difficult for him to tread. The same kind of regret has often been felt with respect to less important matters. Some have eagerly desired the fame and rewards of learning, but they could not undergo the labour necessary in order to acquire it. Others have longed for the reputation won by the daring and resolute, but they could not face the dangers which had to be braved before securing it. They look at the object of their ambition, and then at the price demanded for it, and, much as they desire it, they cannot prevail on themselves to follow the course by which alone it is to be gained, so that nothing remains but sorrowfully to relinquish it. Thus it was with the young ruler and the attainment of eternal life. He would fain have been saved, but, alas! he "had great possessions," and has been told that he must choose between these and heaven. He cannot make the sacrifice required—his heart cleaves to the world; he *must* have present luxury and indulgence; and, deeply grieved that salvation cannot be his on easier terms, he passes away in silence and sorrow from the Saviour's presence.

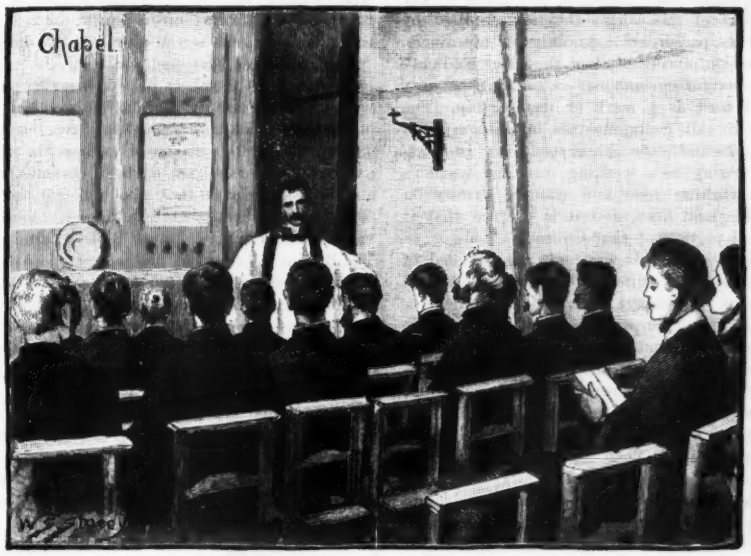
What was his future history we cannot tell. He may, after all, have made choice of the better part; and we would gladly hope that at last it became true of him, as of St. Paul, that "what things were gain unto him, those he counted loss for Christ." But such is certainly not the lesson intended to be taught us by his history. He is presented to us by the sacred writers as a type of that very numerous class who would fain secure eternal life, but who will not act in the manner which is necessary that their desire may be fulfilled. Probably, most professing Christians feel a wish at times to become heirs of glory, yet too many of them still shrink from a decided acceptance of the Saviour. Like this young ruler, they are unable to cast off the chains of worldliness and sin; and they go away from Christ's presence, grieved that it costs so much to obtain salvation. But shall such be the course which any will continue to follow? To guard against this, let us try to follow out in imagination the future experience of this young man, and then say if it shall be ours. We see him turning away from Christ with sorrow depicted in his countenance; and can we fancy that he could ever again be happy? No doubt he might plunge into gaiety; he might surround himself with all the pleasures which money could procure; he might even in his recklessness abandon himself to the wildest dissipation—but never could he erase from his memory the words which Christ had spoken, or chase from his bosom the sorrow which, on hearing them, had arisen in his heart. In his quiet reflective moments, often would he live that scene over again—the voice of the great Teacher would again be heard sounding in his ears, and would remind him that he had, alas! deliberately renounced eternal life. And then, when the hour of death arrived, what would he think of the choice which he had made? Those "great possessions" of his had now to be relinquished whether he would or not; and oh! could he help feeling how terribly he had erred in allowing them to stand between him and the Saviour, and in having, for the transient gratification which they afforded, forfeited the hope of eternal glory?

How different was the experience of the Ethiopian eunuch! We are told, as the first result of his conduct, that "he went on his way rejoicing," and thus there was struck the key-note of his whole future life. As need hardly be said, it was his *decision* for Christ which had given birth to that joy. He felt that he was now safe for ever, and the Spirit of grace shed abroad peace and gladness in his heart. Of his future history, nothing is said in Scripture. Tradition states that he preached the Gospel in his own country on his return, and afterwards travelled for the same purpose into Abyssinia, suffering martyrdom at last for the sake of Christ. Be that as it may, never did the joy of salvation die out in his soul. "He went on his way rejoicing"—on to the discharge of duty—on to the endurance of suffering—on to the encounter with death—on to the possession of never-ending glory. Let us decide as he did, and a like joyful experience will be ours. Let us be prompt and resolute, as he was, in giving ourselves to Christ. Whatever may have hitherto prevented this, let it do so no longer. Let us look at this world, with its passing enjoyments; let us look at heaven, with its unending happiness; and let our choice at once be made. Let the language of our heart be: "Mine, O Christ, shall be Thy salvation—mine the course trodden by Thy disciples—mine the faith, and patience, and self-denial of Thy true followers"—let this be our choice, as it was that of the Ethiopian eunuch, and then, like him, we shall ever henceforth "go on our way rejoicing."

XUM

A DAY WITH THE CHURCH ARMY.

BY F. M. HOLMES.



"STEADY, lad! God loves you, and wants to make a gentleman of you!"

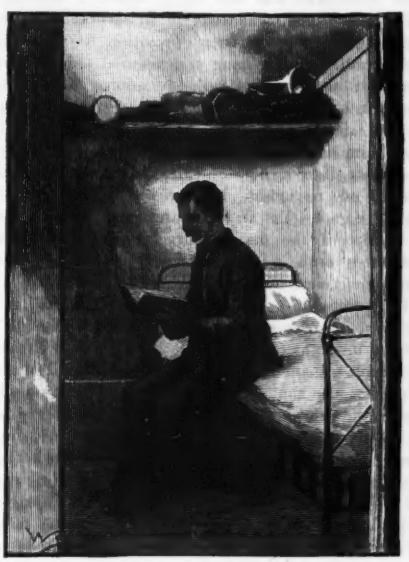
It was a clergyman who spoke. The man whom he addressed was standing outside a public-house, swearing dreadfully. And the clergyman put his arm round the man's neck and checked him thus.

The man was touched. There was something good in him beneath his bad language, after all, and he dragged the clergyman into the house, and—strange gift to such a one!—offered him the remainder of his beer. It was all he had to give!

Now this little incident illustrates, in a striking manner, the chief object and aim of the work of the Church Army. The clergyman was the Rev. W. Carlile, founder and honorary secretary of the Army. Its agents engage in house-to-house visitation, but work in the streets is the greater point. In fact, "chumming up"—as Mr. Carlile calls it—in the streets is intended to be the principal feature of the work.

But its methods are very elastic. It never enters a parish without the invitation of the vicar, and the officer who is sent in response is under the vicar. Should the latter desire the big drum to be beaten, it is thumped vigorously; should quieter measures be desired, they are adopted. In short, the Church Army is in each parish what the vicar desires it to be.

Its officers or evangelists are trained at headquarters in London, as are also its Mission Nurses. The former wear a neat, dark-coloured uniform with tight-fitting jacket buttoned in front, with a plain "C. A." on the collar, and a peaked cap. The Nurses



ONE OF THE CUBICLES.

are clad much as others of that profession, in long, flowing, overall mantle, quiet bonnet, with white collar and cuffs. These evangelists and nurses are commissioned officers, and receive a weekly wage. The soldiers, on the other hand, pay something weekly to the support of the work; they are enrolled by the vicar of the parish, are communicants, abstainers, and helpers of the officers. In fact, the term "soldiers" answers to that of "members." Usually they wear a small red cord as a mark of membership. The evangelists are all communicants, abstainers from alcoholic drinks and tobacco, and speakers. In short, the Church Army is a working men and women's mission to working men and women, strictly on Church of England lines, and it is claimed that it is an integral portion of that Church.

The Army began in this way:—It was founded in 1882 by the Rev. W. Carlile, who has since remained with it, and is, we suspect, its real superintendent, with a committee. He was a curate at St. Mary Abbot's, Kensington, and was wont to go out to the High Street, opposite the railway station, and endeavoured to develop the power of some grooms and butlers to speak instead of himself. He found the audience listened even more attentively to their own fellows than to him. That set him thinking, and the Church Army grew out of it.

He left the parish where he had been curate, and set to work at Westminster to train working men evangelists. At first the organisation, if such it could then be called, had no home. There was a good deal of failure; but some success rewarded its founder, who toiled on with perseverance. The principal helper at the commencement was Mr. Edward Clifford, who visited Father Damien at the leper island of Molokai, and he has been treasurer right through.

The movement was not much opposed, however, until a real change was wrought in several members of a gang of thieves. Then opposition began. One of the leaders of the gang endeavoured once, in the open air, to win back an old companion. Mr. Carlile stepped in between them, and the thief struck him on the head and body, and when he fell to the ground, kicked him on the head. The clergyman was raised and taken into a house, while his assailant was marched off to prison. He was sentenced to six months in gaol. Yet in this case again, beneath the sad surface of the man's character and life, there must have been something good, for one of his chums was heard by Mr. Edward Clifford to say—

"If he gets three stretchers" (years) "I shall get a brick and break some head, and work alongside."

There must have been something good, we say, in the man to have inspired such affection, and in his companion also that such feeling should be aroused. In gaol the prisoner wrote to Mr. Carlile, apologising for his assault, and signing himself "your loving friend." When he was released, he entered the Army, and the last Mr. Carlile heard of him was that he was engaged in mission work in Chicago. Mr. Carlile cannot say that any change in the man was due to the efforts of the Church Army. It is quite likely, he thinks, that the man became disgusted with and ashamed of himself.

In any case, we may regard the whole incident as a striking and touching instance of some goodness at heart existing beneath a horrible surface of ruffianism. And it is to reach such, among others, that the Church Army exists. If there is a drunken man, he is the one for its efforts; or if there is a poor, outcast, or unfortunate woman, she is the object of its mission.

And its efforts have met with success. The Army has over 12,000 members or soldiers, the majority of whom are rescued drunkards, thieves, gamblers, and others of bad character, who have been reached in the streets. About 170 officers or evangelists, and thirty-five mission-nurses, are engaged, besides the staff, and it is calculated that about 40,000 outdoor, and 50,000 indoor, meetings are held yearly, while 400,000 visits are paid annually, with Bible-reading or prayer. The Bishop of Liverpool has said of the Army that it "has succeeded in reaching the lower stratum." The income received at headquarters is something over £4,500, and the amount received locally, mostly in the pence of working-people, is over £13,000. It is also estimated that the honorary work in connection with headquarters amounts to £1,000 yearly.

The headquarters of the Army are in a large building just out of the Edgware Road, in which great thoroughfare, indeed, they are numbered 128 and 130. Just over the busy road is the Mission Nurses' Training Home. Mr. Carlile is the head or father of the first-named, and his sister, Miss Carlile, is the head or the "mother" of the Nurses' Home.

The "cadets," or evangelists-in-training, reside in the one, and the women in the other; but the latter come across the road to listen to the lectures and take part in some of the meetings, etc. The lectures are given daily—in fact, the whole day is full of work, the training being hard, practical, and continuous.

The top floor is divided into a number of cubicles, or small rooms, formed by partitions. Each cubicle has a bed within it, and here the cadets sleep, Mr. Carlile having a cubicle like the rest. At a quarter before seven the first bell rings, and the day may be said to begin by the cadets meeting together on this floor and singing a chorus, which is followed by two short prayers by two of the men. Then, after the Lord's Prayer, the cadets are busy about housework. They scrub floors, clean boots, peel potatoes, and so on, until half-past seven, when the bell rings to prepare for chapel.

Here they assemble at eight o'clock. Several of the sisters, as the nurses are called in the Homes, are present, the Lady Superintendent playing the harmonium. The chapel has lately been enlarged by knocking down a wall and adding another room to the space. A portion can be curtained off to make an apartment for study, and the whole is bright and attractive. Here is a large picture by Mr. Edward Clifford, of a conference at Lord Mount-Temple's, in which are some well-known faces. The service is conducted by one of the four clergymen working at the Training Home, and he gives a brief address. One of the men reads the lesson.

Breakfast is served at half-past eight, and after performing various duties of putting their own cubicles tidy the cadets are at half-past nine instructed

in the use of choruses. Music of a certain character forms no small part of the training, for at two o'clock, again, parts of the house resound with cornet and concertina practice. Each cadet is instructed in the use of these instruments, and there are some of the men who can beat the big drum, or blow a blast on the trumpet, with the best.

But before the cornet-playing, the first and second lectures have been delivered, a half-hour has been given to preparation, a quarter of an hour has been passed in the open air, and dinner partaken of at one o'clock. The teaching of the lectures is distinctly that of the Church of England. The cadets and "sisters" are to be Church of England working-men evangelists, and working-women mission nurses; and the view of the staff and officers is said to be, "to place Christ first, and His Church and Sacraments second;" and it is said further that, "Most spiritual men of the three great schools in the Church of England now give" to the Army "their prayers and sympathy." Most of the Bishops are patrons, including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The late Bishop of Durham said that the Army "had a very warm place in his heart," while the Bishop of Bedford wishes "it to be understood that" he does "identify" himself "thoroughly" with its work, and regards it as having "settled for ever" the question "How the masses are to be reached."

After the cornet practice, brief addresses are sometimes given by the cadets in the study at half-past two. At three they sally forth to the streets to hold brief meetings in the open air and sell the *Church Army Gazette*. Some days they visit the slums, or visit from house to house. Tea is held at five, and from half-past five until a quarter to seven a quiet time is theirs for devotion. After a short meeting to pray for the evening's work, they proceed to St. Mary's Hall, and thence issue forth again for processions and open-air meetings. About an hour later, a meeting commences in-doors, and again an hour afterwards a prayer-meeting is held. At ten supper is served, and at eleven, after a short prayer, lights are to be out, and silence reigns up-stairs.

The day of the sisters is much like that of the brothers—as they are called in the Homes. As we have seen, they join in some of the meetings; but there are two important differences, for all the sisters receive efficient training in nursing and ambulance work by Miss Carlile and Mrs. Franks, and training at a hospital. On occasions, also, a lady leads them into the streets for rescue work, and in connection with this an all-night shelter is to be opened. In "the field," when at work in parishes to which they may be sent, the nurses take mothers' meetings and cottage meetings.

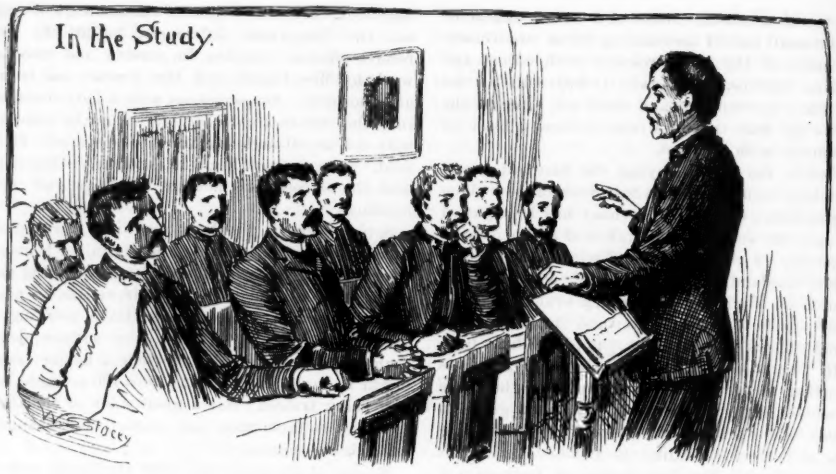
Seven weeks is the length of time during which some of the cadets are at the Training Home, but others remain three months. A longer training might be given to all did funds and circumstances permit, but the fact is, a demand for these working men evangelists is rising — there is a greater demand than supply, and they leave when a longer training might be beneficial. About 120 to 130 per annum are now being trained; but a great want of the Church Army is suitable men and women for evangelists and mission nurses.

Several of the cadets are from the North, and have been colliers and miners; but other trades, such as that of plasterer and of bricklayer, have their representatives. The women have mostly been domestic servants, and some among them have served in shops. We think we may say that some of them represent the cream of the English working-class — hard-working and self-reliant.



A MUSIC LESSON.

One of them five years ago deserted from the militia when it was ordered for service in Egypt, and having enlisted under a false name, did not even claim a pardon in the Jubilee Year, for he felt so certain that he would not be discovered. "He became," said Mr. Carlile, "an earnest Christian, and a member of the Whitechapel Corps. On conscientious grounds he surrendered himself for desertion, at a risk of three months' imprisonment. His example had a great effect in Whitechapel. The magistrate dealt leniently with him, and let him out after a few days with a fine. He afterwards went into training to become an officer. He was a steady first-class Whitechapel bricklayer, and as he had a wife and two children to support, his surrender of himself was no slight matter."



Four of the Church Army evangelists have gone to India, where they are working under clergymen, and living at the rate of about sixteen or seventeen shillings weekly. One or two of the mission nurses also desire to go. The work of specialising agents is commencing, and one evangelist has been devoted to the London cabmen. He is of their class, and visits cab-shelters, cabmen's coffee-houses, public-houses, and also the families of cabmen. A recent *Church Army Gazette*—a popularly written and illustrated halfpenny paper—gave an account of a cabmen's supper-party which Captain Gosling, C.A., promoted, and at which the Bishop of Marlborough presided. A lodging-house and workshop for men has been opened, and it is also desired to set apart an evangelist to the tramps' lodging-houses, and to the gates of the prison. In the former he would have a vast field indeed for his efforts, for it is said there are more than 40,000 convicts and tramps in London lodging-houses.

The work therefore seems expanding. Much of the progress the movement has made during the seven years is no doubt largely due to the comparative sobriety and elasticity of its methods; sobriety and elasticity, however, which apparently are never permitted to interfere with the central principle that it is a working people's mission to working people.

KITTY FAIRFAX.

A MILLTOWN STORY, BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BROKEN ENGAGEMENT," ETC. ETC.

SPENDING some days in Milltown, I was inquiring after some old friends and acquaintances, and mentioned the name of Kitty Fairfax. Mrs. Ashby at once poured out a narrative in which a disguised nobleman, a linen-draper, and a gondola were mixed in bewildering confusion. Miss Elizabeth Marsden, being in full possession of facts, has kindly given me a correct version of Kitty's experiences (her sister Sophia throwing in a few reflections). The following letter was lent, in the strictest confidence, to Janet Scott; it runs as follows:—

KITTY TO CECILIA FAIRFAX.

MY DEAR CECILIA,—At last I am able to write you a long letter, instead of the little scrappy notes I have sent between you and Aunt Jane. We are still at Lucerne; the weather is too hot for Italy, and I do not feel the time wasted. Tom Scott's books are most useful. We go on the lovely lake, land at some sweet spot, stroll a little way, and then settle down to read or sketch. I will not attempt to describe the scenery, but my portfolio will give you some idea of it when I come home. I cannot tell you how happy I am. I feel as though I had never been *alive* before, when I contrast my days here with my life at Milltown, amongst all those dull, uncongenial people, with their silly gossip. You asked me if I were not afraid of Mr. Galbraith. Not the least bit; we like each other, and really I think he is beginning to be a little proud of me. He often laughs about his dreadful letter that caused me so much misery. Everybody—and the place is crammed with visitors: that is the only drawback—everybody thinks

I am his daughter, and when we were both sketching this morning, a lady came up and said: "Ah, that is clearly a case of hereditary talent." Mrs. Galbraith does not care particularly for art; she is very sad, and grieves about Helen. Aunt Jane need not have put in those hints about her wanting care, and little attentions; of course I should remember all that. As this will not go to Milltown, I must tell you what a trial my black silk has been. It was extremely kind of Aunt to sell her ring to buy it with, but people do make such unnecessary sacrifices. If she had given me instead that lovely soft Indian muslin, or even told me before she spent the money—— A black silk is so dull and inartistic, and to me it is such a vulgar idea that a girl must have a black silk for "best." I have spent the entire afternoon in altering it; cut the sleeves to the elbow, and put rich ruffles of poor mother's lace there and at the neck. By the way, I don't think I thanked you properly for giving me your share. But I am sure, dear, that dreadful Miss Williams would never have appreciated it, if you were wearing it yourself. I put your strings of little pearls round my throat. Whilst we were waiting in the hotel drawing-room for dinner, I was looking into the garden, and happened to say, "Those lovely cream roses, how I should like a bunch!" In about two minutes a gentleman came up with some, beautifully arranged, and handed them to me. Of course I thanked him, and fastened them in my dress; they just gave the finish it wanted. He happened to sit next me at table, and was very agreeable; has travelled a great deal, and talked well. He is an artist, he says. This letter is much shorter than it would have been, Cecilia, for Mrs. Galbraith has been in my room, and positively has been telling *me* that I must be careful "about receiving attentions from strangers." As if I were an ignorant chit of a girl, or a common flirt, like Mrs. Ashby's sister! However, I must recollect she does not really know me yet. Mr. Galbraith has far more penetration, and would understand that when the mind is filled with love for art, all meaner subjects fade into nothingness. I do miss you, Cecilia. I *couldn't* do my hair this evening. You are so clever in that coronet style. My love to Maynard; don't tease him too much. What do you find to talk about all day long?—Your affectionate sister,

CATHERINE FAIRFAX.

And now we will follow Kitty Fairfax to Venice, into that atmosphere of golden haze, and glamour of dreamy beauty, which "transforms the most prosaic of mortals into a poet," as Tom Scott had once informed Kitty. Every day seems to our traveller to heighten the charm of that enchanted city; but surely this gives the very crown of happiness—a morning spent in the Ducal Palace, and a long-planned excursion for the afternoon.

Mr. Galbraith had made the acquaintance of a party of Americans three years ago; they will join them, and a rather plain, quiet man of thirty; Kitty has mentioned him to Cecilia with the brief description: "middle-aged and dull!" David Sandle is a silk merchant, whose business requires an annual visit to Milan, and then allows a month's holiday of wandering further south. He is on the easy footing of old and tried friendship with both Mr. and Mrs. Galbraith, and returns their smile with a quiet nod as they remark Kitty's expression of rapt and ecstatic enjoyment. He is almost afraid to speak to her, after the withering rebuff she gave him yesterday, when the poor misguided man positively offered her some chocolate cream just as they were passing under the Bridge of Sighs!

"This is indeed the very poetry of motion!" Kitty murmured at last.

Several other gondolas were bound for the island, and as they landed, they found a rather large party was waiting for the appearance of the guide who was to conduct them over the factory. A handsome young Irishman suddenly left the group and joined the Galbraiths.

"Why, Sandle!" he said, "who would have thought of seeing *you* in Venice!" With a bow to Kitty: "I remember meeting you in Lucerne, and now I hope the pleasure may be completed by an introduction!"

"Miss Fairfax—Mr. Desmond," said Mr. Sandle, rather sulkily.

Kitty's delicate cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled. She looked charming, and Mr. Desmond evidently thought so, and singled her out for his special attention.

David Sandle became all at once anxious about the welfare of mutual acquaintances, but was cleverly suggested as a walking encyclopædia of information to an inquiring young American lady, and comfortably disposed of.

Kitty has to this day a very hazy recollection of the treasures and purpose of the Armenian factory, and when they came to the printing-room she gave up all pretence of interest; and Mr. Desmond easily persuaded her to leave the machinery, which, indeed, she regarded at all times with a want of interest truly feminine, and they strolled out into the lovely garden.

"It is so pleasant to talk to someone who feels the poetic side of Venice. I have heard so much of the historical part, and Venetian influence on commerce," began Kitty.

"Ah," said Mr. Desmond, laughing, "Sandle has not much poetry in him, I should think; and in my opinion, Venice can't be really enjoyed after four-and-twenty!"

"Did you notice those fishing-boats with their painted sails, gliding on a golden sea?" murmured Kitty. "The scent of the magnolia blossoms is like the lotos-flower—it makes me almost wish to stay on here for ever!"

"Would you—really—be happy to stay here, and with me?" whispered Mr. Desmond, with an expression in his deep blue eyes which thrilled Kitty

with quite a new sensation. "To me it would be perfect rapture!"

"Will you like this rosebud?" she said, turning away to hide her blushes, and reaching a lovely spray just above their heads.

"My dear Kitty," said Mrs. Galbraith's voice at that moment, "we have been waiting to start these twenty minutes!"

"I ought to have asked after Miss O'Brien; she is in Venice, I hear, Mr. Desmond," said Mr. Sandle. And it was well that Kitty did not see the angry scowl of those fascinating blue eyes, as Mr. Desmond replied haughtily, "I will tell Miss O'Brien of your very kind inquiries!"

She followed Mrs. Galbraith to the gondola in dreadful confusion, but Mr. Desmond found a moment to whisper as he pressed her hand, "I shall have my rose yet! I must and will see you again!"

Mr. Sandle, fortunately, was again appealed to by the young lady of the inquiring mind, and joined the American party. Kitty could not have endured his solemn face, she thought. She closed her eyes in silent rapture, living that delicious half-hour over again.

"Why, Kitty, surely you won't take a nap in a gondola?" said Mr. Galbraith.

"I think I have had almost too much happiness for one afternoon—I can never thank you enough!" said Kitty earnestly.

"You are a dear, grateful child!" was the answer. —"And we must forgive her for wandering into the enchanted garden, must we not, my dear?"

"I am rather over-tired," replied Mrs. Galbraith. Kitty was too absorbed in her own thoughts to notice Mr. Galbraith's anxious look, as his wife shivered, and drew her fur cloak closely round her.

"You are not in bed yet; may I have a little talk with you?" said Mrs. Galbraith, coming to Kitty's room that evening. Then, with a visible effort—"If you were Helen, I should say just what I am going to tell you now. Aubrey Desmond is handsome and fascinating, I can see; but Mr. Sandle has known him a long time, and says he is that most obnoxious of mortals—a male flirt!"

"Does Mr. Sandle speak of *all* his friends in that kind way?" asked Kitty scornfully.

"He did not pretend to number him among his *friends*, my dear. I should not wish to—to interfere, but I could not help seeing. And, Kitty, he is engaged to be married to a Miss O'Brien, who is in Venice now with her mother, Mr. Sandle says."

"Mr. Sandle! Mr. Sandle! He has evidently a grudge against poor Mr. Desmond! I don't believe a word of it!" exclaimed Kitty, "not a single word!" And when Mrs. Galbraith had repeated her rather cold good-night, she took from her desk a bunch of withered roses, and covered them with passionate kisses.

Next morning, Mrs. Galbraith suggested resting and writing letters, and in the afternoon she still declined going out; so her husband, with Kitty and Mr. Sandle, strolled into St. Mark's, where Kitty proposed they should leave her for an hour, for David Sandle's society was intolerable! As she sat, screened by a massive pillar, she gave herself up to delicious day-dreams. She wondered if Maynard Williams' eyes *could* have spoken to Cecilia as Aubrey Desmond's had done to her. "We are sure to meet again!" the sweet church-bells seemed to be ringing. "I could trust him for ever!" sang her heart. One "jangled out of tune," at length broke in upon her reverie. It was a girlish voice, with just a suspicion of the pretty Irish brogue.

"Put a chair for me here, Aubrey," it said, "against this pillar, and sit opposite, so that I can see you instead of the pavement, which is too dreadfully like a bit of the English Channel! That's quite close enough, thank you. Give me Baedeker, and we'll pretend to be reading up the cathedral properly. And aren't you ashamed, then, that you didn't think of my commission yesterday? Whom were you thinking of, I should like to know?"

"Kathleen, if you pout like that I shall forget I'm not at Killarney again! Do you remember, darling?"

"No, I've forgotten all about it. And did you talk to old Miss Smith the whole afternoon, I wonder, and give her a pink rosebud, like mine? Aubrey, this is the last warning; you will be dangerously wounded directly by that arrow in my hat."

"As if I feared any darts like the look of your darling grey eyes!" was the answer.

And then Kitty Fairfax rose, and hurriedly joined a small crowd who were trying to understand the explanations of one of the guidse; and, partly screened by some heaped-up chairs, she turned and looked at the speakers. She need not have troubled herself; they were far too much absorbed to notice her. That was Kathleen O'Brien, then—a charming, roguish girl of eighteen—and it *was* Aubrey Desmond whispering sweet nothings into that small round ear.

"The old story," remarked a gaunt lady in a deer-stalker's cap, with a glance at the pair.

Kitty stumbled on the uneven marble slabs, and found her hand taken by Mr. Galbraith.

"Take care," he said. "You are quite tired with waiting, but I had forgotten how time was going. I have a rare treat in store for you after lunch—a picture of Bellini's, that gives one a taste of both rapture and despair;" and Mr. Galbraith's description and criticism fortunately lasted till they reached their hotel.

That afternoon poor Kitty vainly tried to appreciate the masterpiece; she gazed at it earnestly, and the old artist at her side imagined that his little friend was utterly overcome by its supreme beauty as he noticed her rapt, intense look and trembling lip.

Mrs. Galbraith went to her room soon after dinner,

and Kitty, with the pretext of a pile of letters to read and answer, shut herself up with them and her aching heart. Mr. Galbraith and David Sandle sat in the tiny balcony over the Grand Canal; the privilege of an old friendship excused the latter's complete silence. The moon made silver paths on the water, crossed by the gondolas with arrow-like swiftness. Presently they heard a rich voice singing "The last rose of summer;" at the same moment a window above was opened, the gondola darted beneath it, and something thrown by an unseen hand was cleverly and eagerly caught by the singer, who disappeared in a moment round the old palace wall into a side canal.

"Aubrey Desmond!" exclaimed Mr. Sandle.

"That was Kitty's window. Was it a letter, David? She is not the girl to care for a scented puppy like him. I saw one of his daubs at Brown's last May, and it would disgrace a house-painter!"

"He is a very fascinating fellow, and Miss Kitty is little more than a child; but I did not think she would——" said David Sandle, and his voice sounded odd and hoarse. "There is a romance and sentiment about the place——"

"Hang sentiment!" growled Mr. Galbraith. "Kitty shall understand that there's an end of this kind of thing."

"Good-night," said his friend, shortly.

"My wife must have a talk with that silly child in the morning," thought Mr. Galbraith. "Heigh-ho! we have all been young once."

But with the morning came far other and more serious care. Mrs. Galbraith had been feverish and restless all day, and became rapidly worse; a doctor, summoned in all haste, spoke of acute inflammation. Her husband, completely unnerved, could only sit by his wife, clasping her hand tightly in his; and Kitty, whose violent headache would have overwhelmed her with care and petting at home, found herself with all the responsibility of a nurse, and forced to submit to listen to David's suggestions—most humbly offered. She had never made a linseed poultice in her life. "If only Cecilia were here!" she thought. Never had the poor girl felt so utterly desolate. One of those letters last night told her of Aunt Jane's happy meeting with Mr. Malyon; another of her sister's speedy marriage; and now, she thought with terror, as she listened to the short, laboured breathing, was she to lose this friend, whose little acts of thoughtful kindness now came to her memory in sharp contrast with her own selfish absorption?

"I will try and think exactly what Cecilia would do," she determined, as she stood by the bedside with trembling limbs and aching head.

I suppose we have all known people whose happy fate it is to have someone always at hand to shield them from trouble; as far as possible all the thorns and stones are carefully taken out of their path, and every chance ray of sunshine deflected for their especial benefit. Catherine Fairfax was one of those favoured ones. Aunt Jane and Cecilia had been her willing slaves, and now David Sandle voluntarily put his neck under the yoke. At this sad time, their delicate pink colour had forsaken the girl's cheeks, but her face had gained an expression of sweetness, and her voice had a softness, which made her, to his partial eyes, lovelier than ever; she was tasting for the first time in her life the delight of service. The doctor advised travelling on to Florence as soon as Mrs. Galbraith's strength would permit; the weather had become stormy and wet—that was the reason. Kitty's letter explained that she should not be sorry, after all, to say good-bye to Venice. She was secretly haunted by the fear that she should see those roguish grey eyes again: Mr. Desmond had called twice with polite inquiries, Mr. Galbraith had rather grimly informed her. Once in Florence, Mrs. Galbraith daily gained a little strength, and insisted that her kind nurse should not always stay by her sofa. All the slight coolness between them had disappeared. She was a good, loving woman, and *therefore* a matchmaker at heart, and since her illness, had discovered the fact that Kitty and David Sandle were admirably suited to go through life together.

The last afternoon of his stay in Florence, Mr. Sandle had persuaded Kitty to walk with him to San Miniato; she was glad to rest when they had climbed the hill, and almost in silence they watched the sunset glow fade over the city.

"How dreary my home will seem after these happy weeks!" he said at last.

"I can understand how you dread going back to it," said Kitty sympathetically. "Mrs. Galbraith has told me how devotedly you nursed your dear mother. I am so very, very sorry for you." A pause. "I wonder when I shall see old England again! Everyone is so kind to me, Mr. Sandle; there are very few useless girls like me who have the choice of three homes! Cecilia says I *must* share hers. Aunt Jane tells me that she and Mr. Malyon have planned just how my studio is to be arranged in their house at Edinburgh; and dear Mrs. Galbraith wants me to stay with her." And Kitty gave him one of her April smiles.

"I do not think it wonderful——" began David, when he noticed Kitty start; her cheeks flushed, and she fixed a scornful gaze on—Aubrey Desmond. He had come up with an easy smile, which quickly changed to extreme perplexity and astonishment; he walked on a few paces, then turned, and evidently supposing he could not have been recognised, he once more lifted his hat, and stopped an instant before Miss Fairfax, receiving again a stony gaze, before which he retreated in evident and wrathful chagrin.

Kitty drew a long breath of relief, as she watched him disappear in the avenue. "Mr. Sandle," she began shyly, "I have long been waiting for courage; I want to confess something."

"I promise to grant you absolution, Miss Fairfax," was the ready answer.

"I was so very rude to you in Venice because—

because you told Mrs. Galbraith your opinion of Mr. Desmond, and I thought it uncalled for; but I afterwards found it was quite true. Oh, surely, you could not suppose when I threw those withered roses from the window, that I meant them for him? You *could* not have thought so! I did not know he was there. I had been silly enough to keep them," said Kitty, putting up her hand to hide her flaming cheeks, "and that afternoon, I found out for myself that—that you were right, and I threw the hateful things away in disgust. It was by the strangest chance they cannot meet till May, so many things may happen before then."

"I have no doubt, my dear," said her husband, laughing, "that Kitty won't be allowed to forget him, and letters will often be passing between us. For instance, she has promised to paint him a copy of his favourite picture, and the poor fellow couldn't have looked happier if she had offered him a kingdom. She will make a dreadful mess of it, I know. I should not be surprised if business takes him within fifty miles or so of Milltown, and of course he will



"'Will you like this rosebud?'"—*p.* 586.

his gondola was passing, though Mrs. Galbraith said perhaps he had been lingering about some time. I wonder you did not all scorn me as I do him, if you thought such a thing," ended Kitty, dashing away a burning tear.

"I am very much honoured by your confidence, Miss Fairfax," said Mr. Sandle; and his courteous, deferential tone was balm to poor Kitty's sensitive heart. They discussed indifferent topics the rest of the way; and that evening Mr. Sandle's gaiety quite surprised Mr. Galbraith, who had noticed how dull his friend had been of late.

"He *didn't* say anything to Kitty Maurice," said his wife to him that night, after bidding David good-bye—he was to leave early next morning. "And feel bound to call in on Miss Gordon! Oh, we shall be deluged with letters!"

"Perhaps he is wiser to wait," admitted Mrs. Galbraith. "And, Maurice, I was amused to hear Kitty say yesterday what a remarkably well-made head Mr. Sandle's was: that no one could call him handsome, but he had such a good, thoughtful face, and she couldn't endure handsome men! they were always conceited! Yes, I believe it will all come right in the end!"

"What a puzzle you women are!" said her husband, rubbing up his stiff grey hair. "Plotting and scheming to be rid of the child, and yet loving her with all your heart!"

An extract from a letter received by Cecilia Williams, in April, shall close my little story:—

"You no doubt remember, when I wrote from Venice, I told you of a very clever, intellectual man who joined us there—Mr. Sandle—about thirty, but looking *much* younger. Oddly enough, I don't think I mentioned him again. He came to Florence with us, and was extremely kind and considerate when I was feeling worn-out with nursing. He is now over again from England, partly on business; but he was anxious to spare Mrs. Galbraith all fatigue on her journey; so we have seen a great deal of Mr. Sandle, and you will be introduced to him before long, Cecilia, when we all meet at Aunt Jane's home. He is often in Edinburgh. Though not an artist, he has an intense appreciation of Art (you may laugh at me as much as you like—I 'm sure it ought to be spelt with a capital 'A'). I have just finished a copy of a favourite picture, and was quite surprised at the soundness and justness of his remarks; he enters far more into the *spirit* and *meaning* of my painting than Mr. Galbraith, who is still apt to be acrid and over-critical: he is human, and jealousy is a universal failing.

"You and Aunt Jane will like him, I know; it is a pity his parents fixed on 'David,' but I understand it is a family name. Even spiteful Mrs. Ashby would surely admit that a business which takes one to the south of Europe at least once every year—I told you, didn't I, that he is a silk merchant?—is, by that fact only, placed on an equal footing with one of the professions. There is nothing like travel for enlarging the mind; the very thought of living in Milltown is a perfect nightmare to me, though it will be fun to stay a week at Miss Marsden's and hear the gossip! I wonder if Miss Browne will patronise me *now!*"

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

June 15. The Rich Fool.

To read—St. Luke xii. 13—21. *Golden Text—verse* 15.

I.  QUESTION ASKED. (13—15.) Most children have seen a great crowd collected. What draws it together? Might be one of these reasons—

Something to *see*—as a fire, or a funeral, or a wedding, etc.

Something to *hear*—as a great preacher.

Something to *get*—as at a soup-kitchen.

What was it gathered this crowd together? (Ver. 1.) So many people that they crushed and trod upon one another. They wanted to—

See Christ—of Whom they heard wonderful things.

Get from Christ—healing, food, comfort.

Hear Christ—Who spake as none else did.

One man takes opportunity to ask Christ to do something for him.

What does he want? Christ to influence his brother to give him share of his estate. Why should Christ do so? Had gained a character for being just and fair. But was this what Christ came for—to settle disputes about property and such-like? So He declines—and bids all beware of covetousness. He shows how a man's life may be viewed in two ways, viz.—

(*a*) *What he has*—health, prosperity, riches, etc.

(*b*) *What he is*—honest, pure, God-fearing, etc., *or* covetous, selfish, unholy, etc.

Which make up man's true life? That which will *last*. Must leave all his possessions at death—but his character, good or bad, remains for eternity.

II. A Question Answered. (16—21.) Christ illustrates His sayings by a parable—commonly called "The Rich Fool." Notice—

(*a*) *What the man had.* The good things of this life—prosperity increasing year by year—all things that are considered able to give earthly pleasure and comfort.

Also had belief in the future—that he would have long life, health, power of enjoying what he had.

So he would be merry, and care not for future.

(*b*) *What the man had not.* Thanks to God Who gave all.

Thoughts of death, which might rob him of all.

Remembrance of the poor, whom he might benefit.

Knowledge of higher life than mere self-indulgence.

(*c*) *What the man came to.* An untimely end.

An unrepentant death—no time to turn to God.

A miserable future—wicked shall be cast into hell.

Lessons. What are true riches?

1. Those that will last—the fear and love of God.
2. Those that benefit others—true charity.
3. Those that bring ourselves peace at the last.

June 22. Trust in Our Heavenly Father.

To read—St. Luke xii. 22—34. *Golden Text—ver.* 30.

I. Earthly Cares. (22—30.) Last lesson told of a rich man trusting to his riches for happiness. Our Lord now gives advice about the things of this life. What are we not to do? Take anxious thought about eating, drinking and clothing. Notice about these things—

(*a*) They are necessary. (Ver. 30.)

(*b*) They must be obtained with toil.

(*c*) They are provided by God.

How does God provide for His other creatures?

Ravens and other birds find food at all seasons.
Are not we better than they?
Therefore God will provide for our wants.
Lilies and flowers cover the earth with beauty.
They are more glorious than Solomon's robes.
But are soon cut down with the mown grass.
It is God who clothes the grass with beauty.
Therefore He will provide us with clothing.

Whence come man's food and clothing? Remind of the sheep for meat and wool—the cows giving milk—corn for bread—cotton for calico, etc.

All these dependent on sun, rain, wind, etc.

Therefore all dependent on God—given by Him for use of man. (Ps. civ. 14.)

Why are we not to be anxious? (St. Matt. vii. 11.)

(*a*) *Because God is our Father.* As Author of our life bound to provide for His creatures' wants. As loving Father delighting to supply needs.

(*b*) *Because God is our King*—bound to do His best for His subjects.

Are we then to be idle? No! Man is to go to his daily work, but he may expect God's blessing on his labours. (Eph. iv. 28.)

II. HEAVENLY TREASURE. (31—34.) What is to be sought first?

A place in God's Kingdom. Then all things needed will be given.

See different titles by which God's people called:—

(*a*) *God's children.* He is their loving Father.

(*b*) *God's subjects.* He is preparing a Kingdom.

(*c*) *God's flock.* He is their Shepherd.

What have they to do?

(*a*) *Give alms* Not live only for themselves.

(*b*) *Provide treasure* in heaven—for this world passes away.

(*c*) *Set hearts* on heavenly things.

How different from the conduct of the Rich Fool!

Examples. Judas set his heart on money, and was lost. (Acts i. 18.)

Demas loved this world and deserted Christ. (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

Apostles gave up all for Christ, and received one-hundredfold. (St. Matt. xix. 29.)

Early Christians gave up all their possessions. (Acts ii. 45.)

Is our treasure in heaven?

JUNE 29. REVIEW OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS.

Golden Text—St. John iii. 2.

INTRODUCTION. The lessons this quarter illustrate the Golden Text.

They show Christ as a Teacher sent from God—teaching by Words, Parables, and Miracles.

I. CHRIST'S TEACHING BY WORDS. 1. *A Lesson of love.* Remind of His Sermon on the Mount (ch. vi.), showing the difference between His teaching and that of old times. The Law taught punishment for evil, requiting of wrongs, etc. Christ taught love to enemies, blessings instead of curses.

2. *A lesson of forgiveness.* Shall we not avenge wrongs, insults, and the like—insist on debts being paid in full with interest? Christ teaches us to give liberally, lend without looking to receive back; to be merciful in conduct, lenient in judging, kind.

3. *A lesson of prayer.* The Lord's Prayer given as a model one. How?

Pray first for God's glory, then for man's needs.
Includes all people and all wants.
God as Father, ready to supply all wants.

4. *A lesson of trust.* For whom does God care besides man?

Birds are fed without their sowing or reaping.
Flowers carpet the earth with beauty.
Are we not better than they?
Therefore God will provide for His children's wants.

II. CHRIST'S TEACHING BY PARABLES. 1. *The Sower.* A tale of God's Word.

The hard heart receives no seed at all.
The shallow heart shows no permanent result.
The worldly heart chokes the seed with cares and pleasures.
The good heart receives and profits.
Take heed how ye hear.

2. *The Good Samaritan.* A tale of love.

The man in danger—could not help himself.
The priest and Levite—did not trouble to help.
The Samaritan a "friend closer than a brother."
Provided for all his neighbour's needs.

Type of Him who so loved us as to give Himself for us.

Shall He not also freely give us all things?

3. *The rich fool.* A tale of sheer folly.

A fool for taking no account of—
The uncertainty of life and all earthly things.
The insufficiency of riches for happiness.
The stewardship of money, for which must give account. His end—destruction.

III. CHRIST'S TEACHING BY MIRACLES. 1. *The Widow of Nain.*

An only son of a widowed mother raised to life.
Christ's compassion teaches us to weep with mourners.
Christ's help teaches to do all we can for others.
The man raised teaches the Resurrection.

2. *The Ruler's Daughter.* The young may die.
Christ's loving sympathy and care for children.

3. *Feeding the multitudes.* In the wilderness with Christ.
Wants supplied fully and freely by God.
Duty of order, thanks, and avoidance of waste.
The same Jesus the Bread of Life.
"Lord, evermore give us this bread."

JULY 6. LAWFUL WORK ON THE SABBATH.

To read—St. Luke xiii, 10—17. Golden Text—St. Matt. xii. 12.

I. SABBATH TEACHING. (Ver. 10.) Recall notices of Sabbath Day. Ordained after creation. (Gen. ii. 3.)
Blessed and set apart as holy by God.
Servants and cattle allowed to rest. (Deut. v. 14.)

No work (except preparation of food) to be done.
Divine worship to be celebrated. (Ezek. xlvi. 3.)
Scriptures read in the Synagogues. (Acts xiii. 27.)
Remind also of punishment for profaning it (Ex. xxxi. 14), and of blessedness of keeping it. (Is. lvi. 2.)
Principles of keeping it in Fourth Commandment.
1. A day of rest from ordinary work.
2. A day of worship and of hearing God's Word.

II. SABBATH HEALING. (11—17.) 1. *A woman cured.* Bent double with infirmity—eighteen years of pain—yet found in Synagogue on the Sabbath.
Came for spiritual blessing—found also temporal blessing. Received touch and blessing of Christ.
At once healed. At once glorified God.
God is able to do more than we ask or think.
2. *A ruler protests.* Why does he object?
Because Christ was "working" on Sabbath.
Had yet to learn "mercy greater than sacrifice."
How had Christ already taught this?
By letting His disciples pluck corn when hungry.
By healing man with withered hand (Golden Text).
3. *Christ's answer.* Why call him a hypocrite?
Because his indignation only a pretence to conceal his real feeling, which was jealousy of Christ.
See how Christ convicts him by his own conduct.
He looses his animals on Sabbath for water.
May not this woman be loosed from her malady?
She is a Jewess, under the law. The same Lord who gave the law has released her. If works of necessity may be done, much more may works of mercy.
The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.
LESSONS. 1. *Sabbath duties.* Rest and worship.
2. *Sabbath restrictions.* (Is. lviii. 13.)
3. *Sabbath privileges.* Works of mercy.
All to be done to the glory of God.
4. *Sabbath foretastes.* (Heb. iv. 9.)

JULY 13. THE GREAT SUPPER.

To read—St. Luke xiv. 15—24. *Golden Text—verse* 15.

INTRODUCTION. Last Lesson told of observance of Sabbath—how works of mercy might be done. On another Sabbath Christ went as invited guest to a feast (verse 1—7), and healed a man who had dropsy. Then He turns the conversation to the heavenly feast—the Supper of the Lamb. Shows who will be partakers of that. (Rev. xix. 9.)

I. THE INVITATION. (15—17.) Notice the remark made by one of those at the feast (15). Had probably heard Christ speak of His Kingdom—perhaps heard the Parables of Mustard Seed and Leaven (xiii. 19—21). So he thinks that he—a Jew, one of God's favoured people—would be certain of a place in that Kingdom. Christ gives a warning by means of a parable. Many are called—but few chosen.
A certain man—God Creator and Ruler of all.
Great Supper—the blessings given by God.
Many bidden—God will have all to be saved.
The Supper ready—Now is the day of salvation.
The servant sent—Prophets, messengers, His Son. (Heb. i. 2.) Surely they will haste to the feast!

II. THE EXCUSES. (18—20.) They made light of the summons.
Excuse of business—bought land and oxen.
Excuse of pleasure—married a wife.
So insulted the host who invited them.
Whom do these people represent?
The Jews who refused Christ's invitations.
All who let this world keep them back from God.
How does God call us? By His ministers and teachers, His Word, His Spirit speaking to conscience.
Do people make such excuses still? Alas! they do. Some say, they have no time to be religious; some say, they must think of this world first; some let pleasure-seeking come between them and God.

III. THE RESULT. (21—24.) 1. *The host angry.* God will not always bear with men. If He is neglected, despised, will one day turn against us. See solemn warnings in Prov. i. 24—28.
2. *Others invited.* The feast is ready—others must come and partake.
The Jews rejected Christ—the Gentiles believed. See what St. Paul said at Antioch. (Acts xiii. 46.) Notice who were invited—
The poor in spirit—who shall see God. (St. Matt. v. 3.)
The maimed—who hunger after righteousness.
The blind—whose eyes shall be opened to know God's truth.
These were called, invited, compelled to come in.
So Christ invites sinners to Him still. He longs to receive them, to welcome them, to fill up His Home. Who can refuse?
3. *The invited guests shut out.* Not only the wicked cast into hell, but also all *who forget God.*
Therefore—Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.

THE COURTESY OF CHRISTIANS.

BY THE REV. DAVID BURNS.

A JEWISH greeting was not a bow and a passing word; it was the custom to observe many tedious formalities, and to recite prolonged salutations. Our Lord had this in view when He bade His seventy fore-runners "Salute no one by the way." He Himself was about to follow, and He was trusting to them to have a welcome waiting Him. Such lengthened civilities to the chance passenger would seriously delay their progress. The Christ must not be hindered that mere courtesies may be honoured.

We must be willing, as those early disciples were, to seem to be rude, if it is only thereby we can be true to Him. Often this is a most trying duty. Genteel society has its frosts and fires for any who

slight its fashions. It has its cold stare of astonishment, its smile of mingled pity and amusement, its sneer, its shrug, its cold shoulder. These tortures are ever at hand. They are ready under the flashing lights and beside the outspread dainties. They are threatened in the midst of the kindliest, raciest talk. And the Face of gentlest grace and clearest rectitude is ill to catch in that glaring light. The still small voice is lost in the laughter of that crowd. The Christian too often joins with the world to crucify the Christ.

Our Lord, however, is far from careless as to the manners of His deputies. Immediately after He had told His disciples to allow no unnecessary salaams to stay them on their errand, He said: "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.'" This was but a repetition of the instruction which before He gave to the Apostles.

Thus to the ministry of His Church and to the members in it He declares the same duty of courtesy. For this "Peace" was the common salutation. It was used as we use our "Good-day" and "Good-bye." Even with the business of the Messiah in hand, the disciples were not to burst into anyone's house, and fling down their message. They were to enter with the usual formalities. These were due to the householder, and would predispose him to welcome the visitor, and to honour his errand.

We, who claim to be the disciples of that Master, are busy with a like message for Him. Even although we may not mean it, we really are engaged in introducing the Christ to men. Wherever we come we make a welcome for Him whose name we bear, or else we create a prejudice against Him. We ought, therefore, of set purpose, to seek that Christianity in our person may meet the world always with a smile and a frank salutation.

This, of course, is to be done not by one set form of words, but by a constant spirit of peace. Any phrase needs but repetition to lose its meaning. The right feeling, however, the oftener it is exercised, grows deeper and warmer. Still our Lord in effect bids us be careful to use the ordinary courtesies of meeting and farewell. He names to those disciples the very words then in common use. We need not avoid the familiar phrases because they have long lost reality. The true value of a greeting is, after all, not the thought in it, but the heart with which it is said. Our kindliness may be conveyed by words whose actual sense we quite overlook. And why not fix attention on the meaning, and mean it? We may turn these phrases into a loftier prayer, just as Jesus transfigured the "Peace" of the Jews. Then they shall be gifts worthy of being presented in the Saviour's name. To do so would be to go far to fulfil the precept which enjoins intercession for all men, and also the larger law, which commands us to pray without ceasing.

He who in Christ's spirit is courteous in salutation cannot fail to be courteous in his whole behaviour. He has the secret, in fidelity to which he shall show himself a true gentleman. He is copying the King—the gentle, gracious, self-sacrificing Jesus. He does what he can imagine his Lord doing then and there. In truth, he is reproducing on earth the manners of the Heavenly Court. Such a courtesy is the truest and the most winsome. It comes not only from the heart, but from the heart of the heart, where the Spirit of Christ is warming and prompting the spirit of man.

The Gospel guides this courtesy, and urges it on to perfection. Our New Testament teaches us to do what fashion only plays at doing. More stringently than any code of etiquette, our life's directory shuts out of the highest society, which is God's, those who do not conform to His rules of conduct. They are such as these: He who is greatest must be slave to all. We are to wash one another's feet. The spiritual are to bear the burdens of their fellows. In honour we are to prefer one another. Such is the good-breeding expected from those who have been born again. By that birth from above, Divine blood flows in their veins, and a Divine tenderness and nobility are becoming their second nature and eternal life.

This true and lasting gentility is open to everyone. It is not reserved for cultured circles, or moneyed people, or any caste. The name of "gentleman" or "lady" may be denied us, but it lies with ourselves whether we are to be so or not. Let us set our heart on the fact, and care little for the title. Let us give our conduct that supreme charm which the worldling can only imitate feebly—the charm of simplicity and sincerity.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

THE sun, whose beams such bliss afford,
When skies are blue above,
Proclaims the goodness of the Lord,
And His unchanging love.

Deep in the woodland's calm retreat,
Its splendours pierce the gloom,
And, in the city's crowded street,
It lights the narrow room.

To children, stretched on beds of pain,
Its cheering rays descend—
Where lonely hearts in grief complain,
It enters like a friend.

How sweet in Heaven the beams must be,
Of glory and of grace,
The light of God's eternity,
The brightness of His face!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

OUR SAILORS.

BY THE REV. F. TRESTRAIL, D.D



"'Jack, my dear fellow, give me a passage.'"—*p. 594.*



SAILORS' PETS.

HAVING lived for the first twenty-six years of my life in Falmouth, I had abundant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the character and habits of sailors. The harbour, one of the finest in the kingdom, was the rendezvous of the Channel Fleet during the war. There was also a Post Office Packet establishment of over thirty armed vessels, carrying only passengers, specie, and the mails for Spain, the Mediterranean, West Indies, America, and Brazil. These vessels, mostly built in the port, were very handsome, very fast, and very safe. Their crews, when not at sea, lived with their families in the town, and as they very seldom changed from one packet to another, were permanent inhabitants, and, with the crews of the coasting vessels, pilot- and fishing-boats, made up one-half of the population. Being more under social influence and restraint, they were neither so wild nor so reckless as their fellows in the navy. For the most their lives were fairly moral, while many were truly godly and devout. I passed the last year of my scholastic life in Devonport, where sailors were met at every step.

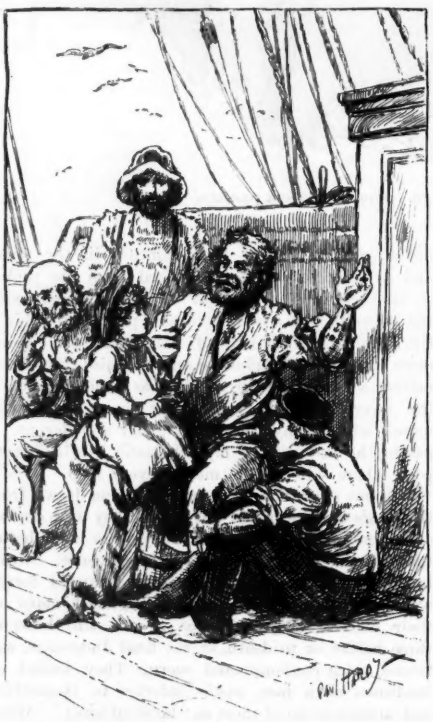
Without education, and many of them drawn from the dregs of society and our gaols, they were deplorably ignorant and immoral. They were little better than animals with a modicum of intelligence. Swearing, cursing, and vice, in their most awful forms, were common to the men, and disgraced many of their officers. Any reference to the sinfulness of these habits, or to death, or the final Judgment, was treated with contempt and scorn. They looked on landsmen as a race vastly inferior to themselves, and always spoke of them as "land-lubbers!" When on shore, they recklessly spent their money in riot

and drunkenness. Having no settled homes, they had no motive to lay up a store for old age.

When, however, they were not infuriated by liquor, none could be more kind, generous, and gentle. Their hilarity and good nature, and boundless love of frolic and fun, made them the favourites of everybody. The "yarns" they would spin, the stories they would tell of the marvels of the deep, both in calm and storm, the tricks they would play on each other, and on their officers when they dared, especially the purser, were highly amusing. They were as simple as children; in action or in danger, daring and fearless.

Their love of pets was almost universal. A monkey, a parrot, a lamb, a dog, and even a pig, they would fancy, and teach all manner of tricks. Nor were they less fond of children. In coming into port after a long absence, if a child were brought on board, there would be quite a scuffle among them who should nurse it. How gently the little thing would be handled! They would play with it, sing to it, with evident enjoyment to themselves, and to the great delight of the young ones.

And if their ship was handsome, and a first-class "sea boat," and if their officers were thorough seamen, considerate and sympathetic, and sparingly using the absolute power with which they were invested to punish men who had misconducted themselves, their pride in the ship and officers would be almost boundless. With so many admirable qualities, one could not help pitying them for their profanity and recklessness, or refrain from offering many excuses for their excesses. Neglected by Christians, with bad accommodation on board, provisions often unsound, and the vegetable diet, so essential to a sailor's health, rarely enjoyed, all these combined with the tyranny which they had to endure when officers were martinets, to degrade their character.



"How gently the little thing would be handled!"

In these far-off times scarcely a day would pass without the occurrence of some amusing incident. I remember when standing at the door of an hotel, whence a coach was about to start, seeing perched on the outside a group of sailors. A gentleman came up to take a place, when he was told that the sailors had paid for the coach the whole way to London. So he shouted, "Hallo, on deck there!"—"Well, you land-lubber, what do you want?"—"A place to London; so, Jack, my dear fellow, give me a passage."—"Well, you may get into the hold if you like, but mind you don't come up here on the quarter-deck." He gladly got inside, and rode all the way to London, and had nothing to pay! I have often seen a sailor, half-tipsy, rolling along the street, and falling against a shop window, break it. Payment was of course promptly demanded. "How much, mate, for repairs?"—"Five shillings." So, taking out a half-guinea, the sailor handed it in. "There, can't wait for your beggarly change, so I will smash another. Now then, mate, we are quits."

In the Royal Navy sailors are often in the same ship for three or four or even more years. During this time the craft is their home, and they speak of it as such, and with an affection as if it were a living thing. Through the means of the ship the men may be wonderfully influenced. The late Captain Hall was in command of a remarkably fine frigate on the South American station, which he always kept in first-rate order, and of which he and his crew were justly proud. The handsome bust on her beautiful figure-head was brightly gilt, and great care was taken of it. The harmony which had generally prevailed on board was somehow disturbed. But instead of resorting to corporal punishment, he summoned the men aft, and in a simple, manly speech, pointed out the impropriety of their conduct, and concluded thus:—"So now, my lads, if this be not put an end to, and hearty goodwill restored, I'll blacken your figure-head and put the ship in mourning." Had a bombshell fallen at their feet the men could not be more astonished. To have their figure-head blackened! No; anything rather than that; and in that way order and harmony were restored.

What a contrast is now seen between the past and present condition and character of our sailors! It will therefore be interesting to glance at the origin of this change, and the instrumentality by which it has been effected.

Its author was unquestionably the Rev. G. C. Smith, more popularly known as "Boatswain Smith." When visiting Falmouth he was always the guest of my



"'Now then, mate, we are quits.'"—*p.* 594.

parents, who were exceedingly attached to him. His history was most remarkable. The ship of which he was boatswain got ashore off Ushant, and was much damaged. With great difficulty she was kept afloat and brought into Falmouth, and after temporary repairs was taken to Devonport to be docked. Here Mr. Smith was brought to a sense of his lost state as a sinner under the ministry of the Rev. Isaiah Birt.

What time elapsed, what instruction he received, and by whom given, prior to his entering the Christian ministry, I never heard. I first knew him as pastor of Jordan Chapel, Penzance, where he was exceedingly popular and eminently useful. He gathered around him a zealous band of young men as local preachers, who carried the Gospel into the surrounding villages. He also sustained a missionary in the Scilly Islands.

The condition of our soldiers and sailors very early attracted his attention, and with characteristic ardour he attempted their reformation. Assisted by some wealthy Christian friends in different parts of the kingdom, he went on a mission to the British army in Portugal. The Duke of Wellington most cordially welcomed him, placed him on the strength of a regiment, and allowed him the use of a horse. Reports of his proceedings came first to my father, and were by him forwarded to London. I remember well how deeply interested we all were in their perusal. After an absence of some months, Mr. Smith returned to Penzance, subsequently resigned his pastoral charge, and removed to London.

His first notable work was the opening of a Refuge for soldiers and seamen in Wellclose Square. Then came the opening of seamen's chapels in some of our large ports. The "Bethel Flag" was his invention. I can now recall the feeling of youthful pride with which I assisted him to run up the first "Bethel Flag," hoisted in Falmouth Harbour.

His power over the rude multitudes that thronged to hear him was perfectly wonderful. He could enter the "Long Rooms" about Wapping, when they were filled with riotous sailors, with perfect safety. Even the most abandoned were respectful to the "Sailor Parson." On one occasion when he was preaching, some drunken sailors insulted him, when a strong woman, of the worst character, knocked them down, and kept them down until he had finished.

I remember whilst he was preaching at Falmouth a sharp shower came on. Generally, a shower will scatter a crowd. But on this occasion not a foot stirred. He could talk to sailors in their own tongue, and had the happy art of adapting nautical phrases to the illustration of Scripture truths. He replied to their rough jokes with imperturbable good temper, and could move them to laughter or to tears.

He was equally at home with persons of rank and wealth. His self-possession and courtesy in their presence never failed him, while his power of persuasion was extraordinary. He invariably maintained his self-respect. He neither cringed nor presumed. Though always a sailor in manner, he was anything but noisy and boisterous in private life; while his fine rollicking humour and open-heartedness imparted singular interest and poignancy to his talk. As a fireside companion he had few equals.

But what a voice he had! The three most remarkable voices I have ever heard are those of Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. O'Connell, and Mr. Smith. The first is wonderful in its distinctness, clearness, and power, and of great range and capacity of varied expression, but somewhat deficient in pathos. Mr. O'Connell's was indeed a splendid instrument, played on with marvellous skill. Humour, wit, invective, sarcasm, persuasion, pathos, and those whispers which are perfectly audible even in large assemblies, but which make one tremble, had a perfect utterance with him. But Mr. Smith's was even finer, and its range rose from the depths of the diapason to the dulcet notes of the flute. He could speak in tones of thunder, or entreat with the gentleness of a woman. It was very striking to look on this heroic man, who had seen peril in its most appalling forms, pleading with sinners in loving tender words, his whole frame quivering with intense emotion, while urging them to be reconciled to God. No marvel that multitudes hung upon his lips!

After years of severe toil, during which he was often in want, when no longer able to work, he retired to Penzance, where he began public life, and there died in a good old age. Many have since risen and

walked in his steps, nobly carrying on the work which he began. But he has had no successor.

The first officer of distinction who seconded Mr. Smith's efforts was Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, who introduced on board his ship the use of coffee and tea instead of rum. His attempts to promote sobriety were at first stoutly opposed, and sailors ridiculed his ship, calling her the "Tea Caddy." But other officers soon perceived the benefits arising from the change, and now the use of ardent spirits is greatly reduced in H.M. Navy. Coincident with these salutary changes, and owing very much to the passionate appeals of Mr. Plimsoll, the men are accommodated in better berths, have better provisions, and are better cared for. Provision, too, is made for their mental improvement, and a godly soldier or sailor is respected by both officers and men, when formerly he would be despised and persecuted.

One turns, with devout thankfulness, to say a word about the marvellous work carried on by Miss Weston and her colleagues at Devonport, Portsmouth, and Sheerness, which began in a very humble fashion, but has now grown to vast dimensions. Here are bright, cheery rooms, where first-class refreshments can be had at moderate prices, with abundance of innocent amusements. Temperance work is zealously carried on, and thousands have taken the pledge. A teetotal ship is now no uncommon phenomenon. A monthly letter is sent to every man connected with the Institute, in whatever part of the world he may be, which is eagerly expected, and read with delight and joy. No less than five public-houses have been closed as the result of this work, and on the site of three of the worst a fine building is rising to afford more sleeping accommodation to sailors when on shore. The lads on board the training-ships, when off duty, cluster round the place like bees round their hives. Anyone who is disposed can pass into the hall where religious services are held, and Bible-classes meet. The two departments are wisely kept separate, and religion is in no unwise way intruded on the men. All these institutes are self-supporting, and are managed by Miss Weston and her colleagues gratuitously.

At the earnest persuasion of sailors who did not know how to dispose of their wages, she became their banker, and has had in her hands as much as sixty thousand pounds at a time. By her repeated and earnest importunity the Admiralty have established a Naval Savings Bank, which has proved a vast benefit to our sailors. Some idea of the greatness of the benefit may be gathered from this fact. Recently H.M.S. *Audacious* returned from a prolonged absence in Oriental seas. Her crew, when paid off, received over twelve thousand pounds. The men quietly left by train for the homes of their friends and families. On the morrow not one was brought before the magistrates for riotous or disorderly conduct! Forty years ago, or in even a less time, the whole of this large sum would have been squandered in dissipation and vice.

Though I have not moved so freely among soldiers as among sailors, yet one cannot but rejoice in the noble work done by the late Mrs. Daniel, and now carried on by her daughter at Aldershot, as well as that maintained by Miss Robinson at Portsmouth, which is similar to Miss Weston's in extent and usefulness. But while thanking God for raising up instruments for carrying on this great work, and rejoicing in the rich and effectual blessing which He has bestowed on it, the name and the labours of the great originator of this vast reformation ought not to be forgotten or let die.

"UNTO ME:" A DREAM-STORY.

POSSIBLY Miss Heatherley would not have admitted that she was wealthy, but certainly she would not have denied that she was "very comfortably off." She had a pretty double-fronted house, enclosed in a garden where flowers and fruit alike flourished, in the airiest suburb of the manufacturing town of Riston. If she wished to go into the town, there were her victoria and pair of sturdy ponies, with a smart groom awaiting her commands. If she wished to remain in the garden, there were her crimson-and-white striped tent and luxurious American chair, amongst the rose-beds near the miniature fountain on the lawn. If she wished for society, she had but to ask and have, for she well understood the art of entertaining, sparing no expense to please her guests. Indoors, money and cultivated taste had made the *bijou* house almost perfection. Comfort and ornament were artistically combined; sunshine and fresh air were freely admitted. The odour of freshly gathered flowers was everywhere.

In Miss Heatherley's drawing-room one might be sure of finding the newest magazine, the most popular book. One might have good music too, for the lady was no mean performer on the superb grand that occupied a conspicuous place in the apartment. There were cushioned settees fixed into cosy corners, where delightful *tête-à-têtes* might be enjoyed, and lounging-chairs seemingly made on purpose for a land where it it is "always afternoon"—so tempting to drowsy indolence were they.

Yes, certainly Miss Lucy Heatherley was "very comfortably off."

Nor was she forgetful of the claims of those who were very *un*comfortably off.

The vicar of the church she attended found her ear and her purse equally open to his appeals. Her name could be seen in the subscription-lists of almost every charity. Neither was this all, for Miss Heatherley

really loved her Lord, and really desired to obey His precepts. Therefore she was mindful of the injunction to *visit* the fatherless and widows in their affliction. At many a wretched door in the lanes and alleys of Riston her victoria—well filled with various brown-paper parcels—drew up, while her portly figure, in its silks and laces or furs and velvets, entered to dazzle the eyes of the poor inhabitants.

She was wont to declare to the humble admirers who gathered at her charitable sewing-parties that "her life was not all play, by any means!"—whether it contained any real sacrifice of self, any positive self-denial for the Master she served, she never paused to inquire.

She was considered a model of charity—one of those whose religion is "pure and undefiled." In the depths of her heart she thought so too. She had known sorrow, and borne it well. She was sometimes lonely, yet never complained. She was invariably kind both to friends and dependents. The spiritual welfare of her servants was never neglected by her. Her public religious duties were faithfully fulfilled.

If her Lord ever said to her, "One thing thou lackest," her heart was never moved to distrust of itself. Perhaps amid the noise of many voices praising her, the still small accents were not heard; or it may be that it had never occurred to her to ask—"What lack I yet?" in the certainty that she was doing what she could, and from the sincerest motives.

One bitterly cold November night, Miss Heatherley sat by her bedroom fire reading her Bible before retiring to rest.

Through the closely drawn curtains the roar of the pelting sleet—the tempestuous wind—came with a softened sound that increased the warm comfort within. The shaded lamp-light, the glowing fire-light, touched with deeper hues pale rose-coloured draperies;



"Miss Heatherley made as pretty a picture in one way as her room did in another."

sparkled here on the dead gold of a picture-frame, there on the gleam of glass or porcelain, and were fain to die in the depths of the soft rich carpet. Clearly they showed the owner of the luxurious room seated in her large arm-chair, padded with eider-down—the Bible in her hand. Miss Heatherley had discarded the handsome plush tea-gown she had been wearing for a dressing-gown equally handsome. Its silken folds disclosed the daintiest pair of fur-lined slippers; its delicate laces fell away from her shapely white hands, where the diamond rings—that were the envy of some of her friends—outshone the fire-light that touched them. With her still fair face, her eyes bright for all the fifty years they had seen, and her snow-white hair, Miss Heatherley made as pretty a picture in one way as her room did in another.

She had been reading the last part of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, with a pleasant remembrance of the gifts of food and clothing she had that morning been distributing. Her heart thrilled with the sweetness of the thought that one day she should hear those blessed words addressed to herself—"*Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, thou hast done it unto Me.*"

She looked round her room with a glow of satisfaction, appreciating her pretty things all the more because of the poverty and misery she had so lately witnessed.

"God has given me many good gifts," she said to herself, as she closed her Bible and rang for her maid; "but they've not made me forgetful of Him. I do what I can for those who are less favoured. The poor do not lie unhelped at *my* gate, whatever may be said of others. Thank God, I am not a Dives!"

* * * * * *

Perhaps Miss Heatherley had slept for two hours, when she awoke with a start, for it seemed to her that somebody called her by name. She sat up in bed, surprised to see the room full of soft light like moonlight, and, to her wonder and awe, a Figure, clothed in white robes and crowned with thorns, standing in the midst—a Figure so familiar to her thoughts, beautiful, majestic, and serene—the Lord she loved, the Lord who died for her.

Miss Heatherley had often pictured to herself the first meeting with her Saviour. She had imagined that she would fall at His feet, and kiss them in a transport of joy and rapture. She had imagined that He would smile approvingly on her, that He would raise her from the ground, and place her—who had given Him so much, and served Him so faithfully—close by His side in some position of honour. But now an overwhelming sense of sin and shortcoming made her cover her face with her hands when she met His grave, loving regard, while the self-abhorring cry of St. Peter rose involuntarily to her lips—"Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful creature!"

As if in answer to that cry, He spoke—

"Arise! Follow Me!"

The words were gently, yet authoritatively spoken, and the trembling woman did not dream of disobeying, or even questioning them. She rose from her bed, followed the luminous Figure down the wide velvet-carpeted stairs, into the cold and empty street.

In a few moments, as it seemed, they had left behind the wealthy suburb, and were in the centre of the poorest quarter of the town. Miss Heatherley's Guide stopped at the door of a wretched tumble-down house in a narrow alley. In spite of the fear and awe that possessed her, she noticed a drunken man, who, with many uncouth sounds and gestures, was barring the entrance against fancied intruders. As the two approached, he shrank back, cowering against the wall, covering his face with his hands—very much as Miss Heatherley had done

The alley and the house were alike familiar to the lady, so was the low, ruinous-looking attic wherein she presently stood with her dread Companion. She had been there that very morning to take a blanket for the poor rheumatic old man who rented the miserable place. A sense of satisfaction stole into her mind as she remembered that gift, and the grateful pleasure of the recipient.

Why had she been afraid? Surely the Lord was about to commend her for her charity! The attic was very dark, but the radiance emanating from the figure of the Saviour fell full upon the pallet where the old man lay. It was bitterly cold. The broken window was stuffed with rags, but the wind and sleet, which had seemed to Miss Heatherley to cease when she was in the street, found only too free an entrance. The grate was empty, so was the cupboard. Cold and hungry, the man had gone to bed, and, in spite of the blanket, he was evidently cold still. Obeying a motion of her Guide, Miss Heatherley approached the pallet. It consisted of a very old torn straw mattress, with the occupant's coat for pillow.

"Oh, my old bones! my poor old aching bones!" he muttered, shivering audibly; "'tis a bonnie bit o' blanket, and a rare kind thing of a lady like that to bring it to the likes o' me! But I thought as how blankets was warmer, surelie I did. Why, three on 'em would hardly keep my old bones warm. Eh, good Lord, if I could get a bit o' warmth into me, I'd not feel the hunger so much, maybe!"

Before Miss Heatherley's eyes came a swift vision of her own luxurious room and bed. She felt the thick soft warmth of the blankets—three of them, and the best that money could buy—the silken coverlet, the cosy eider-down quilt. Then she saw again the poor pallet, covered with only the one thin cheap blanket her charity had given to her brother's bitter need—saw and trembled. "*Thou hast done it unto Me!*" her Guide said, not reproachfully, only sadly.

Then He laid His hand on the old man's head, and his restless mutterings ceased; he had fallen asleep, and in his sleep he smiled.

Out into the street Miss Heatherley, deeply humbled and ashamed, followed her holy Guide again. Again the storm was hushed until they entered a small, close room in a house built on part of a disused graveyard, and round this the tempest raged until the damp walls rocked. A very small room it was, and almost bare of furniture. But it was clean, and a few red ashes glimmered on the broken hearth. A candle burned feebly by the bed, wherein a sick woman lay propped up by pillows. An anxious-looking, half-starved girl sat by her side, vainly beseeching her to "try and eat."

"Try a bite o' this cake, mother, do! you 'at was allers so fond o' cake, and the lady a-bringing it, and all! She'll look for you to have eaten it, and me a telling of her how 'ungered you was, and as 'ow I couldn't 'ford to buy you what you'd ought to have! See, mother, it's real cake! There's currans in it, and—and, yes! a bit o' candy peel! Oh you'll eat that!"

"I'll have a drink o' tea, Meg; I'm sore set on tea, I am; and then mebbe I'll try and eat a bite o' cake. Aye, t'was good on her, a real, grand lady, with her

carridge and all, to bring it to me hersen; but it do somehows stick in my throat. If she'd a-thought on a hegg—but there, I daresay I couldn't eat a hegg now, though I'm terrible set on 'em. Don't you fret, Meg! I'm ower grand for cake, or aught but tea, just like quality is!" And the sick woman attempted a facetious laugh that broke down in a hard racking cough. Against her will, but compelled to it by the silent monition of her Guide, Miss Heatherley drew nearer the bed, and once more there passed before her mental gaze a vision of her own home.

She saw her perfectly appointed drawing-room as she had seen it that afternoon, with its rose-shaded lamps, its masses of flowers, its heaped-up glowing hearth. She saw herself in her rich plush gown and shining jewels, dispensing fragrant tea—on whose delicate flavour she was complimented by a *connoisseur*—into frail cups of priceless china, for the fashionable ladies and gentlemen who made a brilliant group round their hostess. She saw the dainty cakes, the tempting biscuits, that were the commonplace of every day to her friends and herself. Then she looked down at the cup of cheap flavourless tea, destitute of cream and sugar, which the sick woman was drinking. With deepest shame she recognised the cheap cake that 'somehow stuck" in the invalid's throat.

And once more, and yet more sadly, sounded the words—

"*Thou hast done it unto Me.*"

Then He bent over the dying woman, and smiled on her. Oh, what would not Miss Heatherley have given to have won such a smile! The reflection of it was on the woman's face as she returned the empty cup to her daughter.

"Bless the Lord!" she said fervently; "that have done me good, that have! I'm a deal better, honey, and may the dear Lord bless madam as thought on a poor widdy!"

It was dawn when the two unseen visitors re-issued into the street: cold, dark, winter dawn. The sleet had frozen on the pavement, the falling snow was blown into drifts by the piercing wind. This time Miss Heatherley was conscious of the cold—it went through and through her; never had she experienced such a sensation before in all her warm, guarded life. She would fain have crept closer to her Guide, whose viewless presence brightened many a worn, sad face as He passed by, but she dared not. Her heart was breaking with a passion of love, longing, and remorse. How little, she thought, had she loved Him before! How faithlessly she had served Him! The praises of her bounty that she had heard, together with many others she had been wont to receive with outward deprecation and inward pride, were as so many wounds to her spirit. She to be praised for her charity? *She!*

She dashed the hot tears from her eyes as her Conductor paused before a doorstep, where sat a small puny child, holding a yet smaller puner child in her arms.

"I'm cold, Janie! I'm so cold!" wailed the latter over and over again in a kind of monotonous chant. "I'm so cold!"

"Oh, not cold, Bessie dear; not *cold* in them nice new clothes wot the lady give yer! Why, yer'd only rags afore!"

"I am cold, I am!" insisted Bessie, "and you're cold too, 'cause I feel yer a-shivering."

"Shivering? not me! Why, I've a shawl on," trying ineffectually to draw the small knitted square that covered her shoulders further on to her blue arms. "I'm a bit tired, mebbe, 'cause yer 'eavy, Bess, but we ain't cold, you and me!

"Oh, I am! I am! and so are you, Janie: you're a-shivering wuss and wuss; the rags was warmer than these 'ere frocks!"

"Nay now, Bess," said brave Janie, rising and preparing to carry her big baby again; "to talk o' rags, and you and me dressed like ladies! Oh, for shame on yer!"

"Ladies! Miss 'Ealtherley ain't dressed like this!" quoth Bessie, with contempt. "*She's* warm anuff covered with fur like a pussy-cat, and a big muff and a welwet gownd——"

"I'll tell yer what, Bess! Let's *play* at being grand ladies, and let's pretend we're very warm, and not a bit 'ungry; that'll be a jolly game. Then we'll go back 'ome, and mebbe father'll have got in by then, and 'll be asleep, and mother 'll find us a bit o' bread."

Fain, fain would the conscience-stricken listener have shut out the sight that—as the child ceased speaking—rose before her. There were her ample wardrobes, her closets, and some yet unpacked boxes, full of the costliest mantles and dresses. Silks, satins, velvets, laces, and furs: all were there. In themselves they represented a small fortune!

For the first time in her life the wearer sickened of them, turning away in almost despair to the spectacle of the two children whom her charity had clothed. How thin, how poor, how ugly, were the garments she had bestowed upon them! Well might their little limbs be cold! Well might Bessie disdain the notion of their being "dressed like ladies!"

And again, with solemn emphasis, the Lord spoke—

"*Thou hast done it unto Me.*"

Then He laid His pierced hand on the childish heads, and blessed them. As He did so, a city missionary came up to the two, who had begun to laugh and play merrily, and took them off with him to "give them some breakfast"—half wondering at the sudden glow of pleasure that filled his own heart. It was no rare thing for him to give away half his breakfast, or the whole of it, indeed, to some starving fellow-creature.

Quick as thought the scene changed, and Miss Heatherley found herself in her own house. Her Guide was still with her. From room to room she followed Him, compelled to note every useless or costly article that luxury loves, with eyes that seemed at the same time to see a dark background of rainy streets, of fireless attics, of bare rooms and wretched cellars, wherein the Lord Himself wandered homeless, lay in sickness, suffered hunger; calling for help—in vain. It was like a sword in her heart when that accusing voice spoke for the last time—

"I gave thee all, and what hast thou given Me in return? Thou hast spread a rich feast for thyself,

and given Me the cold remnants. Thou hast glorified self, and not thy Saviour. Lookest thou for reward? Yea; thou shalt have it. A day is coming when thou shalt indeed hear the longed-for words which thou never thoughtest might condemn—*Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, thou hast done it unto Me.*"

With an exceeding bitter cry the remorseful woman fell upon her knees—catching wildly at the Lord's white robes as He was about to turn away.

"Oh, don't go! Oh, don't leave me in displeasure! Give me one more chance!" she cried, her tears bathing His feet. "Oh, Lord, I have lived for self; I see it, I feel it now! But Thou knowest all things: Thou *knowest* that I love Thee!"

Her voice broke in a choking sob, but still she gazed up in an agony of entreaty at the Divine Face, which, as she gazed, softened into a smile of such sweet forgiveness, such tender love, that it flooded her inmost soul with the very light of heaven. No words were needed: Lucy Heatherley knew herself forgiven—as only the crucified Jesus forgives—"*all* that debt!"

Then clasping her hands while still kneeling at His feet, she mutely offered to Him her wealth, her time, her life, her all—without one reserve—and besought Him of His mercy to accept the gift. Once more He smiled, and in the glory of that ineffable sunshine Miss Heatherley—awoke.

Behold, it was a dream! S. W.

IN GOD'S GOOD TIME.

IN God's good time His chosen ones He calleth,
Seems this thing hard? Hast never learned to know,
'Mid forest clearing, every tree that falleth
For some wise end the woodman layeth low?

The tall straight sapling, its young crest uprearing,
The lightning-shattered trunk, with years grown grey,
The mighty tree in perfect strength appearing,
Each for the best is hewn and borne away.

E'en so with us, His children, is the dealing
Of the great Woodman, Father of us all!
We may rebel with dark distrustful feeling,
Yet ever for the best His axe doth fall.

The toddling child just ent'ring on Life's story,
The aged patriarch tottering down the years,
The man rejoicing in his manhood's glory,
Each one for good the ringing axe-notes hears.

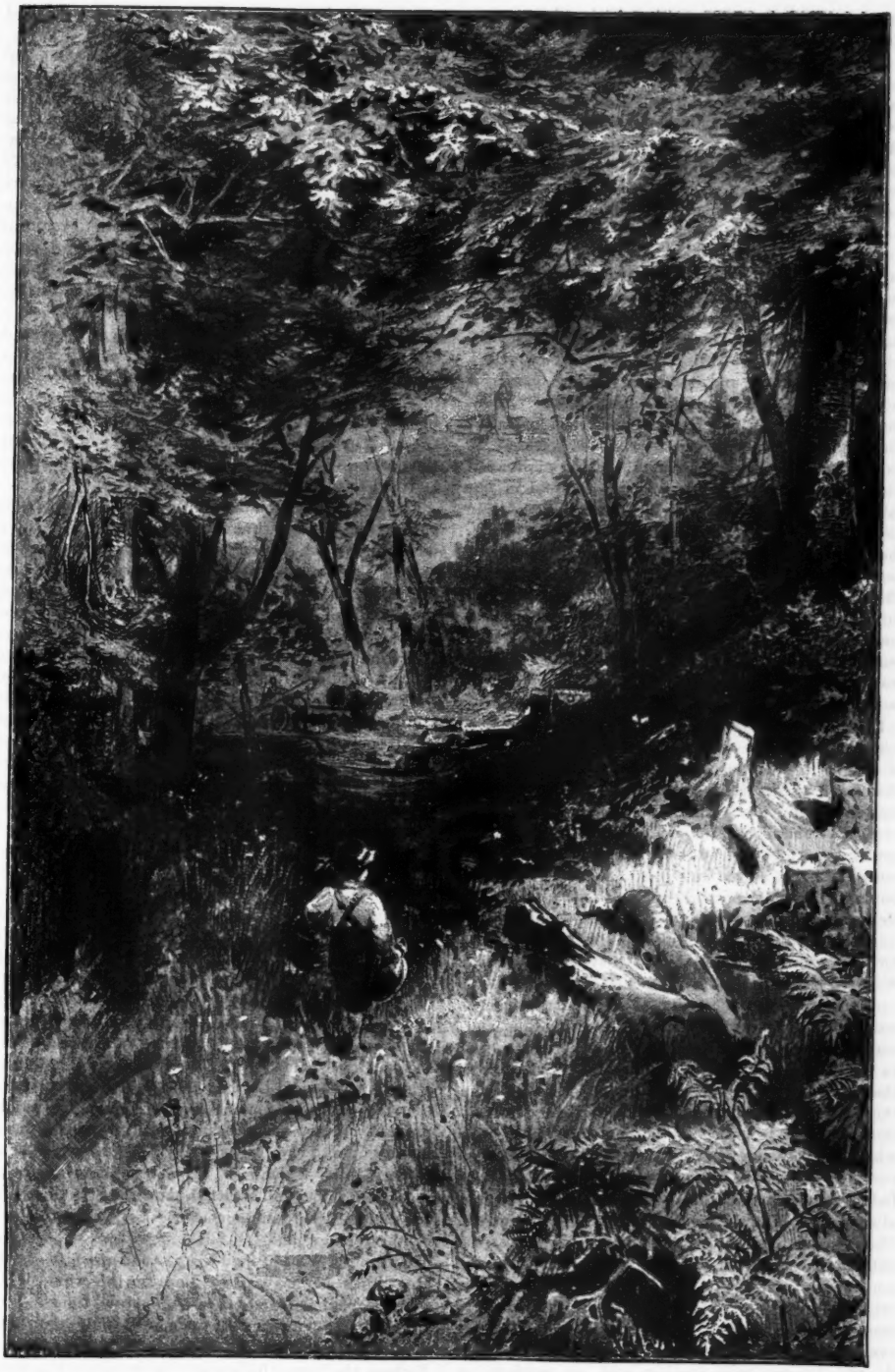
And we, who see them fall, with bitter weeping,
Oh, that we all in perfect trust might rest,
Knowing our loved ones are in God's good keeping,
And whatsoe'er He doth *must* be best.

G. W.

RELIGIOUS MOODS AND SEASONS.

BY THE REV. HARRY JONES, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

A SUCCESSION of seasons and moods is common, or I suppose inevitable, in nations, churches, and men. Otherwise, indeed, life would be monotonously intolerable. There is a time for everything, says the Preacher: a time to laugh and a time to weep. When one aspect of a matter has been offered to us, another is sure to present itself. The wheel turns round. From the first, the morning and the evening must needs be used to make the day, and sleep has ever been the necessary foil to wakefulness. The moods of nature (which is God's) are endless. He does not always give us light and warmth, but alternates them with darkness and cold. The earth has its belt of tropical fire and also poles of ice. In one sense the very weather (of which Jesus sometimes spoke) must reflect or indicate a Divine economy in the conduct of mankind. We have not only many men of many minds, but many moods of the same mind. And these are not to be blamed. A man need not tax himself with faulty changeableness when he is only subject to a dispensation which is natural. The really unnatural attitude is to affect a sublime monotonous immovability. Throughout the Kingdom of God, whether it be called spiritual or material, we have seasons of change. There are changes in matter and in mind. We see them in the Son of man Himself. Not only did He become weary with His journey, and so sit by the well-side or fall asleep in the Galilean ferry-boat, but we read how at one time He rejoiced in spirit, and at another said that His soul was exceeding sorrowful. There were also other mysterious moments in His life, when He suffered,



"IN GOD'S GOOD TIME."

(See p. 600.)

being tempted, though perhaps a little while before He had amazed the people by His wonderful works.

And so, in a measure, is it with us. We may have felt our hearts quickened with spiritual joy, and have seen difficulties recede. All has been bright. Then clouds have gathered, and the light has gone out of our faith. A distasteful contrast has come, or possibly (which, indeed, is worse) something not distasteful. We may enter a mood which does not distress us, but in which purer thoughts fade, and the voice of conscience becomes agreeably compliant. There are, no doubt, periods of glad conviction and enjoyment in doing right, but also, to the best of us, may arrive bad quarters of an hour when temptation has come either suddenly, or risen with the slow strength of a tide. *Now* the wind of the Spirit, which bloweth where it listeth, has moved us with a sense of gladness and strength. *Then* comes a mood of wearisome vacuity, when the Divine air has passed, and the sails of the soul hang flat and still. These changes come at no determined times, at no fixed hours. We cannot (as with day and night) tell when they will arrive. They are not foretold in our calendar, and move in no calculated orbit: at least, in none that we can measure and tabulate now. What, then, can be said about the matter? Shall we doggedly take them as they come, without any special effort to understand and use what they bring? I think not. There must be Christian ways of meeting and employing these moods and seasons. They may sometimes be shortened or prolonged; their influence may be encouraged or subdued; their very uncertainty may teach us much.

First, remember that they are natural. This is so, whether they seem to concern form or spirit, matter or mind. There is nothing necessarily "wrong" in change. A passing failure of interest in even religious matters, an access or period of indifference to worship, need not unduly alarm or distress us. Spiritual appetite is symbolised by that of the body. It is not continuous. It comes and goes. As when we are in fair health we are not, and do not want to be, always feeling hungry, so we must not think that we are spiritually disordered if sometimes we feel no taste for prayer, nor tendency towards devout meditation. We may be as truly filled with the life of the Lord, "nourished with all goodness," between devotional meals as when we are partaking of them. The husbandman is near God while he is honestly reaping the corn in the field as well as when he joins in a harvest thanksgiving within the walls of the church. Again, these attitudes of attention may come at comparatively short distances from one another, and last but a little while, or they may arrive at separated and lengthened periods of life. We must not wonder if an interest fades, nor think that the heart is colder if it is not always warmed in the same way or to the same degree. The calm of maturity is just as divine or right as the enthusiasm of youth. It is not, moreover, in the amount of interest we feel in a thing, but in our original estimate of the thing itself, that changes come. As bodily tastes differ, so do religious. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, but do not let me call another cold, or careless, or extravagant because he does not care for what I value.

There is probably as great a variety in God's spiritual as in His natural kingdom. The earth gives food and fruit of many flavours, the wind blows from each quarter of the compass in turn, and in the same twenty-four hours we have light and darkness, heat and cold. So in the mental condition of men. We must not think that we are to be blamed when we experience varied religious moods. These considerations may help us to apprehend that God is ever near us. So the Psalmist felt when he said, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me; Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising: Thou understandest my thoughts long before. . . . There is not a word in my tongue but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. . . . Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I go then from Thy presence? . . . If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also . . . Thy right hand shall hold me; . . . yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee. The darkness and light to Thee are both alike."

God is always at hand. But our perception of this varies from time to time; and there is a right and a wrong use of these moods. They may lead to good or harm. They must not be left to the working of what we call "chance." Think then, first, of what we should do, of what is best, when trouble or doubt comes. Never say that the true Christian is always free from doubts which chill his inmost soul. Are we to learn nothing from the cry of Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Be sure there is a large meaning in the saying that "He was tempted in all points like as we are." Look at moods of unbelief. A breath of cynical scepticism, unlike honest inquiry, is passing over society, and it distresses many a soul which not merely sees, but is touched by it. What shall he do? It may be that when a man feels the cold air of incredulity he can do nothing, except remember that it is not always so. We do not give up our belief in the summer because we are sometimes congested by a north-east wind. The faculty of faith may be numbed for a while, and we can no more feel with our hearts than we can with our fingers. Then, maybe, we can only wait. Some have not force enough left to pray. But many who have only "waited" have found the power of trust come back. We must not be wholly dismayed at the access of spiritual inability. An Apostle once, in telling others what he and his friends had survived, admitted that they had been "cast down." The sun rises at last upon the infant "crying in the night, and with no language but a cry." There may be, moreover, seasons of incredulity which arise from sheer inexperience or ignorance. The uninstructed man who sees the ocean for the first time fancies that the rise of the tide is a coming deluge, and its fall a departure of the sea. The young Christian shudders at a faith-rending book. He thinks he has met a lion in the way. Well, some people have been killed by lions and tigers. But, in fact, men mostly kill them. They do not have dominion over the earth. Man is master, and supreme. Perhaps the beast which scares the neophyte is a mean

one, after all: some wretched old heresy or 'ism at which the older Christian does not care to shoot; or, perhaps, like some books which have disturbed nervous souls, it is only stuffed—beautifully, scientifically stuffed—and is no living beast at all, but an interesting result of skill in literary fiction. The moods of disbelief, in some, arise from inexperience, or ignorance of the fact that myriads have survived them, or learnt that they are merely fictitious, or only temporary and partially recurrent. I admit that there appear to be persons who have an almost congenital inability to believe. They grow up into ripe and finished unbelievers. As some are colour-blind, and others cannot discern the difference between bitter and sweet, and may yet be as strong as athletes and enjoy perfect health, so there may be intellectual giants to whom whole phases of perception are denied. The Christian need not be staggered at these spectacles. He must not be hopeless because neither he, nor perhaps his friend, is always able to dispose of their ingenious demands and neutralise their influence satisfactorily. The riddle is not unanswerable, though we may not readily perceive its solution. Nor must he be cast down at his own moods of irresolution. Wait a while. The cloud will pass from over his sun. It is not extinguished because he cannot see it shine.

In saying a word about our carriage in bad moods: the most pressing, perhaps, are those in which our faith is not confused, but we are tempted to do what we know to be wrong. Who has been freed from this? Then, indeed, it may not be best to wait; we must indeed "pray." There need even be no words. But we must strengthen our knowledge of the evil; we appeal to the power in using which we have been kept from falling into it before, by raising our thoughts in prayer. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." It puts us afresh into union with the Almighty. It tightens our hold on the hand of God. In hours of conscious temptation, pray; and then bravely face and do the act which has to be done.

A few words now about the "right" use of good moods. There is a time for everything. And many right courses or results are missed because men do not use, or are not prepared to use, the propitious moment when it comes. Of course it is not always easy to do this. We cannot always make the cutting of the hay in the field coincide with the shining of the sun in the sky; or we do not see the opening which presents itself. We often think of the right word or reply when the opportunity for saying or making it has passed. But favourable seasons are sometimes lost for want of sheer common observation, or by reason of inexcusable indolence. And this comes to pass even in the case of those who pride themselves on their activity or intelligence. Men sometimes put themselves to needless trouble by bestirring themselves too soon or too late. One will carry his boat to the water when it would be lifted in an hour by the tide. Another will (as we say) flog a dead horse, or strain his religious energies to reproduce some form of devotion or ecclesiastical discipline which has had its day—its useful day. He will vex himself over its interesting relics, which are no more to be quickened than a strong and beautiful shell which the living animal has left, and into which it is impossible to entice another. Thus time and strength are often thrown away in both the natural and spiritual world of action. Without admitting that God ever deserts His children, we miss those opportunities hinted at by the prophet who cries, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near." We have accesses of influence and perception which we should be ready to use. We cannot force these moods, and yet it is worse than foolish to discard or neglect them.

The question, of course, comes—how shall we save the hay that is made in periods of Divine sunshine? How shall we store the fruit gathered in a warm propitious hour? How make the best of a healthy and gladsome mood? First, thus: If a satisfactory conviction arrives; if a promising resolve presents itself vividly to the mind, remember the old saying that "habit is the act of yesterday," and that "it is the first step which costs." Fix the new-born desire by translating it into immediate deed. Strike while the spiritual iron is hot; while the consciousness of a true reply to some difficulty is warm within. "Thou hast answered right," said Christ. "This do, and thou shalt live."

It is surprising how soon a new action may be set up in a man's life. People do not believe enough in the powers which God has given them. There is no more radically untrue mood than that which leads a man to say of such and such a proposal: "It is very true, fine, and beautiful, but it is no use trying." Why limit the power of trial? You never know till you try. A custom in which we may fancy that we have become confirmed, and from which we think it is hopeless to effect a departure, may be given up with surprising success if we have faith really to make the attempt. A large proportion of difficulties and some impossibilities are imaginary.

Take a commonplace example. Even that irritating fly in the perfume of culture seen in bad handwriting could be removed with a little carefulness in handling the pen. A few weeks of steady pains to the writer would bring lifelong relief to his or her friends. It is so with most vexatious commonplace habits. And it is true with those of a far more serious kind, even such as are not merely tiresome, but deadly. Moreover, with both, times arrive when they can be most, or more easily, shed off. If, therefore, a good mood comes, don't stop to enjoy it, but put it into form. Give it action. Recollect that it is sent by God to be used.

Much more, on the lines which I have followed, may be said about the alternation of moods, and the way in which they can be corrected and used. I will, however, add only a few words about what we understand by those called "good" and "bad." By a good mood I do not mean a dispersive generous humour, but an undefined sense of gladness and resource which makes the world look bright or tolerable: a mood in which work feels easier than it did, and our future is more promising than it was. No doubt the commonest cause of this, at some times of life, comes from good health, and we may be tempted, perhaps, to discount the value

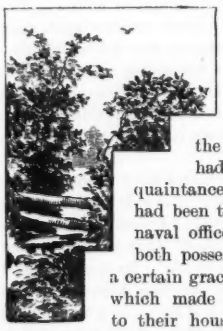
of a light heart in the healthy by saying that it is a matter of mere physical temperament and bodily sensation, and hardly to be reckoned among sacred enjoyments. But surely good health is a Divine gift, well called a blessing. Those who have it might see in its possession a sign of our Father's life; and the feeling of strength and cheerfulness which it brings may be called "good" in the best sense, inasmuch as it comes from God. But when we talk of using good moods, think how grievously this Divine gift of health may be spoiled and squandered by material indulgence. Think how the soul may be wounded through the body. The spirit ever suffers from the flesh. A sense of self-rebuke adds heavily to material distress. There was a profound diagnosis in Christ's treatment of that sick man to whom He said: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Let those in health accept some moods which it brings as divinely good, and remember that it can be sorely injured by a disregard of conscience, as well as by what men call a neglect of sanitary precautions.

Take another good mood, apart from the sense of physical health. A man is pleased at having done well. Some sourly pious critics might deprecate this, saying, "You have not yourself to thank. It is God who enables you to do right." Yes, indeed; and herein is the best cause for exultation. "O be joyful" (says the Psalm so often sung), "be joyful in the Lord. . . . It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." There is no greater source of joy than the sense of having done right. It is most gladsome to feel that the great Doer of righteousness has been with us, making a mood which is truly good. Another comes when we receive a kindness which does not humiliate by its ostentatious patronage, nor shame by its transparent flattery. Especially does a kind appreciative word from someone whom we trust bring on a gladsome mood. It is an echo or foretaste of that Divine love which is felt by an honest conscience. All these good moods, from sweet health, from the sense of being right, from just and kindly commendation, are valuable, not merely in themselves, but because they are assurances of the life and love which remain and work in the world. They are also foretastes of fuller union with the Lord. They are holes in the curtain of the world through which we get glimpses of a brighter light beyond; and though they may pass, their memory is invaluable. We may move on into a dull humour, like a ship which, after sailing on a sun-bright sea, enters a bank of fog; still we are cheered by the recollection that all life is not clouded. Sometimes, indeed, the fog is very thick. I have already spoken about the pressure of temptation to evil, when our strength lies in prayer. Nevertheless, there are bad, heavy moods, when we are not urged to do wrong, but when the sense of uneasiness seems to be unaccountably accumulated, or sorrows are so plainly burdensome and sore, that a man thinks he sees no way of escape nor prospect of recovery. And they surely are echoes of that Divine dismay when Christ Himself cried aloud that He was forsaken. This communion in suffering might help us. If we ever have moods of profound distress, we may not at the time be able to think of our Lord's compassion. But now let us remember that He presently could, and did, commit His Spirit into His Father's hands, and that our life is hid with Him in God.

IN THE SECOND PLACE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I," "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," "ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER V.



THE Greys were the rich people of Downton; they belonged to the county, and only a few of the humble inhabitants who lived in the straggling little village had the honour of their acquaintance. Mrs. Karron, however, had been the wife of a distinguished naval officer, and Jocelyn and Hope both possessed a certain air, and had a certain gracious prettiness about them, which made people like to ask them to their houses. Not only were they intimate with the doctor's wife and the lawyer's daughters, but they also knew the Greys and the Percivals, and even the Mainwarings, who lived ten miles away. Cecil Grey had been in and out of the house since he was quite a lad, and the girls were in the habit of regarding him as a convenient something between a cousin and a brother. They laughed at him a good deal; they chaffed him unmercifully; but they were fond of him, and undoubtedly they made considerable use of him. There never was a more affectionate, obliging, good-tempered fellow; and even Mrs. Karron sometimes expostulated with Jocelyn and Hope for the amount of messages they gave him to do for them. His visits to town were often solely taken to match Jocelyn's silks and wools, or to get a very particular flower on which she had set her dainty mind, to accompany a certain costume to be worn at an evening festivity.

Girls of nineteen brought up like Jocelyn and Hope are very often thoughtless, and it never occurred to them to spare their obliging cavalier.

Cecil was one of the frankest, after a certain sense the most innocent, of mortals, and although he did feel a glow round his heart when he walked with Jocelyn, or looked at her, or listened to her words, and although even the delight of sport could not



"'Mother, you understand, don't you?'"—*p.* 606.

exceed in interest the absorption with which he obeyed her smallest behests, his eyes had never been opened to the true state of his own feelings until the evening of Mrs. Karron's sudden illness. When Hope flew up-stairs that evening, and Dr. Marvel, with what tact he could compass, broke the news to Jocelyn, she gave one full, frightened, piteous look straight up into Cecil's eyes, put out her hands and let him clasp them; and with that look, and that hand-pressure, the young man knew his own secret.

He went home, feeling torn, aroused, pained, and yet full of ecstasy. Life was quite golden. Oh yes, even though there was gloom and misery at Oakdene; for he loved, and his love should be his.

On the day of the funeral, Sir Jasper Grey, Cecil's father, came suddenly into his wife's boudoir.

"My dear," he said, not noticing Cecil, who was lounging by the window, "I have just heard of such a catastrophe; it is in connection with those poor Karrons. Marvel told me—he said it is the talk of the village, and no secret from anyone—the girls are left absolutely penniless, my dear; and their mother—one does not care to blame her, as she is dead, poor soul!—but she was little short of a spendthrift. She speculated, and lived on her capital—fact, I assure you."

"And with two girls to provide for!" exclaimed Lady Grey. "I blame her, even though she is in her grave. Poor girls—nice-looking, both of them; particularly Jocelyn. But there is nothing before them now but governess-ships, or secretaryships, unless indeed, they would take lessons in cookery, and then teach what they know to inexperienced domestic servants."

"Not a bad idea at all, my dear," said Sir Jasper, who adored his wife. "This remark of yours seems to open up a new career for young women of the upper classes. But it is early days to speak of these things. The girls are terribly to be pitied; and the doctor tells me that their poor father left them fairly well off—that is, he left sufficient capital to secure to them a modest income."

"That wretched woman! I wonder she can rest in her grave," said Lady Grey.

"Well, my dear, she has gone to a higher tribunal to answer for her shortcomings. The girls are the people to think of now. I hear, poor Jocelyn is very ill; she is confined to her bed with a sort of feverish attack."

"Jocelyn?" said Cecil.

He had been standing perfectly motionless, drinking in his father's news. Now he came forward out of the gloom, and stood in the bright ring of light caused by the fire.

"I forgot you were there, Cecil," half yawned his mother. "You might ring for Hawkins, my dear. A cup of tea would be refreshing."

"In a minute," said Cecil.

He clenched his hands hard, and stood facing the fire; his boyish face was red all over. "You were talking about the Karrons—you have brought bad news of them, father; at least, at least, bad news for poor Hope—it doesn't matter so much about Jocelyn."

Cecil was delivering his sentences in so jerky a manner that Sir Jasper interrupted him with a laugh.

"Your mother and I are particularly struck with the clearness of your speech," he said. "Your remarks are most lucid. Is Jocelyn so ethereal that she can do without the necessities of life?—My dear, if Cecil won't ring the bell, I will. His ideas are so obscure just now as to be scarcely interesting."

"Hold, father.—Mother, you understand, don't you? Jocelyn will come here—she will be my wife—that is, I mean to ask her."

As Cecil spoke he dropped on one knee beside his mother, and taking one of her slender hands half crushed it between his own.

"You'll welcome Jocelyn as my wife, won't you, mother?"

"Very heroic," said Sir Jasper. "Really, quite a slice out of the old romances—the penniless damsel rescued by the young knight. Look here, Cecil; your mother and I are not going to listen to any such folly—you were only of age last summer—time enough if you bring us a wife in five years from now. The sooner you go back to Oxford the better, and put such folly out of your head."

Sir Jasper did not speak angrily. He regarded the whole matter as a huge jest. Cecil was nothing but a boy in his eyes; it was Quixotic of the lad to stand up for a pretty, penniless girl—and—that was all.

"You'll go back to Oxford in a week, my boy, and there'll be an end of this folly," he said, patting the young man good-humouredly on the shoulder.

Cecil sprang to his feet as if he were stung. His mother had not articulated a word; not by the faintest movement did she return his hand-pressure, not once had her eyes met his. His mother's conduct hurt Cecil more than his father's. He went out of the room, feeling miserable enough to satisfy the most exacting lover. He had appealed to his parents, asking them for bread, when the hardest stone of satire and indifference had been vouchsafed to him.

"He's nothing but a boy," said Sir Jasper to his wife, when he could find words to speak after Cecil had gone away. "We'll take no notice of him, my dear; and the silly affair will die of itself."

"She's a dangerous girl," said Lady Grey, "and the sooner she leaves the place the better. After all, we may perhaps regard it as a providence that she and her sister can no longer live at Oakdene."

"We must not allow ourselves to look at matters in that light, my love," said Sir Jasper, as he stirred his tea. "Poor Jocelyn! After all, she is a pretty creature. Young men will be young men; you must allow that, Susannah."

"Precisely, my dear. And mortgages *will* be mortgages, and money *will* remain just a little too short for our requirements; and Agnes Deane, who is the greatest heiress in the county, comes here in the spring—and—and—— But leave it to me, Jasper. I'll have a talk with Cecil this evening in my room."

When that talk took place, no one could be more eloquent than Lady Grey, and no dutiful son could have listened more attentively than Cecil. At the end of a conversation which lasted for over two hours, he made the following remark:—

"I don't want to do anything to hurt you or my father, and nothing would induce me to bring a wife here whom you could not respect, but Jocelyn is a lady. My thinking her beautiful and the best of all girls is perhaps nothing; but I suppose anyone, even you, mother, will admit that Jocelyn looks nice, that she makes a room all the brighter when she is in it, and—and—that she's the sort of girl no one need be ashamed of. She's just as well born as I am, and there is nothing in the world against her except that she hasn't got money. I have loved her for years. There is no one in all the world like her to me; and now, when she is in trouble and penniless, is just the time for me to come forward. I'm going to come forward, mother—I'm going to propose for Jocelyn. My father speaks of me as a lad; but I'm of age, and my own master, and if you won't receive Jocelyn here, why, I've got that little place in Devon that aunt Lucilla left me, and we can live there and be jolly enough until you and my father forgive us. I don't mean to be disrespectful, mother, and I love you as well as ever; but I won't give up my own girl for anyone, not even for my mother."

Cecil stooped down and kissed Lady Grey on her forehead as he spoke, and then he went out of the room without waiting for any last words from her. She had to acknowledge to herself, as she saw him go, with a queer mixture of pain, and pride, and love, and anger tugging at her heart, that he was not such a boy after all, and that Jocelyn was very much to be envied, and she, poor forsaken Lady Grey, very much to be pitied.

"It's Lucilla's doing," she said to her husband after she had related all that had passed between herself and Cecil. "She left the boy that wretched eight hundred a year; and he threatens to go and live at Leaside, away from us all, with a penniless girl."

"We can't permit that, whatever happens," said Sir Jasper.

XUM

CHAPTER VI.

"You understand all about it now, Hope?" said Cecil. "And you will speak to Jocelyn, and let me know. Perhaps if I could put off going away just for a day she could see me. Do you think so, Hope? Do you think there is any chance? It's awful not to have seen her for nearly a fortnight; it has half killed me—it has, really."

"I'll speak to Jocelyn," said Hope. "I don't think she'll be prepared—I don't, really, Cecil; for you have always been a sort of brother to us both, you know."

"Well, I'll be your brother still, and something nearer to Jocelyn. She couldn't make that objection now, could she, Hope?"

"No; I'll certainly speak to her. Only, Cecil, Jocelyn and I have never thought about lovers—never once."

"But you've got to begin. There has got to be a beginning to everything. You'll have lots of lovers yourself, Hope, presently. Oh! you needn't colour up. You don't know what a jolly sort of girl you are. Of course, heaps of fellows will be wanting you, and you'll have only to pick and choose. But now about Jocelyn. You'll speak to her—you'll give her my message—you'll make the most of me you can: and I'll come down this evening to get my answer. It can only be the best kind of answer, can it, Hope?"

"I don't know," said Hope. "It seems to me that I don't understand. I'm very sorry for you, but I don't sympathise. I suppose it's because Jocelyn and I have never thought of lovers."

"You'll do your best for me at least," said Cecil.

Yes, Hope could promise that; and then it was arranged that he should call again that evening at nine, and if nothing had been accomplished—for Hope must find a fitting opportunity, and that might require longer time than between now and the evening—he would postpone his departure until noon of the following day.

Cecil went away, and Hope, pushing back her hair in a perplexed manner, went into Jocelyn's room.

It was true she did not understand, but it was also true that her heart was full of an undefined ache and pity for Cecil. His face had grown quite haggard in the last fortnight: there was no doubt at all of his earnestness, no doubt of the sincerity and depth of the feelings which caused him to speak.

Jocelyn was lying in a luxurious attitude on her sofa by the fire; her cheeks were slightly flushed, her red lips a very little parted. Her beautiful eyes had a contented smile and light in them. Hope was conscious of a feeling almost of repulsion as she glanced at Jocelyn's smiling beautiful face.

"She had no right almost to die of grief for mother, and now to look like that, particularly when Cecil is breaking his heart for her," was her reflection.

She came forward and stood moodily by the fire; Jocelyn looked up with a laugh.

"My Knight of the Doleful Countenance!" she said. Then a little petulance came into her voice. "Really, Hope, when I am doing my best to get better, and to cheer up after the terrible way I suffered, I think you might aid me instead of looking like Patience on a monument, and all the other dismal horrid things. Before you went out you tried to frighten me into my grave with visions of a bread-and-water diet. Then you stayed away for quite two hours, and now behold Minerva at least."

"Oh, don't liken me to anyone else," said Hope, suddenly laughing. "I am Don Quixote, Minerva, and Patience all in one breath. Listen, Jocelyn; I have got something really very interesting to say at last. It was quite true about the poverty; but you need not share it, darling. No, thank God, you can still have the pretty dresses and the nice things you ought to have; that you are suited for."

"I knew you were frightening me for nothing that time," interrupted Jocelyn. "The moment you mentioned Mr. Frost's name, I was sure of it. He's an ogre, and, in my humble opinion, keeps our fortune for himself."

"Oh! *will* you listen?" cried Hope, clasping her hands in despair. "It is not that at all; we are poor. It is—it is——"

"We *are* poor?" said Jocelyn. "Your manners are quite enough to turn anyone's head to-day, Hope. Do let's drop the theme. I am to have pretty dresses still; that is one comfort. Do you know, Hope, I have been thinking—I'm afraid it's a little rude to say it, but still I fear deep mourning won't be as becoming to you as to me. I have been rather fretting about that, for I want you to look very nice when we go our round of visits presently. But when I was writing to Mme. de Pompadour I told her to put as many frills and soft trimmings as she could possibly devise on both our dresses; so I trust the effect won't be so bad, as far as you are concerned, Hope Of course I shall be all right, with my fair complexion."

"I think it's only right and honest to tell you," said Hope, in a blunt voice, "that when I went out that time it was to despatch a telegram to Mme. de Pompadour, telling her not to execute your order. There, will that make you believe in our poverty?"

Jocelyn sat upright on her sofa. An angry spot glowed in one of her cheeks. Her eyes, sparkling and eloquent with reproaches, were fixed full on her sister.

"Is *this* your affection for mother?" she said at last. "Are we to wear no mourning for her?"

"Yes, the best we can make ourselves, with Jane's assistance."

"Hope, you haven't a bit of heart."

Down went Jocelyn's head on her pillows, and violent sobs shook her slight frame.

These tears filled Hope with compunction. She knelt down by the sofa, and putting her arm round Jocelyn's waist, kissed the back of her neck once or twice.

"Stop crying, Jo," she said. "I have not told you my news—the news which, after all, secures to you the pretty dresses."

Jocelyn half checked her tears, and Hope quietly, but not inefficiently, pleaded Cecil's suit.

This was Jocelyn's first proposal. In her way she was as innocent as Hope. Her tears ceased altogether. Her smiles came slowly back.

"Ridiculous!" she said. And then she broke into a laugh. "Cecil—Cecil Grey! But I'm not going to marry for years and years. I've never even thought of marrying, nor of lovers. Poor Cecil! he must have looked very funny. Did he, Hope? I wish he had asked *me* for *you*—I'd have loved so to watch his face."

"It's all over, then, for him," said Hope, rising. "I wasn't sure, for you and he were always great friends. But of course, if you can talk like that——"



"'Say "Yes," Jocelyn.'"—*p.* 611.

"What other way could I possibly talk? Do tell me how he looked, Hope."

"Very earnest, and manly, and handsome. He's in love with you, Jocelyn, and you ought to be awfully sorry for him."

"I'm not—it's too funny. He looked manly? Nonsense, he's nothing but a boy."

"He didn't look like a boy when he talked about you. Well, I'm sorry for him. You are quite positively certain, Jo, that you don't care the least little bit in the world for him?"

"Care for him? Of course not. He's a great deal too young; he's not the style of man I'd have for a husband, and I'm not going to tie myself to anybody for years, and years, and years."

Hope seated herself on the hearthrug.

"I'm glad, for my part," she said. "We'll be very happy together. We won't mind being poor—not a bit, after we've got over the first rub."

"Oh! being poor. How you *do* harp on that string. I suppose Cecil is well off."

"I suppose so. He said you and he could begin on eight hundred a year."

Jocelyn pressed her hand to her chin in meditation.

"I don't know what eight hundred a year means," she said. "But it sounds a good lot of money. Then, by-and-bye, I'd be Lady Grey, and we'd live at Grey's Park. I—— Hope!"

"What?" said Hope.

"Did he really look very manly when he spoke about me?"

"Yes" (a fierce light came into Hope's eyes), "a thousand times too manly to be married for his money or position."

"Oh, of course," said Jocelyn, shrinking back. "Whoever thought of such a thing?"

CHAPTER VII.

Cecil took his dismissal quietly enough. He turned very white, but he did not say much, nor did he ask Hope to plead his cause any further.

"Thank you," he said, as he rose to go away. "You did your best for me, and I'll never forget this to you—never. I might have known I wasn't half good enough for her—I always feared it, but I'd just a sort of half idea that she might put up with me—I mean, that she would have allowed me to be a sort of comfort to her. However, it's all at an end now. God bless you, Hope; good-bye—God bless you."

"I'm ever so sorry for you, Cecil," said Hope; "even though I don't comprehend your feeling."

"It's awfully good of you—your turn will come some day—sure to. It won't be the worse for you then that you were good to me now. Well, it's at an end, and I'm off to Oxford to-morrow. I might have known she wouldn't look at me. She's miles, miles above me!"

"Oh, don't, Cecil!" said Hope, relieving her strained feelings by a sudden laugh. "It does sound so ridiculous—poor little Jo!"

Cecil's face flushed hotly.

"You don't know what I feel," he said. "And even you don't know her, not as she looks to me. There's only one fellow in the world worthy of her, and I hope to goodness he'll never come across her."

"That's rather selfish of you, Cecil. What's the name of this wonder?"

"Oh, you needn't laugh; his name is Markham. He's a chum of mine at Oxford—he's awfully clever. He's ugly, too, but he can twist anyone, man, woman, or child, round his little finger. If he asks Jocelyn to marry him she won't say 'No.'"

"From your description, he must be unpleasant. We will trust that he won't spread his toils round Jocelyn. Good-bye, Cecil. I am deeply sorry for you."

"So am I for myself. Good-bye, Hope; you're a brick of a girl; he'll be a lucky fellow who has you for a sister. I only wish the luck were mine!"

Then Cecil went away, and Hope considered that episode in their lives quite at an end.

In a day or two Jocelyn came down-stairs again. She was quite well, and no longer particularly sorrowful. Neither could she any longer shut her eyes to the fact of their poverty, and once or twice she was inclined to be sulky over the home-made mourning.

With all her faults—and she had plenty—Jocelyn, however, was a very good-tempered, sunny sort of girl; and as all this time the shoe of poverty was only preparing to pinch, and had not yet given any very hard twinges, she and Hope lived happily enough at Oakdene, during their few remaining days there.

At last came the morning when Mr. Frost wrote to Hope, telling her that all debts were now paid, and that she and Jocelyn might walk forth free maidens into a cold world, with fifty pounds a year to sustain them. On the same day Jocelyn had a letter from Mrs. Seaton. It was long, and, to judge from her manner, was of absorbing interest to the young lady. So excited was she that she failed to notice Hope's disapproving tones. This was the first letter received from Mrs. Seaton since the day when Mrs. Karron had died, but this fact was also overlooked by Jocelyn.

"Lend me five pounds," she said to Hope. "I must go up to London to see Aunt Margaret. There is her letter; when you have read it you will understand."

Hope pushed the bulky envelope away.

"You forget, Jocelyn," she said, in a voice which she in vain tried to render unemotional. "I told you once what I thought of Aunt Margaret. I will not read her letter. I will not talk of her nor to her. It is a disrespect to our mother, Jocelyn."

Jocelyn coloured.

"You don't understand," she said. "You are a very prejudiced person, Hope. If you don't take care, you will grow hard. I see hardness getting into your face every day. Aunt Margaret was not to blame. You made an impossible request to her. If you read the letter, you will see."

"I will not read the letter. My request may have been impossible, but it was refused in such a way that it killed mother. She might have come down—she might have written tender words—she was mother's only sister. She knew her life was in extreme danger, and she wrote such a letter that she died. I saw her die, and of the letter. Aunt Margaret is nothing to me now. I'll neither read what she writes, nor accept assistance from her. And, Jocelyn, I *will* say it: if you are worthy of being mother's daughter, yes, and of being our father's daughter, who was a most honourable man, you will put that letter into the fire and give it no further thought. You owe it to our parents to accept nothing from Aunt Margaret Seaton."

Here Hope's voice changed. Her pliable, expressive face grew full of a great tenderness.

"Dear little Jo, poverty need not be hard if we stick together, and are of one mind," she said. "Let me burn the letter for the sake of all the happy old times, and because we both love our mother."

But Jocelyn was angry now. Hope came close to her. She pushed her away.

"You are all for heroics, Hope," she said. "I dare say they look very well in a book, but they aren't at all interesting in real life. Now I may as well tell you plainly that I am sick of this everlasting talk about poverty. I hate horrid dowdy home-made dresses. I hate pinching and contriving. I really don't know anything about the spending of money, but the income Mr. Frost is going to allow us every year would, I fancy, be spent by me in a single day. I see nothing for it, Hope, but that you must go your way, and I'll go mine. I have quite made up my mind. I have been making it up for the last week, since I saw you getting so horribly screwy. Aunt Margaret has written very kindly. She has given an explanation about what you choose to consider her unkind conduct to mother. She offers us both a home with herself, and for my part I am going to see her, and talk matters over with her, and that's what I want the five pounds for. I'm frank enough, Hope. You know everything now."

"I have a great mind to refuse to give you the five pounds," said Hope. "I think you ought to be protected against yourself. This conduct is not honourable."

"You refuse!" said Jocelyn, her eyes flashing angrily.

"Oh, Jocelyn, how changed you are! Yes, I have a great mind to refuse."

"Then I tell you what I'll do—what I've been making up my mind for the last week to do, until Aunt Margaret's letter saved me. I'll write to Cecil and bring him back; I'll marry him for his money."

"Oh, Jocelyn!" Hope gave a sharp cry. "Even Aunt Margaret is better than that," she said. She opened her purse, took out her solitary five-pound note, laid it on the table, and went out of the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE were no more luxurious flats in LONDON than those to be found in Albemarle Mansions. They were well situated. They were in the centre of Mayfair, close to everybody and everything. In themselves the flats were large and commodious; the reception-rooms were spacious, and there were plenty of them. In every way the flats were suited to the requirements of fashionable people, and in one of them Mrs. Seaton and her daughter Lottie lived a luxurious life.

Mrs. Seaton was about five-and-forty—a handsome woman, young-looking for her age, with a slightly full figure, and a slightly arrogant bearing. She was a widow and enormously rich. Her husband had been the well-known city merchant of the name. When talking about her, people had added to her wealth, making it fabulous; but although it was not that, she had a great deal more money than she knew how to spend, and Hope's mother had been right when she said that Margaret Seaton would not miss two thousand pounds. In one sense that was true, in another it was not. Mrs. Seaton was fond of balancing her banker's book, and of lying awake at night counting over her stocks and shares, and the various items which made up her great wealth. Two thousand pounds on the wrong side of the ledger would not have pleased her, and she decided to deny her dying sister's request. In this particular she showed great hardness, but she was not generally considered a hard woman, and in many ways could be kindness and generosity itself.

She had one child, a girl of eighteen, a fragile, white-faced creature, not the least like herself, for she was full of vitality and energy. Mrs. Seaton considered Charlotte a beauty, and perhaps the glamour of her wealth might have made some people agree with her. But to unprejudiced eyes she was simply a very fragile, uninteresting little mortal.

"How bitterly cold it is, mother," she said, on this particular January day. "How detestable England is at this time of year; why do we stay here?—why don't we go back to the Riviera at once?"

"Well, you know, darling, I have been rather upset. Your poor Aunt Amy's sudden death; then our mourning, and then my resolve—suggested by you, if you remember, Lottie—that we should invite the girls to come here, offering them a home as companions to you, darling."

Lottie's fretful blue eyes brightened.

"Yes, yes, of course," she said eagerly. "But not only as companions. That sounds like the kind of person that writes your letters for you and reads aloud; that kind of person can be paid for. I want sisters, equals—girls who will put a little variety into my life, and be just the same to you that I am. Oh, I hope they'll come—I do earnestly hope they'll come."

Mrs. Seaton gazed full into her young daughter's face. A shadow quickly passed across her brow.

"You have been in the world ever since you were born, Charlotte," she said, "and yet you are the most absolutely unworldly person I ever came across. You talk of the possibility of your cousins refusing my offer. Do you think it likely that penniless girls will do that?"

"Are they penniless? How delightful! What fun it will be getting them all they can possibly want. Oh, mother, are you sure they will come?"

"Yes, I am sure."

"When did you write, mother?"

"Yesterday. Lottie, it does me good to see you roused and interested like this. When the girls come we will go to Cannes for a month or so, and travel about until it is time to come back here for the season. We might spend Easter at Rome."

"We might. It was rather dull there last year. What are my cousins' names, mother? It seems so funny we should never have met all these years."

Mrs. Seaton's face flushed.

"I will tell you the reason another time," she said. "Their names—I have no doubt you will admire their names, Lottie; for my part, I dislike fanciful titles. The girls are called Jocelyn and Hope. They are twins, and their mother, poor thing, used to write and tell me they were very pretty."

"What sweet names—Jocelyn and Hope—particularly Hope. Mother, I feel more excited about these girls coming than I have ever felt about anything in the whole course of my life. It is so uninteresting—so terribly uninteresting to be alone."

"And yet you have me, child. I am always alone in all the world but for you."

"Dear mother!"

Lottie went up, raised her lips lightly to the elder woman's face, bestowed a caress without much warmth in it, and sank down once more in a luxurious little chair opposite a glowing fire.

At this moment the room door was noiselessly opened, and a powdered footman brought in a telegram on a salver.

Lottie sprang to her feet, rubbing her hands excitedly.

"Is it from the girls?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, child, yes.—There is no answer, Williams."

The footman withdrew.

Mrs. Seaton tossed the pink sheet of paper into her daughter's lap.

"You will make me jealous of those girls," she said, with the finest shade of bitterness in her voice. "But your wish is likely to be granted, Lottie. They are coming fast enough."

The telegram on which Lottie's eyes feasted was brief:—

"Downton.

"Please expect me at three o'clock, to answer your letter in person. "Jocelyn Karron."

"It is half-past twelve now," said Lottie, looking at the clock. "What a long time we shall have to wait! Shall we go to meet Jocelyn at Paddington, mother? We can look up her train in Bradshaw."

"I should prefer to receive her here, Lottie. I will send Blake to Paddington in the brougham. I suppose this girl must remain for the night. She certainly *is* eager to come."

"I think that is so nice of her. I wonder if she is like me—very *petite*, and fair; I don't like being *petite* and fair. I wonder if she has got my tastes; I hate my own tastes. Heigh-ho, how weary life is! Mother, don't you think it's awfully uninteresting to be rich?"

"My dear Lottie, do you know that you are getting quite eccentric?"

"Am I? I suppose it's because I find everything so dull. It seems to me that riches hem one in and stifle one. Riches are just another name for all sorts of odious proprieties. Now, I should so like to take an omnibus to Paddington this afternoon, and stand on the platform and look for Jocelyn, and then bring her home in a hansom. That's what I should like, instead of doing propriety in this dull, dull room."

"Lottie dear, you are really talking such wild nonsense that I shall have to send for Sir James Porter to see you. You cannot possibly be well."

"I am ill in mind, mother, that is all. How I wish my father had not made his huge fortune. He must have been much jollier when he blacked shoes at a penny the pair."

Mrs. Seaton coloured all over her handsome face with intense annoyance.

"How dare you?" she began.

Then she paused. "If you weren't my child ——" she continued—then again she stopped. The colour faded from her cheeks and lips, leaving them chalky white.

Lottie surveyed her from the depths of her snug chair with a lazy, provoking smile.

"Poor papa!" she said; "he often talked to me about those days. Oh, what funny stories he had to tell! Do you remember the one about the slice of saveloy for supper? And that other story when he slept under an archway and found a threepenny-bit?"

But the drawing-room door was shut almost noisily; Mrs. Seaton had left her daughter to her recollections.

At about half-past three Jocelyn arrived. Her face was somewhat pale, her big eyes had a wide-open, appealing glance in them. She came up to Mrs. Seaton holding out both hands, her delicate colour coming and going.

"You have a look of my mother," she said, and there was really a pathetic note in her voice.

"Only a very slight look, my dear," responded the good lady, touched and pleased in spite of herself by Jocelyn. "Your mother was much prettier than I ever was. I am glad you have come, Jocelyn. Let me introduce you to Charlotte.—Lottie, this is your Cousin Jocelyn."

Jocelyn was certainly neither *petite* nor fair, after Lottie's somewhat colourless pattern. Her hair was golden, it is true, but the gold was very bright; her complexion was creamy and rich; her blue eyes were shaded by curly black lashes, her brows were delicate and dark, and her figure, slightly full for her age, looked generous in its proportions beside her shadowy sprite-like little cousin. Nature had endowed Jocelyn with a most affectionate and taking manner. She clasped Lottie's hand now, gave it a squeeze, then turned again to her aunt.

"You wrote me such a kind letter, Aunt Margaret."

"Well, my dear, well—I meant to be kind to you and Hope. I am glad you came here to-day to discuss my proposal. There is no time like the present. Take off your hat, Jocelyn."

"And sit in *my* easy-chair, please, Jocelyn," eagerly interrupted Lottie. "It is very comfortable—I'll put this glass screen between you and the fire. Are your feet cold? Let me take your furs. What exquisite sable!—Look, mother, you haven't got sable like this."

"It is a set that belonged to my mother," said Jocelyn. "Thank you, Lottie; this snug chair is very resting."

She leant back in it with an air of possession. But neither Mrs. Seaton nor Lottie was just then in a mood to criticise. Charlotte felt excited and charmed; Mrs. Seaton compunctious. She had many failings, but her heart was not really dead, and Jocelyn had a radiancy about her which brought back a vision of her beautiful young sister of long ago. She had quarrelled with this sister, and they had not met for years; her sister had made a dying request which she had refused. Now her penniless orphan daughter sat by her fireside. Mrs. Seaton said to herself—

"I will be very good to Jocelyn and Hope—I will make up to them for any little unkindness I may have shown to their mother."—"My dear," she said in a cordial voice, "after all, our consultation may be brief. I offer you and Hope a home—will you come to me and be my children, and Charlotte's sisters?"

"Say 'Yes,' Jocelyn," exclaimed Lottie, dropping on her knees beside her cousin's chair.

Jocelyn lowered her eyes. Now she raised them slowly.

"We have no money," she said.

"As if that mattered! Oh! mother and I are so tired of having too much money!"

Jocelyn felt herself colouring. She remembered the look on Hope's face, and the money which had been refused to her own dying mother.

"Aunt Margaret," she said, rising suddenly to her feet, and speaking with a visible effort, "there is nothing for it but for me to be frank. You wrote a letter which pained Hope very much—it also pained me. You explained your reasons for writing that letter when you wrote so kindly to me yesterday. Aunt Margaret, I accept your explanation—I—I—forgive you."

Lottie gave a little gasp. Mrs. Seaton drew herself up very erect, and half turned away. Jocelyn

went a step nearer; she came right in front of her aunt.

"I forgive you," she said, "but that does not mean that I love you. Mother is dead, and Hope and I are very poor girls. I don't like being poor. You are rich. I like being rich. I like warmth, and nice food, and carriages, and beautiful dresses. I hate roughing it; I like to live in clover. I'll accept your offer, Aunt Margaret. I'll come to you, not because I love you, but because you are rich. I'll be a sister to Charlotte, and a daughter to you, outwardly; I'll do what I can. I can be bright, I can sing and play, and say witty, cheerful things, and keep a room alive, and I can always look pretty and be a credit to you. So perhaps, after all, I'll give as much as I get. You and Lottie look very dull. I don't think you'll be dull when you've got me. It's an equal bargain, I think. Is it to be one?

Lottie gave another gasp: she looked at her cousin in a half-frightened way. Mrs. Seaton remained silent for nearly a full minute after Jocelyn had done speaking.

"Kiss me, my new daughter," she said then; and she pressed a very light kiss on Jocelyn's brow.

"What about Hope?" said Lottie, after another brief pause. "Is she coming, too, to make bargains, and to—to——"

Mrs. Seaton spoke abruptly.

"Hush, Lottie, she said. "Jocelyn has put things in a sensible light. I did not expect so much sense from such a young girl; it took me by surprise. Of course, I respect it. No doubt, Jocelyn, love will come later. And now we must all try to *appear* affectionate."

"Yes," said Lottie, shivering. "All this is most exciting to me. I really never came across anything so refreshing and original. And I don't greatly care about the affection being left out. Still, I want to know about Hope. I think Hope has a prettier name than you have, Jocelyn. I suppose she is not hard, like you—she's the soft and gushing sort?"

"She's harder than I am," said Jocelyn, shivering in her turn, and growing pale.—"Aunt Margaret, Hope has sent you a message."

"Yes, my dear, yes."

"She does not forgive you—she won't come here."

"But she has no money!" exclaimed Lottie.

"There is fifty pounds a year left; she says she will live on that—she won't come here."

Late the next afternoon Jocelyn returned to Downton. Hope was waiting at the station to meet her, and the sisters walked back to Oakdene arm in arm.

Hope was looking very pale; her heavy black scarcely suited her.

"Oakdene is let," she said to her sister.

Jocelyn did not reply by a single word. She tugged her arm a little away from Hope's, who held it tightly.

"Is it all settled, Jo?" asked Hope, in a gentle voice.

"I feel stifling, Hope. Don't ask me any questions. Yes, though, why shouldn't you? I am to go there next week."

Hope did not speak for a full minute.

"Tell me about them, Jocelyn," she said then.

"There isn't much to tell. They have got what I want—riches and comforts. Aunt Margaret is a lady by birth; Charlotte isn't, but I like Lottie better than Aunt Margaret. It's all settled. I can have my own way. I shall want for nothing that money can buy. Hope, I did *not* know that Oakdene was to be let so soon."

"Mr. Frost found a tenant for it. He will take the furniture and all off our hands. It is a splendid chance."

"And you, Hope—you?"

"I am going to London, to the Frosts, for a week. We shall both be in London after all; I can sometimes see you."

"There will be a gulf between," said Jocelyn, in a choking voice. "I think I was mad to do it."

"It is not too late," said Hope eagerly.

"Yes, it is too late."

Jocelyn stamped her foot passionately on the snow-covered ground.

"I can't be poor, I won't be poor! And yet, Hope, how I hate myself, and respect you!"

(To be continued.)

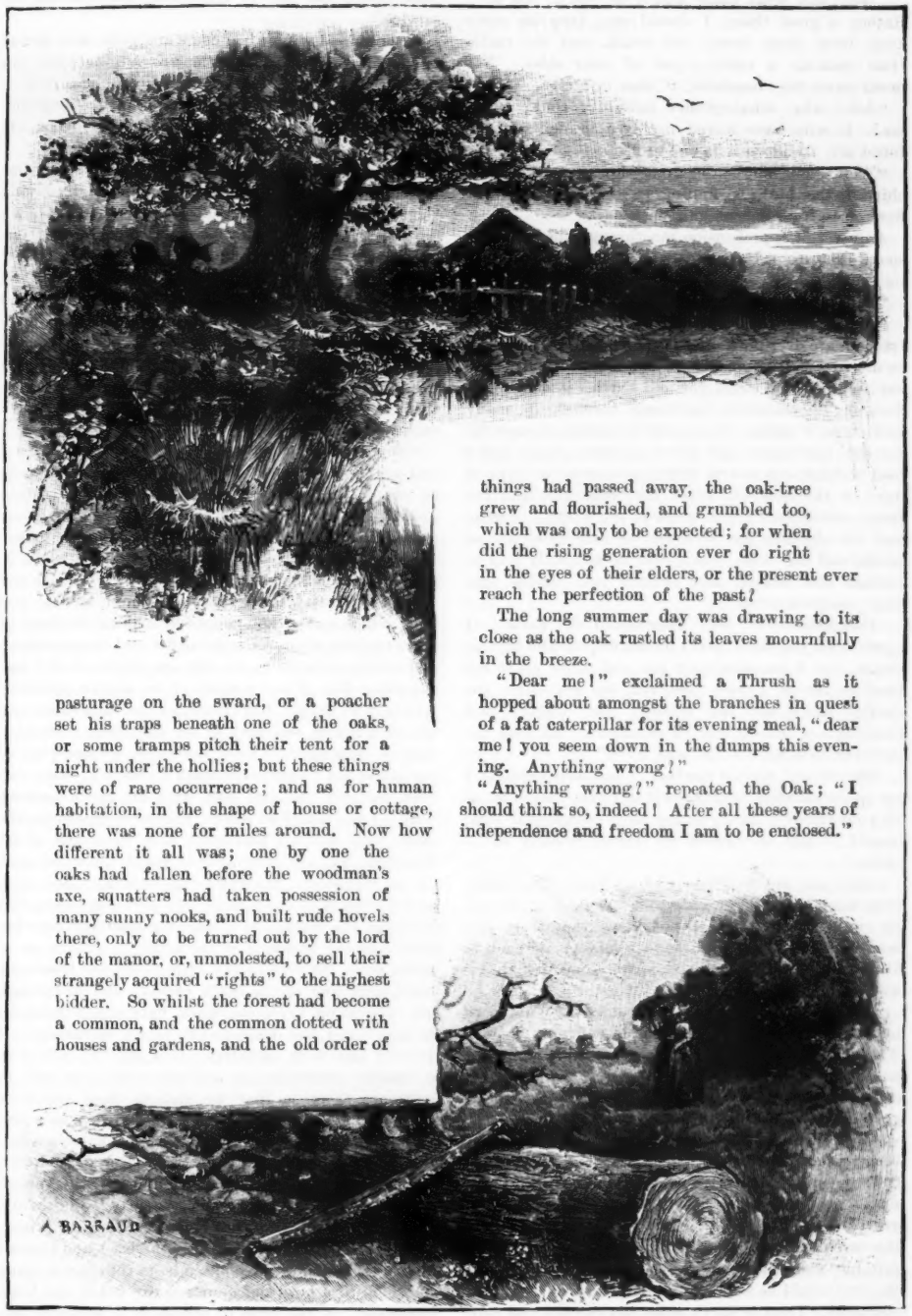
PROMOTION.

A PARABLE FROM NATURE.

BY LADY LAURA HAMPTON, AUTHOR OF "MUSINGS IN VERSE," "THOUGHTS ON SICKNESS," ETC. ETC.

"Count misfortune's worst assaults
Triumph, not defeat; assured that loss so much the more exalts
Gain about to be." ROBERT BROWNING.

NOW long the Oak had lived there it really could not tell; ever since it remembered anything it had grown and flourished where it stood. How the place had changed, to be sure, since first it poked its inquisitive young head up amongst the brambles, and took a look at the world around! Then it grew amid a forest of oak-trees, interspersed with hollies and furze bushes, and patches of bracken and green grass, among which the rabbits played hide-and-seek, or the hares sat quietly in the sun. The solitude was seldom disturbed; occasionally a stray cow or donkey would trample the ferns under foot, and seek fresh



pasturage on the sward, or a poacher set his traps beneath one of the oaks, or some tramps pitch their tent for a night under the hollies; but these things were of rare occurrence; and as for human habitation, in the shape of house or cottage, there was none for miles around. Now how different it all was; one by one the oaks had fallen before the woodman's axe, squatters had taken possession of many sunny nooks, and built rude hovels there, only to be turned out by the lord of the manor, or, unmolested, to sell their strangely acquired "rights" to the highest bidder. So whilst the forest had become a common, and the common dotted with houses and gardens, and the old order of things had passed away, the oak-tree grew and flourished, and grumbled too, which was only to be expected; for when did the rising generation ever do right in the eyes of their elders, or the present ever reach the perfection of the past?

The long summer day was drawing to its close as the oak rustled its leaves mournfully in the breeze.

"Dear me!" exclaimed a Thrush as it hopped about amongst the branches in quest of a fat caterpillar for its evening meal, "dear me! you seem down in the dumps this evening. Anything wrong?"

"Anything wrong?" repeated the Oak; "I should think so, indeed! After all these years of independence and freedom I am to be enclosed."

"Well, and what harm will it do you if you are? Rather a good thing, I should say: keep the goats away from your hoary old trunk, and the cattle from making a rubbing-post of your sides. Not much cause for complaint, if that is all."

"All! why, what greater indignity could befall me? I, who have waved my free branches to the forest air, to adorn a lawn!"

"Well, you might be cut down, you know," chirped the bird, as, finding its search fruitless, it flew off to an adjacent garden.

A quiver of apprehension ran through the tree as it spoke, disturbing a mole who had her nest amid its roots.

"What is the matter?" she asked anxiously.

"Matter enough," it replied. "All our days of freedom are over; we are to be enclosed. There will be mole-traps for you, and—who knows?—perhaps the axe for me; and as for you, old Earth," it continued, drawing the moisture vigorously through its many rootlets as it spoke, "there will be trouble enough for you too: barrenness, and loss of sunshine and air, and a load of brick and mortar hiding you from the light of day; or the iron will enter into your soil, and the fruits and flowers will blossom at the bidding of man, and the children you love will be torn from you as weeds, and the work you would do naturally will be trained and pruned and twisted into shapes past your comprehension."

"Comprehension; yes," interrupted the Earth. "I agree with you there, and I do not dispute the trouble either; but I am older than you, and allow me to say that, as far as I have observed, the enclosing, the cutting down and the pruning, the digging and building are all by way of promotion: all lead the sufferers to a higher life and level."

"May be so," replied the Oak; "but as it happens, I am quite satisfied with myself as I am. Say now, of all your children have you any more ornamental than myself?" and it rustled its leaves proudly as it spoke.

"Nay, you are well enough," answered the Earth, "but have I reared you only to be ornamental, to be a joy unto myself? Do I not know that there is a need-be for every child of mine, a mission for each to fill, a separate life to be lived, apart from, though one with, mine?"

"Life is beautiful, and I am content. What need to talk of usefulness when simple existence is joy? Why speak of separation when we are all in all to one another? Higher level, indeed! Pray, which of my companions over-tops me?" and the summer shoots gave a fresh start as it spoke.

"Well done!" exclaimed the Sunbeam, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, "well done, O Tree; but yet thy action belied thy words. Wert thou really content with thyself, wouldst thou seek to grow? And thou, O Earth, fret not thyself. Must not the careless exuberance and joy of life precede the pruning, abundance of growth the cutting down, or the tree would be stunted and deformed, its usefulness impaired? Thou, O Earth, canst but counsel and rear; from thy master alone, and in his own time and way, comes the call to live solely for him and his service."

Autumn and winter had come and gone, and spring flowers were making gay the ground, but the oak responded not to the awakening voice of nature as it lay upon the earth, shorn of the beautiful branches in which it had gloried, bemoaning the joyous life of the past.

Two ladies approached who had been for some time watching the bricklayers busily employed in laying the foundations of a house close by; and sitting down on the trunk of the fallen tree, the younger one observed to her companion—

"You will think me very silly, mother, but do you know I always feel so sorry for the piece of ground that is built over—shut up in the dark, no more sun shining on it, no more flowers springing from it, not even seeing the life in the house above—just forgotten! And the trees, too: I cannot bear to see them cut down and destroyed after they have taken such trouble and such years to grow."

"You would cry out, 'Woodman, spare that tree;' and yet, darling, was it not for this they grew—to be of use to man, not merely ornamental? and the ground, too, over which you lament, serves his purpose as truly when it bears his dwelling, as when it brings forth grain for his food. May we not find a lesson in both? Does not the one speak of the higher life and service to which some are called through trouble and trial, which some reach simply by making the most of opportunities given for self-culture and improvement, and which ought to be the aim and object of all? and the other, does it not remind of the hidden influence which, if we forget it or remember, we each exert over all with whom we have to do, moulding their characters, shaping their lives, just as the ground-plan of our house lies forgotten beneath its floors? Have you ever, thought, too, that man, with all his inventions, with all his manifold works, has never placed on the earth what has not previously been in it, and of it? The cathedral was once the rock itself, the wood-work of our houses and furniture, like this oak, once grew and flourished in the forests; the pots and pans in our kitchens, the machinery of our manufactories once lay hidden in the darkness of the mine: the china we so much prize, the very bricks with which our homes are built, were first of the earth, earthy; and so through all, cultivation, invention, work, have raised the lesser to the greater, and developed its latent usefulness. It is even thus with ourselves. God gives to each of us a separate individuality and character, and bids us cultivate them so that we may by them rise to a higher and better life. There must always be a first and a last; we have not all ten talents, but we have all one. Let us see to it that, responding now to the influences of His Holy Spirit, moulded by the various dispensations of His Providence, we may 'so faithfully serve Him in this life' that hereafter He may acknowledge us to have been faithful in the least, and commit the many and more precious talents into our keeping of which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived,' in the land of which it is written, 'His servants shall serve Him,' perfectly, and for ever."

MORE DONE THAN SUPPOSED.

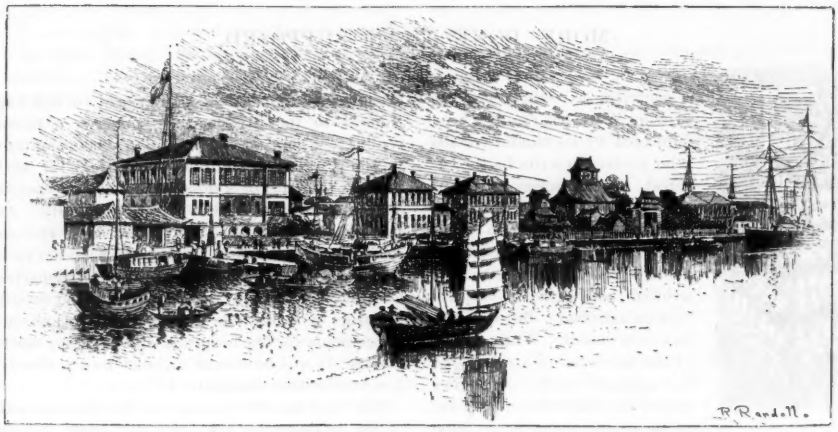


THE criticism to which Foreign Mission Work has recently been subjected by its candid friends who profess to write in the interest of the missions themselves, has almost made us forget the fire of criticism to which it is constantly exposed from those whose attitude is that of avowed indifference or of positive antagonism. But that fire has not ceased. While many of the missionaries are engaged in pioneer work, labouring where no other Europeans are to be found, many more have their head-quarters in districts where merchants reside, or in ports frequented by the sailor and visited by the globe-trotter. Some of these do not hesitate on their return home, or in their letters, to disparage the missionary and his service. And what they write and say seems to carry great weight. Their deliverances are received as the words of the unbiassed critic direct from the scene of the missionary's labour—words sadly compelled by actual observation, and so on. The globe-trotter says: "I have been there, I have seen—or should have seen, had there been anything to see—the result of the missionary's residence abroad at the cost of the subscriber at home. And I am bold to affirm that that result is just nothing." And so authoritative is the air, so indignant the stamp of the foot, or so mournful the shake of the head, that the friends at home dare not refuse credence to their travelled relative.

From a recent number of the *Chinese Recorder*, published in Shanghai, we learn that a certain Lieutenant Wood, of the United States Navy, having served a commission on the coast of China, has considered himself qualified to pronounce sentence on the work of the American missionaries in that Empire, and that a number of newspapers have seen fit to reproduce his assertions. He is quoted as having said: "It is not extravagant to say that the work of the missionaries in China and Corea is absolutely without any result, except to hold them up to the ridicule of the natives. It has before been stated—and I concur in the belief—that there is not a Chinese convert to Christianity of sound mind to-day within the entire extent of China." This will seem pretty strong to those who are in the habit of reading missionary literature, and have read, therefore, of great numbers of sane converts in China. Apparently the lieutenant has been asked about these numbers reported by the various societies, for he has been at pains to explain: "They are merely the menials employed about the quarters of the missionaries, who have a salary of 4 dols. per month to become converts, but when discharged there is no further evidence of a 'change of mind.'"

As was to be expected, these severe strictures, getting back to China, have not been received in silence. The critic has been criticised. In regard to this explanation as to the existence of converts, a missionary replies: "There are at present 35,000 communicants in the Protestant Churches of China. If they are paid at the rate of 4 dols. a month, they cost 140,000 dols. monthly, or 1,680,000 dols. annually. As this sum is considerably more than double the amount spent by all Protestant Missionary Societies in China, including the salaries of all the missionaries, the building of churches, and parsonages, and schools, the printing of books, the supply of drugs and surgical instruments for the hospitals, and all other matters of expense, it will be seen at a glance how perfectly self-destructive this statement is."

The lieutenant's remarks on the literary activities of the missionaries lead him still more seriously to expose his ignorance of the subject on which he is posing as an authority. He says that the Chinese translation of the Bible "is in a lingo which stands in the same relation to the Mandarin tongue, or classical language of the country—which is used in court, and is the official language of the country—that an obscure negro dialect of Louisiana stands with classical English." Here those whom he criticises have an easy, if not pleasant, task in dealing with their critic. They are able to point out that several translations of the Scriptures have been made by the missionaries into the classical language of the country, and that one of these at least is acknowledged by the best scholars of the Empire to be in very excellent China style. They are further able to point out that "the Mandarin tongue" is not, as Lieutenant Wood seems to think, "the classical language of the country," but that it is simply one of the dialects—though the dialect that has the widest range, and is in use as the official language—and that translations have been made into it, as into the other dialects of the Empire. They are yet further able to point out that none of these dialects finds any parallel in the negro dialects of Louisiana, but that they are the only spoken languages of the people, the classical language being so exclusively a written language that, when a person is reading aloud from a book printed in it, he does not read what is written, but translates as he goes along into the colloquial dialect. Yet a man capable of such sweeping statements on so slender a foundation of knowledge is hailed by the newspaper editors as "an unprejudiced observer," while the friends of missions who know enough about China to see at once that the statements contained in his criticisms furnish evidence of the little worth of his "actual observation," are taken severely to task for not welcoming "all obtainable facts as to the progress of the work, whether favourable or unfavourable." "Obtainable facts" are good, but fictions—well, they are more obtainable than profitable. It does not follow that because a gun-boat lies in a Chinese harbour, every lieutenant on board will see all the work that is being done by the missionaries on shore, much less that he will be qualified to appreciate it. There is more being done, and of a



SHANGHAI.

higher nature and more important character, than is thought or suspected even by those whose own business takes them into the very localities where it is being done.

A rather sad story in illustration of this occurs in a letter from a missionary in the South Seas, published in the *Chronicle* of the London Missionary Society. A large ship bound for Sydney ran one dark night on to the reef of one of the Penrhyn Islands. The captain had his wife with him, and, moved by a terrible fear of the cannibal propensities of the Penrhyn Islanders, he sent her off with a boat's crew to try and make the island of Manihiki, some considerable distance off. The boat was capsized and the poor woman drowned. Next morning the captain himself was welcomed in a civilised and friendly manner by the natives, one hundred of whom—out of a total population of 373—were church members. The body of his wife was washed ashore and interred in solemn Christian burial by the very men whom he had credited with a readiness to devour it. We must pity rather than blame the poor man. But though he may often have marked his course past those islands, a little more accurate knowledge as to the success of missionary work in them than he evidently had, would have been of much service to him that night. It is obvious that he would never have exposed his wife to the risk of going to Manihiki in an open boat to escape a landing among the Penrhyn Islanders, had he not been convinced of their savage nature—so convinced, indeed, must he have been, that, had he arrived at Sydney without delay or mishap, we may hardly doubt but that he would unhesitatingly have replied to a question regarding their character in the same sense in which he practically answered it when his vessel was on that reef. We may almost hear him say: "The Penrhyn Islanders, sir—they are horrible cannibals. I would rather send my wife five hundred miles in an open boat than risk her landing among them!" A. J. B.

A SUMMER THOUGHT.

OH, faint and low
The breezes blow,
When the summer sun is in the West,
And through the trees
That faint low breeze
Goes singing songs of sweet unrest.

That music thrills
The eternal hills,
Till the listening valleys catch the strain,
And the swelling song
Is passed along
From the mountain top to the distant plain.

And the music saith,
"Oh, why is death,
When all the world with life is filled,
When all is blest
With peaceful rest,
And pain is not, and grief is stilled?"

And a voice springs out of the lowly sod;
"Death is but life in the hand of God."

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

A BROKEN WILL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.



"MY mother says that I am to row you to the Willows, and that you are to stay to dinner with us, as you must feel lonely without Miss Morson."

"I 'm never lonely, Dr. Suffield," answered the mistress of the Towers, with a toss of the prettiest, fairest head in Milchester.

"Oh! very well; I suppose that means to say you don't want to come with me. Good-bye."

"Perhaps I do and perhaps I don't; who can say? You 're a doctor, and know a great deal; but, between ourselves, you aspire too much when you pretend to know what I don't want to do."

They sauntered side by side down the grassy slope. Atherton Suffield turned and looked seriously at Jessica Hunt; then he smiled as he read the mischief lying in her large dark eyes. When they reached the stream he stood by the boat and folded his arms.

"Well?" he said.

For all answer, she stepped into the boat. He followed her, and pushed off.

When they got well out on to the river, she leaned forward with the rudder-ropes over her shoulders, and said—

"You 're very generous, Atherton."

"Why?"

"I 've been expecting you to inform me for the last ten minutes that of course you were sure all the while that I should come."

"There 's no being sure with you, Jessica. I could only hope that you would come. My dear child, I wonder if you have an idea of what pleasure this gives me! You see, I am very hard-worked just now; everybody seems ill, everybody seems to want me, and I 've had so much night work that I 'm very tired. I fear I should knock under if it weren't for the few hours I spend with you now and then. So, naturally, I 'm glad you didn't stay away."

She frowned slightly. "That 's all very well," she said, not raising her eyes; "but what annoys me is that I 'm getting into a way of always doing whatever you ask me to do."

"Thank you," he answered, his face flushing with a sudden joy.

"Don't be too triumphant," she continued, still looking down; "I shall make a stand; I couldn't do just as anybody wanted me to do, I really couldn't; it 's against my nature. Now, why should I for you?"

"I never said that you did."

"But you know it, and—it vexes me."

She lay back pouting, and he rowed on in silence; he felt very happy as his glance rested on the white-robed, graceful figure before him. The sun was setting, the heat of the day was over, the boat sped past the cottages and the ivy-covered church, and the people sitting on the banks.

"Here we are at the Willows," said Atherton. He jumped on to land, and held the boat with one hand, while he stretched out the other to Jessica.

For a moment she stood up, undecided, in the middle of the boat; then she sank on to the seat and took hold of one of the sculls.

"Come, Jessica," said Suffield.

"No, I don't think I will, after all, thanks. Give my love to your mother, and say I have a headache, so I thought I should be better at home." She pushed off with a sudden jerk, and rested on the sculls in mid-stream.

He stood beneath the willows, all the happiness gone from his face.

"Ah! Miss Wilful! Miss Wilful!" was all he said.

"That 's a good name," she called back, laughing. "I forgot to shake hands. When will you come to see 'Miss Wilful?'"

But he turned and walked away without a word, and she laughed again as the boat bore her rapidly down the river.

"How pale you are, Atherton!" said Mrs. Suffield, as she met him in the garden walk. "Where 's Jessica?"

"She sent you her love. I rowed her up here. She said I was to ask you to excuse her; she has gone back."

Mrs. Suffield was a tall, elegant woman; her son had inherited her straight features, her refined manners, and quiet voice. But while he was in the strength of a powerful manhood, her grey hair and lined face showed that sorrow and trouble had laid their ineffaceable mark upon her.

"Poor boy!" said the mother, with her hand upon the son's shoulder.

He bent his head till his lips touched the slim fingers.

"Well, mother, it can't be helped; I think I'll go away for a few weeks and take a holiday."

"And yet——"

"And yet!—to be so seriously unyielding over petty things! She toys with life. Come, my best friend, let 's dine without her."

The next afternoon Mrs. Suffield heard a well-known clatter of ponies' hoofs, and looking from her rose-embowered window she saw Jessica Hunt in her pony-carriage. The sun's rays nestled in the girl's bright curls and soft cream gown with its gold trimmings; her tiny high-heeled shoes seemed to flash as she threw the reins to the groom and ran into the house. It struck Mrs. Suffield that she had never seen her look more dazzling.

Jessica did not wait to be announced; she went direct to the study, where she knew she should find Mrs. Suffield.

She threw her arms round her neck.

"Dear Mrs. Suffield, I thought I'd drive over and

have tea with you this afternoon; Miss Morson is home again, and I told her not to wait dinner for me—that I should stay here if you'd ask me, and she wasn't to send for me; perhaps Atherton will see me across the fields."

"I'd like you to stay very much; if Atherton can't see you home—he's making arrangements to take his holiday—somebody else shall."

Atherton evinced no surprise at seeing Jessica; she was very lively at dinner, but he was very quiet. After dinner the three sat out in the old-fashioned garden, and Jessica nestled in a kind of appealing way up to Mrs. Suffield as Atherton discussed the plans he had already made for his holiday. He talked of going far, very far, thought Jessica, and her liveliness deserted her suddenly. As ten o'clock struck from the old church tower she said she would go, as it would take half an hour to walk across the fields. Atherton put on his hat as if it was a matter of course that he should accompany her. As she bade good-night to Mrs. Suffield and kissed her, she whispered—

"I don't want him to take that holiday."

"Then tell him so, my dear, or else I think he will;" and Mrs. Suffield smiled contentedly as she watched the two set off on their moonlight ramble.

At first they scarcely spoke, but at last Jessica broke through the constraint. She talked excitedly and nickly, though very low.

"You don't seem to appreciate why I came here to-day. You are very hard and unforgiving," she said.

"I don't understand you."

"Oh! yes, you do; I vexed you yesterday, so I've come to tell you to-day that I'm sorry; I'm always vexing people, but when I vex you I always tell you I'm sorry; you're the only person I can do it to, somehow."

"I was hurt and pained, not vexed. My dear little Jessica, I'm a man of thirty-two, and life has been a struggle for me; you're a girl of twenty, and you've found life a very easy affair; I'm not a poor man, but I'm not rich, and you are rich—very rich. I've come to the conclusion that we must look on the art of living from very different points of view, and that our paths will lie very far apart. What my regret is there is no need for me to say! You know how much I love you—you cannot help knowing it; I have not hidden my love from you lately. I think I have always loved you, ever since you were a little child and your parents were dead, and you seemed to have nobody in the wide world to protect you; and my sweetest ambition has always been to call you my wife. But I see I must give it up. There is a certain stubbornness in you that robs you of moral courage; and you give the weight of this to the slightest circumstance—from little things such big things arise. Fortune has spoilt you, that's my way of looking at it; but I may be wrong—perhaps fortune has only fitted you for your position in life; perhaps you are never to wish for a thing but you are to have it; perhaps you are never to will a thing but you are to have it as you will it. But I should expect otherwise of you; I should expect that if things weren't by chance just as you wanted them you would adapt yourself to the state of affairs—that you would yield if need be. You ought to marry a tyrant, perhaps; but I'm no tyrant, and I could not make you do things unless you did them from love of me. And I see"—his voice shook, and he turned his head away from her—"and I see, only too well, that you do not love me. If you had a different disposition, I should not have rested till I had made you love me. But after all, it is better as it is—and so, I am going away for a time, and I'm going to try very hard, Jessica, to forget you."

"You ought to make allowances for me," she said; "I've always been my own mistress; I've no father, mother, brothers, sisters; I've had nobody but that dear, kind little Miss Morson. It had always seemed quite natural for me to do just as I fancied till I came back from abroad last summer; since then it has gradually dawned on me that I must study your fancies before my own; you are the only man I care to speak to. Yesterday I wanted to go to the Willows, and yet I was obliged to rebel: but after I left you looking so sad and unhappy you haunted me; I couldn't sleep; I could scarcely think, till I had told you all this. But you are cold, terribly cold, and you don't care whether I'm sorry or not."

Atherton set his teeth together—nothing should alter his determination.

"Nothing matters now," he said, in a hard voice; "you'll go your way and I shall go mine."

Her shadow came close to his; she had slipped her hand through his arm, and she spoke in such a low whisper that he was obliged to stop and bend his head to hear what she said.

"Can't you guess, Atherton, why I care so much when I see you are unhappy—above all, when I have made you so?"

He would not answer.

The moon seemed to look down scornfully upon them.

They went along arm in arm a few paces without uttering a word, till they came to the stile that led to the Towers path. There he dropped her arm and got over the stile. Her face was piteously pale beneath her white lace scarf. She sighed, she trembled, she placed her hand to her heart. With his help she got to the top step of the stile; he supported her, and she looked with her large, soft black eyes into his. For an instant they stood thus, then he lifted her to the ground and held her panting in his arms.

He murmured, "Believe me, my darling, it is better that we part."

Her cheek rested against his, she clasped her hands round his neck. "But—— Oh! Atherton, I love you, I love you!" came from her quivering lips. Then she tore herself away from him and ran towards the Towers.

He clenched his hands; he would not follow her! no, he would not! And then suddenly he ran after her. In half a minute he had caught her up and was holding her in his arms again.

"Fool, madman that I was," he said, kissing her passionately, "to think that I could live without you! When will you marry me, Jessie?"

"As soon as you like," she said, her face ablaze with

blushes and smiles. "Come with me to the Towers to tell Miss Morson—she'll be so pleased; and then run and tell your mother; it will make her so happy—she has always wanted it."

CHAPTER II.

It is more than two years since Miss Morson went to live with Mrs. Suffield at the Willows, and since the two ladies had welcomed at the Towers the return of the doctor and his wife from their honeymoon. It had been decided that the young couple must live there, because it had been in the Hunt family for so many generations. And so Master Harold Atherton Hunt Suffield was born in the house of his mother's ancestors, and very soon learnt to rule there as he did in undisputed sovereignty at the Willows.

"I'm glad to see he's so much like Atherton," said little Miss Morson, shaking her head till her crisp white ringlets flapped against her ruddy cheeks.

"He has Jessica's fair hair and dark eyes," said Mrs. Suffield.

"But Atherton's expression, bless the dear little soul! he'll be just such a man as his father."

"I'm sure Jessica has a sweet expression."

"So she has generally, but sometimes she hasn't."

"Well, there's nothing in that; I'm sure she has not a bad temper."

"Oh! no, of course she hasn't; I never said she had—far from it. But she's so self-willed. Poor Jessica!"

"I won't have you say 'Poor Jessica.'"

"But I do say it," and Miss Morson made her knitting-needles click furiously. "I'm so fond of her, and I know her so well, that I do say 'Poor Jessica.' If you had seen her as I have sometimes, even as a child, when she had to give in, you would not have said her expression was sweet."

"Her expression never could have been bad."

"Oh! no, never bad. But one could see what a storm was raging; she was always prostrate after one of these struggles for mastery over herself; the suppressed passion used to take it out of her to a dreadful extent. Even I could seldom get her to yield, and I used to be sorry almost when I did. She's not what I call strong; she's nerves—all nerves."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Suffield; "I've never seen a happier pair."

"Thank God!" answered Miss Morson, reverently; "indeed, they are happy. They love each other, that says everything. As for Jessica! she seems to live but to think as Atherton thinks."

This was all perfectly true—a happier pair could not be found. Dr. Suffield had always been thought a very able man, but Dr. Suffield who had married the rich heiress Miss Hunt, and who was now master of that magnificent place, the Towers, was really a somebody; he was looked on as a power in the county; he was expected to do very big things one of these days; nobody knew exactly what the big things were to be, but they were expected of him nevertheless. He and his wife could not help smiling at the position they had taken, and for which they were so well fitted. Nobody disputed his abilities or her beauty, or the charm of manner they both possessed. They were very hospitable; altogether they were a great success. And they were very proud of each other Atherton never thought of the time when he had doubted that the result of their union would have been different from what it actually turned out to be. And Jessica wondered at the marvellous way her nature seemed to have changed; she never felt rebellious now.

But are we ever sure of ourselves?

One afternoon Mrs. Suffield and Miss Morson had strolled over to the Towers to enjoy a few hours' worship of the son and heir. They found Jessica playing with him in front of the boudoir fire; she told them that he could almost walk, and that he would soon talk.

"And see," she said triumphantly, "he has pulled my hair down."

"Oh! my grandson is a wonderful fellow!" said Mrs. Suffield, bouncing Master Harold in the air, much to that young gentleman's delight.

"I wonder what your future will be, my son!" said the young mother, her flushed face peering from out of the mane of tawny curls. "I must do a mother's part by you; I must marry you to an heiress, at any rate."

"You must marry a dear, lovable girl, mustn't you, you sweet darling?" said the elder Mrs. Suffield.

"She must be an heiress," persisted Jessica; "all mothers like to marry their sons to heiresses."

"I don't think I studied whether you were an heiress or not when Atherton married you, my dear," said the elder Mrs. Suffield, balancing Harold on her knee.

"Oh! mother, I don't know! You can say that now, of course!"

"Jessica!" said Miss Morson.

"Well! I didn't say anything," said Jessica, getting up from her undignified position, and arranging her hair in a rough knot in front of the mirror.

"My dear Jessica, you didn't say anything, because I know very well that you didn't mean what you said!" And Mrs. Suffield smiled, and cooed softly to Harold, who showed his appreciation by untying her bonnet-strings.

"Of course she didn't mean what she said," said Miss Morson.

The figure before the mirror did not move, but appeared wholly occupied in the adjusting of some loose, curly tendrils of hair. There was a dead silence, which Jessica broke. She spoke very distinctly.

"I don't consider that I said anything," she said; "but I know one thing—whatever I said I meant."

Mrs. Suffield stood up and fixed Harold safely between two cushions in the corner of a couch—he immediately set to work to try and bite his toes—then she went across the room and turned Jessica forcibly round. She put her hands on her daughter-in-law's shoulders and looked at the mutinous face.

"I want to see, Jessica, that you are laughing."

"Why should I laugh?"

"You know I was always very fond of you, and that I thought you and Atherton would be very happy together; that I never gave anything else a thought."

"That 's ridiculous; I was very rich, and you were quite right to want the match; I don't blame you. As I say, I must do the same for my son."

"You don't retract your words, then?"

"There 's nothing to retract."

Mrs. Suffield loosened her hold, tied her bonnet-strings, and drawing on her gloves went out of the room.

"You silly girl!" said Miss Morson, rushing up to Jessica; "run after her this moment and make her come back."

"It 's all right; she 'll come back."

"No, she won't—not unless you make her. Go this moment when I tell you."

"Oh! it 's all right—it 's all right!"

"And I say it 's all wrong. You won't go? You stupid woman! I 'm sure she won't come back. It 's too bad! I must go to her; I must go to her." And Miss Morson also went out of the room, and she banged the door behind her.

Harold gurgled a triumphant infantine chuckle, having succeeded in getting his toes in his mouth, and giving the idea that he was about to swallow himself.

Jessica rang the bell impatiently, and sent him to the nursery. Then she sat in an arm-chair in front of the fire and stared moodily into the burning coals. She was annoyed; she felt herself aggrieved, she did not know why, except that she had no intention of being treated like a spoilt child; she would just show everybody that she was a woman, and not a silly girl as Miss Morson had said she was. She longed yet dreaded to see Atherton.

But when he came home she told him nothing of what had taken place, and made some excuse when he proposed they should go over to the Willows after dinner; she knew, however, it must all come out very soon.

The next evening he came into her dressing-room.

"Oh! do please fasten these pearls, Atherton," she said. "I was just coming to you——" She gave him one glance and could see that he knew everything. "Thanks! Now make haste and dress, because I want to get dinner over quickly; remember, we have a drive of twelve miles before us;" and she slipped past him like some lovely vision. They were going to a party; she had on his favourite gown—amber satin—and her pearl ornaments; and as she went down the old broad oak staircase, her amber satin train with its border of amber feathers trailing behind her, she felt armed for the fray and very confident; in fact, she rather enjoyed the situation.

When they were driving along after dinner, Atherton started the subject. He had called at the Willows on his way home; his mother was out, but Miss Morson had given him a description of yesterday's scene; he wanted to hear Jessica's version.

"What did she say?" asked Jessica.

He told her. When he had finished, she said—

"My version is the same as hers; you can trust Miss Morson—she always tells the truth."

"But how could you have said such a thing to my mother, of all women in the world?"

"I don't consider I said anything, and whatever I said I meant."

"Jessica, Jessica!" he said reprovingly, as he put his arms round her. "You 'll come with me to-morrow, love, won't you, and say that you did *not* mean what you said?"

"I can't tell stories, Atherton," she replied coldly, "even to please you."

"But you know you did not mean it."

She only shrugged her shoulders.

After a little while he took his arms from her, and sighed heavily as he lay back in the corner of the carriage.

At the party she was the one woman to whom none of the others could compare; Atherton himself had never admired her more, but he was shocked to find that his feelings were so strong against her just then that it seemed he had never loved her less. But he said to himself that he must have patience.

CHAPTER III.

AND he did have patience; he and Miss Morson both had patience. They tried argument and persuasion. They stated the case to her over and over again. A few impulsive words had become an insult through being reiterated. Mrs. Suffield had said nothing about it, but she had not been to the Towers—how could she, they said, till Jessica had gone to her and told her that they had only been impulsive words? But this Jessica refused to do.

"Of course, you can make me, if you like," she said to Atherton.

"I make you do nothing," he replied. "I thought you loved my mother; I thought you loved me."

"You know I do," she said impatiently.

He answered nothing this time.

Jessica feared all Milchester would talk of the altered relations xisting in the intercourse of the two Mrs. Suffields, so she asked Atherton to take her and baby to the seaside. Without a murmur he took them, but he very soon went back to Milchester to see his mother.

"Why did Jessica go away without saying good-bye to me, Atherton?" she asked.

"We must talk this over, mother;" and then, for the first time, they discussed the subject nearest their hearts.

When he was leaving, she said, impressively, "Now, understand, Atherton, you're only to get Jessica to come here; I don't see how I can go to the Towers till she does. She has no need to mention what has passed; only let her come to see me, only let her be my daughter again."

"I don't think that's right; she ought to own to you that she was wrong. I know she thinks she was, so she should own it."

"If I don't mind, what does it matter to anybody?"

"It matters to me; you 're my mother."

"And she 's your wife; my dear boy, the whole affair is getting too serious."

"That 's true, that 's true. You 're right, mother."

And so he told Jessica what his mother had said.

"You 'll go and see her as soon as you get back to Milchester?" he asked.

"Oh," she replied petulantly, "we 're not back at Milchester yet." Atherton dared not trust himself to speak—he was too angry.

And so the miserable days passed; he still stayed at the seaside with her and the boy, although it was near Christmas, but he made continual journeys to see his mother, whose name he never mentioned to Jessica now.

He was unhappy, and he knew Jessica was unhappy.

One evening she went over to him, and kissed him.

"Do you know, Atherton," she said, "I often kiss you, but you never kiss me now."

He kissed her coldly on the forehead.

"We must go back to the Towers for Christmas," he said; "you don't mind going?"

"No; I should like to go, very much."

In the next few days he noticed a great change in her; there was a strange submissiveness about her, and yet she appeared to be brooding over some set purpose. When they got back to the Towers he consulted Miss Morson.

"I must go and see her," said the brisk old lady.

"I 'm determined to ask to be forgiven," were the first words Jessica said to her.

"There 's no need for that."

"Oh! yes. I 'll show I 've no will left. I 'll do it



"For a moment she stood up undecided."—*p.* 617.

properly—I'll say I've come to ask you to forgive me—to forgive me."

Miss Morson soon left, and she cried when she got back to the Willows.

"She looks dreadfully ill—so haggard and thin; and I don't like that intense expression. I'm frightened—so frightened."

"I'm almost afraid she's making herself ill," said Atherton, who happened to be there.

"There must be an end to this," said Mrs. Suffield. "Tell her, Atherton, not to come to me—it's too cold for her to go out; say I shall dine at the Towers to-morrow and spend the evening with her."

"You kind, good mother!" said Atherton, rapturously. When he delivered the message to Jessica, she said—

"No, no; I'll do it, I'll do it."

All through the night he heard her mutter in her sleep, "I've come to ask you to forgive me—to forgive me."

The next day he had promised to assist at an operation on an old patient of his, who lived a long way off. When luncheon was over he said to Jessica as he kissed her—

"I shall be back in time for a cup of tea; and you are not to go out, mind; stay at home and play with the boy." He ran out without waiting for her answer, and he thought delightedly as he drove away that that evening everything would be right again. And yet he could not help feeling worried and anxious—Jessica seemed so strange, so highly wrought.

At about four o'clock, as he was returning, the horses pulled up suddenly on the dark road. Before he had time to ask what was the matter, the carriage door was pulled open, and Jessica jumped in and sat down beside him.

"To the Willows as quickly as possible," she called to the footman. Then she turned her burning eyes on Atherton.

"I have been waiting here for you; I knew I should catch you at this corner." She was breathing hard, and she moved her hands restlessly.

"We are going to the Towers," he said, "not to the Willows."

"No, no: to the Willows! We are almost there. I'm going to ask to be forgiven. I'll do it, I'll do it!"

In fact, at that moment they stopped at the Willows; he felt there was no fighting against the passion that was consuming her. She opened the door herself and leaped out.

"Come with me," she gasped, as she grasped hold of his arm. "I'll do it, I'll do it; you'll see, I'll do it."

They were soon up the frost-covered path, and inside the bright little hall. They brushed past the maid-servant into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Suffield and Miss Morson rose with a cry of delight as they entered.

Jessica walked up to her mother-in-law, and stood perfectly rigid before her.

"I've come to ask you to forgive me," she began in a harsh, strained voice; "to forgive me—to forgive me;" and then, with a piercing shriek, "to forgive me!"

Mrs. Suffield caught her in her arms. "Don't say that! there's nothing to forgive. Oh! my dear, I'm so pleased to see you." She felt the figure grow heavier and heavier, and then slip to the ground. "Child, child, don't kneel to me!"

Atherton rushed to his wife, who lay huddled in a heap at his mother's feet; he lifted the apparently lifeless form on to a couch.

"My darling!" he cried, "what can it be?"

"She has fainted!" said Miss Morson.

* * * * * *

Milchester never knew the rights of the tale; Milchester could only surmise that Dr. Suffield's wife must have gone out in the damp and caught cold, or that she must always have been delicate—women with those perfect complexions always are delicate, said Milchester—or that she must have had some severe shock to her nervous system; Milchester never knew exactly how it had come about, but Milchester knew one thing for certain—and that was, that since a couple of days after Dr. Suffield's wife had returned from the seaside a few years ago she had been an invalid; she had lost the use of her lower limbs, she was paralysed, and would be an invalid for the rest of her life, poor young thing!

The Willows is sold. Old Mrs. Suffield and Miss Morson have lived at the Towers ever since a certain fateful winter afternoon. Jessica never seems happy without them, and likes them to minister to her in her helplessness. Dr. Suffield has become in the last few years a grave grey-haired man. Harold can ride a pony now, and spin tops.

It is a beautiful summer's day, and the invalid's chair has been wheeled down the grassy slope at the Towers to the edge of the stream. Dr. Suffield comes and leans over his wife as she lies there so peacefully.

"Here are some roses, Jessie, the deaf old man in the village has sent you."

She chose the prettiest ones and called Harold to her.

"Run along, darling. These are the freshest; give them to grandmamma and Miss Morson with my love."

Harold ran across the lawn to the two elderly ladies to fulfil his mission.

Jessica followed him with her eyes.

"Atherton," she said, "when the boy is old enough he must be told my history."

"I don't see why."

"I should like it; it will teach him a great lesson: we mortals are such atoms, only some of us can't believe it."

She looked at the stream rippling by.

"Do you remember, Atherton, the day before we were engaged? You rowed me to the Willows, but I would not get out of the boat, and you stood under the trees, and called me 'Miss Wilful?'"

"I remember, sweetheart," clasping her hand; "but why think of that? it's such a long while ago."

"Yes, such a long while ago!" And with her hand still in his, she turned her lovely, sad, resigned face towards him.
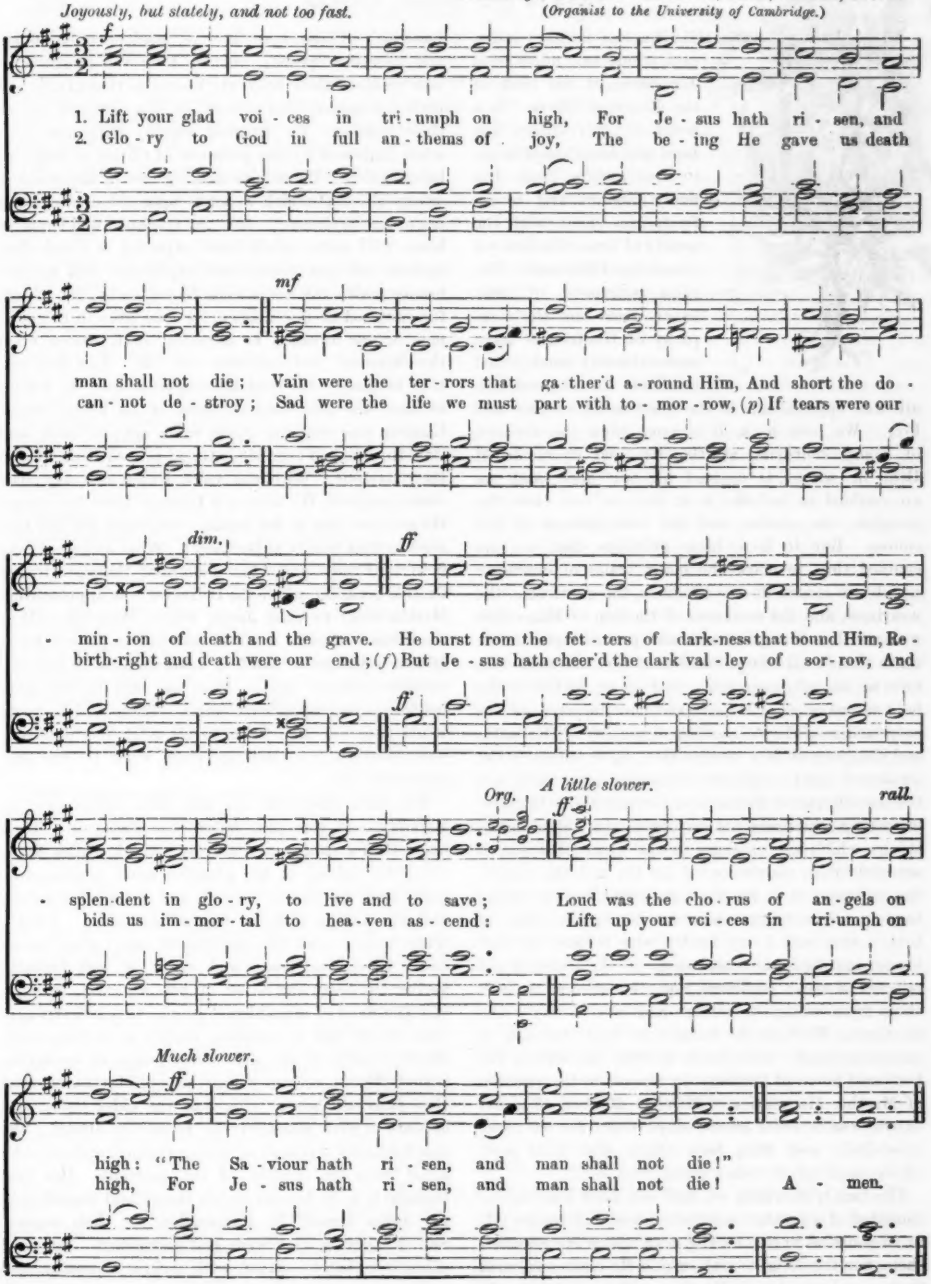
"I'm not wilful any more," she said, "am I?"

Lift your Glad Voices.

Words by HENRY WARE, 1831.

Music by GEORGE M. GARRETT, M.A., Mus.D., F.C.O.
(Organist to the University of Cambridge.)

Joyously, but stately, and not too fast.



"CAREFUL ABOUT MANY THINGS."

BY THE REV. C. F. S. MONEY, M.A., HON. CANON OF ROCHESTER, AND VICAR OF HOLY TRINITY, KILBURN.

THE village of Bethany is distant about two miles from Jerusalem, at the back of the Mount of Olives. To a house in this village our Lord was accustomed to go, to rest awhile from His many labours, and to refresh His spirit with the society of those who listened to and loved His words. The calm retirement of that sweet place and the sympathy of His friends there were evidently much prized by Him. In the great city all was opposition; in the quiet home, respect and love. We look back, it is true, from the distance of many centuries, at the life and character of Him in whom is centred all our hope, and we are enabled to include, as it were in one view, the wonders, the glories, and the humiliations of His course. But it is a high privilege that we are enabled thus to mark the many traits of character which are recorded—the kindness, the gentleness, the weariness, and the weakness of the Son of Man—that we have thus brought home and pressed upon us the truth that in all things the Son of God was made like unto us, sin only excepted. And as we so follow the holy record of what He said and how He lived, of the outpourings of His love, and the ignominy of His death, and the glory of His resurrection, there comes to the awakened mind a light of surpassing brightness, and the traveller, as he journeys on through the wilderness, mistaking sometimes his way, and doing, alas! many things which are contrary to the name of Jesus, is arrested by the conviction of his sin and the matchless compassion of his Saviour. Oh! happy, happy they in whose hearts there dwells, by the grace of God, a true and lively faith: who become the followers and the home companions of the despised and rejected of men: who turn not from Him as He goes about from village to village and city to city: who see Him as He feeds the hungry, or heals the sick, or raises the dead: who listen to Him as, within the honoured house at Bethany, in answer to the question of Martha, He replies, "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*"

The family in which we find our Lord was staying consisted of a brother and two sisters, and we are left in no doubt as to the feeling with which He regarded them, nor the delight with which He conversed with them. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Those were days of unclouded happiness and unbroken peace; but ere long the family who now received their heavenly Visitor so thankfully had their joy turned into sadness by the death of one of their number. The greatest earthly happiness, even when hallowed by the presence of Christ, is liable to interruption. There is no making sure of any comfort or any blessing which depends upon the creature and not upon the Creator. Into the brightest and happiest home will come, when least expected, a cloud that darkens all our years—an experience and remembrance which can never more be put away, but which, for our good or our misery, for our growth in godliness or our advance in unbelief, shall fasten upon the character, and influence the life. And thus was it at Bethany—the trial hour approached; the loving brother, the affectionate friend, is no longer there. Lazarus was sick, but Jesus came not; he died, and then He who had been their Guest proved Himself also their Saviour. With the voice which one day shall shake creation, He wakened Lazarus from his sleep; He restored him to his home. Oh, what joy did this send to that family at Bethany! What an appeal was it to their faith, and what a claim to their gratitude! On this occasion, when the Deliverer was approaching, Martha went to meet Jesus, whilst Mary sat still in the house. Martha went to ease her impatient heart of this reflection—"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Mary sat still in her calm confidence and submissive spirit. There will be hours when you, too, will have to sit still, not doubting your Master's love, but uncertain what He has prepared for you.

Yet once more we are told that Jesus goes to Bethany. It was just before the Passover. They made Him a supper, and Martha served, whilst Mary, out of the fulness of her grateful heart, poured ointment upon her Master's head, and anointed His feet, and wiped them with the hair of her head. A little while longer, and this intercourse must come to an end. From the peace and quiet of this friendly shelter the Lord and Giver of life advances, through the shoutings of a maddened people, to a last struggle with death and a complete victory over the grave. But the words of our title were spoken at an earlier period, when a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. She was the elder sister, and appears to have managed the household affairs. She was evidently a person of strong feeling, and one who acted upon the impulse of the moment. Her first thought is to do honour to her Guest, and accordingly she busies herself in preparation for their supper. She is right in this wish and endeavour. But how often is it that we set out with a right intention, and because we are not as watchful as we should be, an

ingredient is introduced by the Evil One which changes our mind and mars our action! As the one sister becomes more and more intent upon her preparations, she beholds the figure of her sister Mary, calm and happy, sitting at the feet of Jesus. By degrees the thought crosses her mind that there is something selfish in this indifference to her cares and occupations. "Why am I left alone to prepare the feast? Why does not my sister come and help me? Why is not the Master more considerate?" And so, with a mind perplexed and dissatisfied, she renews her toil. At length, unable any longer to contain her vexation, and forgetting that respect which was due to her Guest, she addresses Him, and says, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Mary, who had sat still to listen to the words of Jesus, sits equally still as she hears the reproach of Martha. It was not from indifference that she thus acted, not from want of love to her sister. But her mind and soul had been contemplating other and higher objects, and she was willing to leave the matter in her Master's hands. "Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me." Send from Thy presence that eager, patient inquirer, that happy disciple who is drinking in the word of life—bid her to assist my preparations, and then we can listen to Thy words. Thus appealed to, our Saviour is no longer silent. He knew the whole history of Martha's distractions, which led her thus abruptly to break in upon His conversation; not one thought of her heart had been hidden from Him; and this was the rebuke He conveyed to her, this the encouragement He gave to Mary. The much serving is passed by unnoticed, but the earnest listener is richly comforted. "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*"

It is not easy to trace the way in which good impressions made early in life become not rooted up, but choked—how the child who was accustomed to listen with a solemn mind and a touched heart to the account of holy men who feared God will cease to be influenced by these examples. But it is well to remember that there is something which covers the garden of the heart with withering effect—and that is the cares, and troubles, and pleasures of this life. In the outset of life these may, indeed, appear to be but trifles, and yet if they are not daily examined and spread before God in prayer, they will master all opposition. The young heart which to-day has nursed some disquieting thought will be upon the morrow more alive to those things which distress; the sensitiveness is increased; and so an evil temper or a wrong bias may come to pervade the whole character. In the case of Martha it was not one thing, but many things, which troubled her: the gradual drawing off her mind from that upon which alone it should have rested, and the admission into it of those distracting thoughts by which it was engrossed. It is very rarely that one thing alone has the power of producing over-carefulness; it is the distraction of many things, the thinking of many things without delight, the performance of everything without success. When bereavement comes, however bitter the loss, however deep the sorrow, the effect is not to distract the mind, but to fix it. When loss of fortune takes place, or when the dream of life is dispelled, then come a variety of cares. The lost position in the world, the dreary waste which spreads around, the gloomy hue which everything wears—all this will combine to agitate and vex a spirit which has lost its spring. It becomes careful and troubled about many things, with the accompanying drag of painful thought, and sad remembrance, and conscious weakness. And so, whilst the memory is recalling past vexations, and the imagination is on the wing to create new joys, the message of peace, the voice of conscience, the teaching of Jesus, is unheeded and despised. I would desire to appeal to all who know that they are robbed of the benefit they should derive from holy ordinances, and solemn warnings, and earnest exhortations; and I would ask if you do not find that there is something in your life which counteracts the effect of these things—something of which at times you are half conscious, and at others wholly so—which chokes the good seed, grieves the Holy Spirit, turns you from Christ, deprives you of peace, fills you with uncertainty, keeps you from your knees, and hardens your heart? Have you found at times, as you listened to the Word of Life, the message of the living God, that it attracted you for the moment from the influence of habits and thoughts which generally control you—that eternity mastered in your soul the things of time?—that the glories of heaven outshone the vanities of the world? And with the contemplation of such themes, has your soul thrilled with a joy which made you feel its immortality, and tremble for its destiny? Oh, I may surely say, with the earnestness of Paul to Agrippa, I know that you have been thus impressed and aroused. But, alas! as the sun goes down at close of day, fringing with bright gleams the clouds which wait upon its course, even so has this heavenly influence declined, leaving only in your breast a waning reverence for those occasions upon which it has been felt. You had indeed resolved to lead a new life; but before you put that resolve into execution the old one had resumed its sway. You had determined to meet those temptations and anxieties which had hitherto disturbed you by casting all your care upon God; but an unexpected occurrence, an engrossing anxiety, an overwhelming suspense, an irresistible attraction, has encountered you, and you are once more involved in all the distraction from which you had hoped to be freed. Many there are upon whose hearts the seed has been cast, who have attended upon the ordinances of God's House and the preaching of His

Word, who can recall hours when they seemed to be leading a new life, enjoying a new peace, feeding upon a new hope; and yet by daily cares and daily occupations, and nightly amusements, and increasing riches, the whole promise of their early life has been proved untrue, and they have turned from the easy service of Christ to the iron bondage of the world. With all such, then, I would desire now to plead—that if they feel and apply to themselves the force of Christ's remonstrance to Martha, they are bound to own the wisdom of Mary's choice.

It is not in anger that the Friend of Bethany would now speak to you. If it pleased Him—if it were for your good—He could send down his voice, past shining worlds and trackless wastes, and address you by name with affectionate earnestness, as He once spoke to the engrossed sister: "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*"

But the great Teacher was not satisfied with unfolding to one sister the wrongfulness of her course and the lurking evil of her heart; He told her of something else which was better, and which was calculated to satisfy her soul. And in the same way we, too, are bound to set before you the happiness of Mary's choice, as well as the misery of Martha's carefulness. It is not the strongest appeal to conscience, nor the most vivid description of judgment, nor the most appalling dread of death, that will convert and sanctify the heart. It is not the truth to which Scripture lays claim from its accurate analysis of your hearts that will lead you to obey it. No miracle and no threat will bring the sinner to God or prepare him for heaven; and if we were obliged to confine ourselves to consider the unhappiness here, and the misery hereafter, of those who give their hearts to the world and their lives to sin, we should be hopeless of rescuing by this means one sinner from the error of his ways and the ruin of his soul. We may gain a hearing for the message of the Gospel by this means, we may draw forth an acknowledgment of the world's worthlessness, but it is needful to do far more than this if we would have you to seek earnestly the one thing needful. We must point to that which can take the place of all you are summoned to give up. The all-mastering and wonderful love of Christ must be set before you; the hope of eternal life through Him; the preparation by Him of joys which shall never end; the readiness with which He will condescend to enter your heart, to come in and sup with you; the power and the gentleness, the skill and the tenderness with which He will comfort and relieve; the offer of a peace which passeth understanding, and of a rest which remaineth for the people of God—all this must be associated with "the one thing needful," in order to draw you from the world which passeth away, and to introduce you to that Friend who abideth for ever. And even when this is done—when the contrast is so strongly drawn that there rises up a desire to choose the better part; to cast in, once and for ever, our lot with the children of God; to leave no longer the soul's safety or the soul's peace uncertain and unsecured—even then, is it not true that there is felt a want of power to maintain the choice, to act upon the decision, to fight manfully, to strive for the mastery, to persevere unto the end? But if you feel this want—if, as you begin to find that "one thing" only is absolutely necessary for you, you at the same time mourn your inability to obtain it, then indeed, with the promise of God and the experience and example of His people, we are enabled to give you every encouragement. Many who once looked upon this world as very good, and found delight in those pleasures it affords, have been enabled to look beyond, to a purer land and a more enduring substance. Many who once found that the eye and ear of sense revealed to them a beauty and a harmony which thrilled their soul and captivated their mind, have now gazed on the King in His beauty, and rejoiced in the sweeter melody of redeeming love. Many who knew not how to give up the inclinations of a lifetime and the infirmities of a second nature have become transformed by the renewing of their minds and the imparted grace of God. Many who once cried with the publican, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" or with St. Paul, "Wretched man that I am!" have finished their course, and kept the faith, and received for their portion "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Many who once, under the plea of much serving, and the temptation of overcarefulness, neglected Christ and imperilled their souls, have been brought by the grace of God and faith in the Saviour to choose that better part which shall never be taken away from them.

And now I ask you to close with the offer which the address of Christ to the two sisters holds out to you. Let the effect produced by choosing the good part, and the promise that it shall never be taken from those who so choose it, excite an ardent desire in every breast to be numbered amongst those who are taught of Christ and pardoned of God. You have seen how Mary seated herself at the feet of Jesus and listened to His word. She was not attracted by curiosity—she did not seek for any temporal benefit—she did not pay Him a heartless homage—she followed Him not out of regard to human custom: she knew He was a homeless wanderer; she knew He was despised of men; and yet to Mary the proudest throne would have been less esteemed and less desired than that humble place at her Lord's feet. She had experienced the power and the *sympathy* of Christ, and that was the cause of her *humility* and *earnestness*. The spirit of God had taken of the things of Christ and had shown them unto her. She was convinced of her sin and *her need of a Saviour*—she felt her sin within, and she beheld her Saviour beside her. In the midst, then, of all the preparations which her less spiritually minded sister was engaged in, she found her duty and her pleasure in listening at the feet of Jesus. She had come to feel this truth: that "man

does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Saviour was to her not merely the deliverer from a future evil and a future danger, but her present Guide and her portion for ever. This gave her peace and tranquillity of mind. This made her afterwards, when death invaded her family circle, submissive under the stroke, and patient in expectation of deliverance. Let me, then, ask you if, like her, you have taken your place at your Lord's feet? Not one holy desire, not one characteristic of the faith exhibited in this happy and favoured disciple of her Lord, but you must resolve to seek, if you would partake of her blessing. Are you willing to learn of One who was lowly? Are you ready to bear His cross? Are you seeking now—are you conscious of possessing a real desire, deep and growing, to be conformed to your Saviour's example? There are many objects upon which the mind is wont to fasten, which the more they are contemplated the more do they disturb, perplex, and unsettle. But it is not so when *Jesus* is the object of contemplation and love. *If He alone is looked to for deliverance—if He is entirely trusted*—if His table is approached in order to obtain a closer union with Him, then will there reign a holy tranquillity within the soul. All the decision derived from *having one object*, and all the energy from feeling it to *be very needful*, will be the possession of one so living. The pleasures, and the cares, and the trials of life, will range themselves in their proper places. They will neither rend by their conflicting appeals nor overwhelm by their united pressure. Whatever is presented to the mind as matter for hope or distress will be referred to its connection with *the one great object*. The *faith* which has enabled the believer to put on Christ, and to rejoice in His *salvation*, will stand forth as a pattern for every other effort of the soul. When in some trifling matter which seems almost beneath the notice of Jehovah, but which is sufficiently great to master the strength of His servant, there is a strong temptation to be careful and cast down, then will the believer give himself to more earnest self-examination and prayer, and then will he renew that life of faith which first began beside the Cross. Then will he prefer to take his seat at *Christ's feet* rather than distract and endanger his soul with the *cares*, the pleasures, and the riches of this uncertain life.

Jesus loved Martha and Mary. Think you, my reader, that He loves you? Are you convinced that you love Him? Have you in very truth chosen the good part? and are you, in dependence upon God's grace, endeavouring to give your whole heart to the Saviour, and to draw your whole spiritual life from Him? It is by going to Christ in the *first instance* for *pardon*, for *peace*, for *grace*, that you will obtain strength for the performance of duty. Mary felt that the strength to do anything must be gained at the feet of the Saviour. There she would learn wisdom; there she would receive directions; there she would be filled with hope; there she would receive a blessing which would carry her through trial and care unmoved and undismayed. No soul that has not thus nestled close to Jesus, waited for His word, depended upon His grace, and received out of His fulness, can ever hope to serve faithfully or to serve rightly. Blessed, unspeakably blessed, is the relation which subsists between a soul that is filled with the love of Christ and the Saviour who loved that soul and gave Himself for it! High and holy and ennobling is the intercourse to which those are admitted who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. United by faith to the Son, adopted by grace into the family of God, there is henceforth no power which shall be able to pluck them out of His hand. Oh, then, strive to gain more, if you feel that you possess and realise any of your Saviour's love! Think of Him watching you! Think of Him praying for you! Think of Him as deeply interested in all that concerns you! "*Be not careful, be not troubled about many things.*" Let your Master receive an undivided and unfaltering service, and then, whatever others may say of your contempt for earthly things, may this be the comfort and sweet encouragement which Jesus Himself shall pour into your soul: *One thing is needful: and you have chosen that good part which shall never be taken away from you.*

THE DREAMS OF DR. FAYDING.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," "THE VANISHING OPAL," "THE HEART OF THOMAS TITT," ETC. ETC.

PART II.

WHERE are some men to whom life seems destined to be one long discipline; the 'why' of this we cannot tell. Hope seems to exist only to mock them; for them fruit forms and swells, but either to ripen not, or, ripening, to be plucked by other hands. That these have their place in the great universe of God, I doubt not; but what their place is, why they should be ever in shadow when the sun shines over hill and dale; why they should be hot and fevered while the cool wind blows, and cold and cheerless while that bright sun shines; deaf, when there is music to be heard; blind, when there is beauty to be seen; bedridden, when there are moors and fields, and hills and vales, all of which would receive with welcome a human tread: the why of this I know not: I only have faith to say—"Shall not



"'Come here, young man, and listen to what's before you in life.'" p. 630.

the Judge of all the earth do right?" I stand upon the shore of this sea of sorrow, though I venture not into its deep, and wonder and adore where I cannot understand.

Who started in life with better prospects than Jonathan Fayding? If the race were to be to the swift, and the battle to the strong, then Jonathan Fayding had a right to win life's Derbys, whatever they may be; and to be conqueror in its Waterloos, whatever they may be also. Jonathan Fayding had a right to expect a full hand; life was to be very good for him.

In family the young man was somebody. Old Sir Jonathan, his father, could go back almost to the Conqueror himself. In the grey matter of the brain, the quality was good: young Jonathan was at the head of all his classes at school. Limbs! yes; they were all right too—bowling or batting, running or leaping—in all of them the young man was first; and first he meant to be in life. Jonathan Fayding was endowed with all that ought to get a man on in this life; with all that would enable a man to enjoy himself with the things of this life. He meant to have them, and to enjoy them too.

But beyond this life he looked not; here there was enough to satisfy him; he would take it all; and this would be to him the fulfilling of the destiny of life.

But let it be recorded that there was nothing low or grovelling in the young man's idea of pleasure; on the contrary, his ambitions were noble, his affections pure, his tastes refined. The world was not worth having spent on it all that he had to spend.

It may be that there are some so largely dowered that it seems a tenfold shame in them to spend their gifts upon what must perish in the very using—in the very having; and the might with which they would have poured their life down the channels which Nature has hollowed out, is met by the might of boulder and shingle, drift and crag, turning that life away from the morass in which it would have been lost, to the ocean infinite—the sun-lit, the music-laden, the health-pervaded sea.

Jonathan Fayding, thou art the man! Of these "maybes" thou "art," and because thou "art," I write. There are those who through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Mrs. Dillwort, you didn't know that, or you wouldn't have talked nonsense to Drailes the sexton about

mushrooms, mistletoe, and warts: perhaps it was not necessary that you should know much about the matter. To do your duty in that state of life to which you were called—making puddings and beds—may be all that is required of you. Your trials will come to you after your kind—as wisely ordered for you, as other folks' are for them. Be faithful, all ye Dillworts, in your day and generation in what you are called to; only don't pretend to understand that about which you know nothing at all.

The gentleman at the "Three Owls" had yet a good bit of holiday before him—at least, quite enough to enable him to learn something about the Vicar of Daysford, and something he wanted much to know: he would give a good deal to discover the mystery of that peaceful face. If the vicar gave him the chance, he would cultivate his acquaintance, and perhaps get in some degree into his confidence. Whether the three wise-looking birds, under whose sheltered wings he lay that night, were hatching him into this wisdom, I cannot tell; but such was his determination. Moreover, he would spend at Daysford what remained of his holidays. If there were anything to learn, there was much; and, only imagine, having some inner rest like the vicar's, in the midst of life's hurry and worry—the London life he had to lead; for the visitor to the "Three Owls" knew enough of mankind to be sure that the vicar's face of heavenly peace was but the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

In the morning the good man called at the "Three Owls," which little incident, though in itself scarce worth the ink I am spending on it, caused a considerable sensation in the village. Why the vicar shouldn't let a man come and go without putting himself out of the way to come and see him, was what the landlady of the "Three Owls" couldn't understand. That day she had a great deal of dusting to do in the immediate neighbourhood of the visitor's door—indeed, on the door itself; moreover, she had to clean the key; and to clean the key she had to take it out; and then she had to look into the lock, to make sure that there was no dust inside; and as Nature had so arranged matters on the head of the landlady of the "Three Owls" that her ear was in close propinquity to her eye, she just gave it a chance of hearing what was going on. And what did she hear? Why, nothing short of an invitation from the vicar to her guest, to come and stay with him while he remained in Daysford. That such a thing should be, vexed her landlady soul; it was an affront to the "Three Owls;" it was a lost chance of many separate charges for breakfasts, dinners, and suppers; but why the vicar should so suddenly take up with a stranger, was from the incomprehensibility of it more vexatious still; and for the credit of human nature I am sorry to say the lady of the "Three Owls" looked pickles at her visitor as, that very afternoon, he took his departure for the vicarage.

Her only guest gone! and abstracted by the vicar! Well! could he be as good a man as people thought? If the "Three Owls" could speak, what would they say about it—that old one in the middle especially—she'd like something to come out of his beak; she'd like him even to wink, which wink being freely rendered might be translated, "You see, parsons ain't to be trusted no more than anyone else; they say, 'Thou shalt not steal,' but here's been one, and stolen the 'Three Owls'' only guest." She'd drop in in the afternoon to Mrs. Crook, and have a cup of tea with her. She'd like to know whether she could tell the meaning of it all.

The stranger took his departure all the same; and that evening found him installed at the vicarage, the guest of Dr. Fayding. The doctor had his own reasons for asking the Daysford visitor; and the visitor had his own reason for being glad to accept the invitation he received.

Charles Domville lived in the world, and what had the world done for him? He had toiled, and what had come out of his toil? Little more than thorns and thistles, as the fruit of the sweat of his brow. The girl whom he thought he had won had left him for another; the fret of that sore was eating him up; and now, though he wandered from place to place, he could find no peace. Moreover, he was a disappointed man in his profession; the Mastership in Chancery to which he thought he was entitled, and which he had every reason to expect, was given elsewhere, and here was something else to furrow his brows, and make them very unlike the Vicar of Daysford's; he was a restless man, and the vicar, whose eye was not dimmed, could see it all. And he pitied his guest, even as his guest envied him.

It needed but a short time for confidence to grow up between the two; the vicar's visitor somehow believed that his host could help him to rest; and the vicar longed to calm the fret which evidently corroded that visitor's life; and so they came together upon this point ere very long.

"Yes," said Charles Domville to the vicar, as they sat together by the latter's study fire, "I am the son of a man whose life had been unrestful, and his unrest is upon me; the father's inheritance is with the son—there has been an entail of misery, and I have come in for it. I will talk freely to you, sir, as I have not talked to anyone. I can make a father of you, and give you all the confidences of a son; it will be a relief to me; and perhaps you may tell me how my entail may be broken. Hah! when I have been tying up estates in strict entail, I have often shuddered, thinking of the entail that I have been obliged to come in for myself, whether I liked it or no.

"I knew nothing, sir, of my own history until my father was on his death-bed; then he told it to me, or, rather he told me his own, which, indeed, has woven itself into mine. My father was a restless man, a man who never prospered in life; he seemed always on the point of prospering; and when he was on the point of success, met with failure instead. And all

his life was miserable. He was ever living with his losses and bygone troubles. All that was wretched seemed to live with him, to eat and drink, and walk and talk with him, and be his companion all day long. And he hated me; he used to tell me that I embodied his curse; he said he wished I had never been born. At last, he lay on his death-bed; and then he said, 'Come here, young man, and listen to what 's before you in life. 'T is now twenty years since I robbed a man. I robbed him not of gold and silver, not of lands, but of love—no, not of love, but of what he loved; to steal is bad enough, but to steal from my own friend was worse. It doesn't matter what his name was, he was my friend, and I was his, until I became a thief, and stole from him the jewel of a heart; nay, not that, though that I did my best to steal. I only got the casket, after all. But why shouldn't I tell you his name? Shame was going to keep me from it; but how can you do what I charge you now to do, if ever you meet that man in life? His name is Jonathan Hopeton. Jonathan Hopeton was my chief college friend; and Jonathan's heart was as open to me as the sky is to the sun. And Jonathan fell in love—in love with the daughter of a poor, proud man. She had a brother at the University, and she came up to the Commemoration to see, like many; but not to be seen, like still more.

"'There I saw her; and no sooner had I seen her than I determined to have her; but her heart was Jonathan's. There was no chance of my cutting him out; he was handsomer, cleverer than I. I know not what demon possessed me, but I would have killed Jonathan, killed my friend, rather than not get that girl, whose heart was his.

"'But there was no need of running any gallows chance; we managed the thing more cleverly than that. The girl's father was poor, very poor, for his position in life; and his son, who was as poor in heart as he was in purse, fell in with the plan which was to rob Hopeton of his sister; not of his sister's heart—mind you, I never said that—but of his sister herself. I paid for the whole lot to go abroad; and the girl's wretched brother was in my pay. He stopped all Hopeton's letters; he stopped all hers; the rascal worked the oracle with a vengeance; for he was promised two thousand pounds by me, on the day I married his sister. He worked double death, and worked it well; many a time since, I could have blown out his brains for his cleverness and success. She believed Hopeton was dead, and he believed she was dead; and then I came in, and father and brother hung about her, and coaxed her, and kissed her, and flattered her; and to save the lot of them from ruin, she consented to call me husband.

"'Hah! it all came out. I never had her heart, and woe betide the man that takes a woman without her heart. And when it all came out, she just died; it was all that was left her to do; but she left you behind; and I wish she had not, for you have just served to keep up the memory of what has been my life-long curse.

"'Now then, young man, listen, and my curse (whatever that may be worth—perhaps more than my blessing) be upon you, if you don't carry out what I say. If ever in your life you come across anyone of the name of Jonathan Hopeton, go down upon your knees before him; and put your two hands together, the way children do when they are saying their prayers, and ask his forgiveness on your miserable father. Tell him that, from the day he did him this tremendous wrong, no prosperity has fallen upon his life.' I carry the burden of that," said the vicar's visitor, "on my heart; I feel as if I had to bear his sin about, until I find the forgiveness that will roll it off, until I find the man; and if I do find him, how do I know that he will forgive? And I have my own troubles too. I must carry about for ever with me a heart trouble of the selfsame kind; only I am not the wrong-doer, but the wronged. The world too has gone awry with me. I am disappointed in both position and purse; and all I have, or indeed all I hope for now, I would give, Doctor, to have in my face the peace that there is in your face—the peace in my heart that there is in your heart. The secret of peace is with you; and I would give all I have, or hope for, to have the secret of peace with me."

There was a long silence in that study, and the younger man and the old looked both of them into the fire; it may be that each was seeing in the coals the embodiment of what was filling his thoughts and heart.

At last the younger man said, "Dr. Fayding, you have the secret of peace; if that secret can be communicated, tell it to me."

The old man said nothing, but taking his visitor by the hand, led him up to the green curtain drawn in front of the little churchyard in the recess. The lamp was already so placed, as to throw its light full in upon the peaceful looking little spot. The Doctor drew aside the curtain, and pointing to the little graves, said, "The secret of peace lies pictured there."

The vicar's visitor stood before the little recess, utterly amazed. There, in truth, was the exact imitation of the home of death. This, then, was what he had heard of from the sexton in such confidence; this was the churchyard which the vicar kept in his house. Was it a toy? Nay, the old man was too serious for that; he stood in front of it with too much earnestness and reverence in his face, for that; he was a man, and an old man, and a tried man, and having become a man he had put away childish things.

The vicar's visitor felt that it was not for him to speak first, especially as his host seemed lost in contemplation; indeed, he observed that his lips were moving silently, as though in prayer. But all still remained peaceful—no cloud passed over the old man's brow.

"You say," said the vicar, "that I have peace on my brow, and peace in my heart; it is true. And the secret of that peace you want to know. The

peace I have all comes through death. Death is the gate of life. The peace of forgiven sin is the first peace of all; the peace of accepted death comes next. We live in a world of dyings; and he who struggles with death shall have a life of spasms, and not of peace. The acceptance of death—of Christ's death for us—of our own selves in us—of the dyings which are around us—in these there is peace.

"You are a scholar," said the old man, "your profession tells me that; there is a glass—it will enlarge the letters on the tombs and headstones in this churchyard: you can study them until I return. Lock the door that no one may disturb you; in an hour I shall come back." And the vicar left the room to his guest, who locked the door; while the vicar went to his own room and did the same.

It was well that Dr. Fayding took into that room the peace which indeed was his; there are times in life when war would arise in the heart, if it were not that it were hopeless to blow the trumpet, and uncover the shield, and bring forth the spear, in a land, the very atmosphere of which is peace.

The vicar gone, his visitor, with strange feelings indeed, applied the glass to the little churchyard which lay before him; and strange were the revelations which it made.

The first inscription he came on was, when freely translated—

HERE LIETH £10,000.
Died May 1, 1826.

Ten thousand pounds dead! he could put no meaning to it at all. There was not a word of explanation; simply "died." Close to it was another headstone—

HERE LIETH CLOVELY MANOR.
Died June 14, 1828.

Clovely Manor! well, here was a name, at any rate. Who was he? what did he die of? he was a relation, no doubt. Poor fellow! in all probability he had a history; it was just such a name as one would find in a novel. Perhaps Dr. Fayding would tell him something about him. Perhaps he, too, had a love affair, and maybe died of a broken heart. Although a lawyer, Charles Domville had some imagination; and as he was not engaged upon any case, he allowed it a little grace.

But he could not tarry long in his reverie; there were other graves to be examined; and it took some little time to decipher some of the stones. Who lies in this row? Ah, no doubt a family. Fayding! why, here's the vicar's own name. The old man never had wife or child. Surely he hasn't buried himself? Let me see:—

"HERE LIETH JONATHAN FAYDING,
BISHOP OF CUMBERLAND.
Died January 14, 1840.

"No doubt his grandfather," said Mr. Domville. And next to him—

HERE LIETH JONATHAN FAYDING,
DEAN OF DORWICH.
Died February 3, 1842.

"No doubt his father," said the visitor; "the Church runs in some families, just as medicine and the law."

Again—

HERE LIETH JONATHAN FAYDING,
CANON OF THWAITDEAN.
Died July 9, 1844.

"Bless me!" said Charles Domville, "how 'Jonathan' and Church preferment run in this family. Who was he?"

HERE LIETH THE LORD CHANCELLOR:
ALSO
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY:
ALSO
THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY.
Died November 4, 1848.

"What! all three of them?" said Charles Domville. "What a terrible mortality in high places! I wonder if there were any epidemic then? But I don't remember reading of this; surely it is so remarkable that I must remember it if I had read of it. I can't make out this place at all; there must be something allegorical in it. Ah, yes, no doubt, for here is another:—

"HERE LIETH HEALTH.
Died September, 1855."

And after reading this Charles Domville would have been sure that it was all a mystery, to which only Dr. Fayding could supply the key, when the glass almost dropped from his hand as he read the name of his own father and mother:—

HERE LIES CHARLES DOMVILLE:
ALSO
DOROTHY HIS WIFE.
Died July 2nd, 1822.

And the date, what was it? Not the year his father, to his certain knowledge, died, not the year his mother died, but one year before this last. Both dead, dead together! And what was the year? It was that of their marriage, not their death.

There were more graves, but the vicar's visitor did not care to read the inscriptions on their headstones; he threw himself down in the arm-chair, and, with his head between his hands, felt like a man who found himself suddenly in a maze.

"Jonathan," that was a well-known name—it was one of the two impressed by his dying father on his mind; but the other name, "Hopeton," what connection could Fayding have with Hopeton? And yet, if there were no connection, how came it that his father's and mother's names were in this churchyard? There could not have been two Charles Domvilles, and each of

them married to a Dorothy; the whole thing was a tremendous tangle and bewilderment; but the vicar could no doubt explain it all. Indeed, the whole affair of this churchyard needed explanation, the inscriptions on the other tombstones as well as those on this.

The vicar's visitor had not long to wait, for the hour was up; and the good man knocked at the door. He was himself calm and peaceful, but with another-world look upon him, more than there had been before.

The vicar gazed for a few moments silently, and with a look of unutterable interest and pity, on his guest; and then laying his hand upon his shoulder, said:—"Hear the parable of the churchyard. That grave," said the vicar, pointing to the one which had so staggered the young man, "is the grave of *your* father and mother. You will observe the date; on that day they died to me; and I numbered them deliberately amongst the dead. Yonder little church has no registry books; the registry of this churchyard is kept in my heart. This churchyard is the cemetery of life, hopes, and expectations—those things which died, and which for my peace I learned to bury, to put out of sight. Tell me what inscriptions you have read, and I will explain them all."

"First and foremost," said Charles Domville, "my father's and my mother's grave."

"To explain that," said the vicar, "must be to tell you also how this graveyard came into existence; no toy to please me as a child, but a substantial parable, if I might so speak, to help me as a man. We are all of us differently made; and to me, it may be, in my weakness, this has been a real help. I am the Jonathan whom your mother loved."

"But *his* name was Hopeton—Jonathan, it is true—but Jonathan Hopeton."

"And so was mine—my name was Hopeton; but a sister of my father's, Mrs. Elizabeth Fayding, left me the estate of Clovely Manor, on condition of my taking her name, and so I became Jonathan Fayding.

"The history of this churchyard is indeed my own; none lie buried in it but those who belong to me, or were connected in some way with me. That is how your father, as well as your mother, come to lie here.

"When I heard of your mother's marriage, I was struck down with fever, and for a long time lay between life and death; and before I might be said to be really well, she had died. It was during that long time that I made this churchyard. 'They shall be dead,' said I, 'indeed to me,' and to root it and ground it in my mind, I made this cemetery, and their grave. Lost friendship and lost love I buried there; if my mind wandered to either your father or your mother, I turned it at once to the churchyard, to death; and said, 'Buried—gone—belonging to the earth no more.'"

The young man dropped on his knees, and putting his hands together said, "Grant to the dead the forgiveness I was given a life-charge to implore."

"Take it, take it freely," said the old man, raising him up. "I have no enmity to the dead."

"And my mother!"

"As your father's wife, her grave shall be undisturbed; as anyone's *wife* but *mine*, she lies buried there."

"But herself?"

"Why should the living be sought amongst the dead? *She*, *she* herself was never dead to me. I knew I had her heart; how could I ever bury her? In unembodied love I knew I ever had her heart as she had mine. You have told me to-day more than I knew before, but I knew enough to keep me from ever laying *her* here. Oh, no! *she* lives with me every day; it is only the hope of earthly union, it is only a human friendship, which lie buried there, never to disturb me more.

"Well," said the vicar after a pause, "a little time passed on, and one day coming on the text, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach," I thought, 'That word is for me,' and it ended in my taking orders, and becoming a curate in a place where there was so much to do, I had scarce time to think of the trial by which I had been vexed so sore. I did not allow this death to paralyse my life, but into the ministry I took with me the flesh and its ambitions; none the less the flesh—it may be, still more the flesh—because they intruded where of all other places the flesh should not come. Family, talents, interest, all led me to expect high preferment in the Church; but one hope after another perished, and one patron after another failed. They all lie buried there. They trouble me now no more. They have not even ghosts; and, if they had, those ghosts would have nothing to do with me. One by one I buried my ambitions there;" and the old vicar pointed to the graves of the Bishop, the Dean, and the Canon, all Jonathan Faydings.

"And with those," said the vicar, "I buried those three great personages—the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the First Lord of the Treasury. I had expected a bishopric from the last, and then I came down to a deanery; but my hopes were disappointed, and I buried bishopric, and deanery, and First Lord, all hard by each other; the Archbishop and the Lord Chancellor had to be buried on the same grounds. As long as I was expecting everything and anything from man, I had unrest; but when I gave all such things up, and died to them and the people connected with them, I said, 'What helped me in one death will help me in others.' I buried them; I did as should be done with the dead—I put them out of sight—and they have never turned in their graves; they have never vexed me more. I have seen that in these things 'the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,' and that 'a man's life consisteth not in what he is called, or what he has.'

"As life wore on, I had to *accept* as dead—yes,

and if I were to have peace, to *account* as dead —what you see on those stones ; and which, once put there, had no place for further disturbance in my heart. Ten thousand pounds I lost by the collapse of the firm with which it was placed. When I knew that beyond all doubt it was dead, I interred it there. Clovely Manor was taken from me by a flaw in my poor aunt's will, and there it lies ; I respected her good intentions, and kept the name she wished to have perpetuated. The last that lies buried here is 'health :' it passed away gradually ; so much so that for a long time I fought against the idea that it would go ; but its time came, and when I recognised that it was dead, I laid it reverently here."

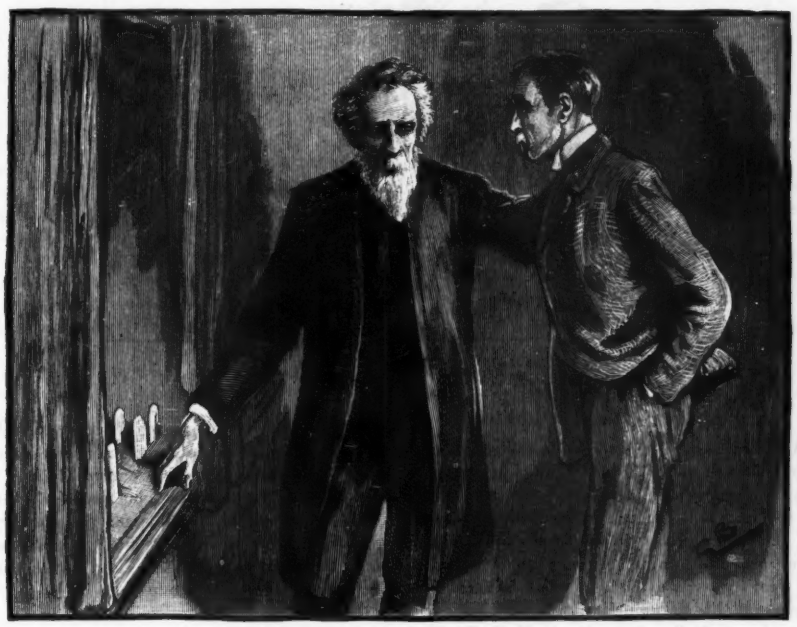
"But can you banish all these things from your mind ?" asked the visitor.

"I can *think* of them as *dead*," says the vicar, "and thinking of them as 'the dead' does me good. They have had their relationship to my life, and they themselves have passed away. We pass through death unto new life, and that life is peace. There are hopes, there are desires, there are grievances, there are losses, there are ambitions, there are relationships which must be buried—accepted as dead—if there is to be in the heart anything of a perfect peace."

"But how can you have any brightness," asked Charles Domville, "if you are thus always a dweller amongst the tombs ?"

"But I am not always a dweller amongst the tombs," said the vicar. "Do I look as if I were ? I believe in resurrection, and life everlasting, and in the world to come. What I have sown here in corruption, I expect will rise in incorruption ; the dead hopes of earth transformed into the living realisations of heaven. Earth's losses in love, and wealth, and health, and human honours, and all that this world can give—when surrendered with a chastened will—when passed away from the fret, and cankering care of unsanctified Nature, when dead in their bodily form, can live in their essence, and in their new forms above. How they will rise, and with what body they will come, I know not ; but God will give them a body as it pleaseth Him. There is not for any man who surrenders all to the will of God, a final death to aught that is good, be it of mind, body, or estate ; it dies in form, but in essence it shall arise and live."

The vicar reverently drew the curtain across the little graveyard, and his visitor had learned the secret of the holy calm that sat upon his face. God is a God of peace, and through much tribulation we enter into the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom that is now, the Kingdom that is yet to come.



"'Hear the parable of the churchyard.'"—*p.* 632.

SHORT ARROWS.*

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.



"WHAT 'THE COUNTRY' MEANS."

THE WEATHER.

A MAN who had been complaining because it had not rained for a good while, when the rain did come then grumbled because it did not come sooner. It is the rich rather than the poor who talk of the "wretched weather," because they have fewer real sorrows to grumble at. "What wretched weather we are having!" said a man to an old woman of his acquaintance whom he passed on the road. "Well, sir," she replied, "any weather is better than none." Fuller tells us of a gentleman, travelling on a misty morning, who asked a shepherd (such men being generally skilled in the physiognomy of the heavens) what weather it would be. "It will be," said the shepherd, "what weather shall please me." Being asked to explain his meaning, he said, "Sir, it shall be what weather pleaseth God; and what weather pleaseth God, pleaseth me."

WHAT "THE COUNTRY" MEANS.*

A teacher in a London school recently asked the little ones forming her Kindergarten class to draw a tree on their slates. The children all complied with the request; but one of the mites gave even more than the teacher asked for, and drew the railings round the tree at the same time. This city child could not imagine a tree without railings round it. She was one of a large class of London children who know nothing of the pleasures of a country holiday, and whose friends cannot procure one for them unaided. Here the Children's Country Holiday Fund steps in, and we shall be glad to hear that our friends have made it possible for the managers of the Fund to teach many more little ones this season what "the country" means. Now is the time to help, while the season is young.

* Special attention is directed to the italicised note at the end of "Short Arrows," on page 640.

THE STRENGTH OF WEAKNESS.

St. Paul said, "when I am weak then am I strong," and many another has had the same experience. In fact this seems to be one of the ruling principles of our lives. Successes come, in many more cases than those in which we can discover the connecting-links, from failures, happiness from unhappiness. We learn in suffering lessons which are of use for our own future guidance or for the guidance of others. The weak do not always go to the wall. The invincible might of weakness protects them from many dangers and temptations that destroy the strong. The following little speech was made by a successful competitor for the prize in a foot-race: "Gentlemen, I won this cup by the use of my legs; I trust I may never lose the use of my legs by the use of this cup." The fact that men of great health and strength often die before weak ones, because they think that they can indulge their passions with impunity, and need not take care of themselves, justified the fear of this successful competitor.

XUM

A "QUIVER" HERO.

It is some time since the medal of The Quiver Heroes Fund was awarded for the saving of life from fire, but we are glad to note that our readers have not lost sight of this side of the Fund's work. Our attention was drawn to the following act of bravery on the part of Assistant-Superintendent Reeves, of the Southampton Fire Brigade, and we were glad to recognise such gallantry by the award of The Quiver Medal. On the night of February 6th last the brigade was called to a fire in French Street, Southampton, and by the time the firemen reached the house the flames were well in possession of the building. A cry was raised that there were children on the second floor, and the firemen reared their ladder to the windows and tried to force an entrance by breaking the old-fashioned frames in. But they were driven back by the heat and smoke, and had turned their attention to the floor below, when Assistant-Superintendent Reeves determined to make another effort to reach the imprisoned little ones as speedily as possible. He mounted the ladder, and, although he was overcome by the smoke when he first entered the room, succeeded in bringing out one of the children. Unfortunately this child afterwards died from the shock, and her two companions both perished in the burning building, as the gallant fireman was too much exhausted to make a second visit to the room, and his comrades did not succeed in making their way into it in time to do more than recover the burned bodies.

MORAL COSMETICS.

No cosmetics are so capable of enhancing beauty as the smile of good-temper, and a desire to please. On the other hand, even small-pox is not as great a foe to beauty as sin. We quite agree with Mr. G. Richmond, R.A., when he says that every man makes his own face.

IDOLS AT THE PAWN-SHOP.

A missionary in China tells the following story :—"I want to send home, among other 'curios,' some idols that have been actually used in worship," said a traveller we lately met in China. "Can you help me in the matter?"—"Hardly, I fear," was the reply. "I never heard of priests or people selling such articles." But next day, wending our way through the streets of the native city of Shanghai to our Mission Church, we bethought us to make inquiry on our friend's behalf at a shop where we had often stopped to survey the hideous deities of wood and plaster arrayed in the open window front, and to watch the manufacture of such images going on within. To our surprise a good supply of second-hand images was produced for our inspection. "How do you get these?" we asked.—"The people, when they are in want of food, bring them here to pawn." What a startling supplement, we thought, to the prophet's splendid satire on the idolator of his own day! "He heweth wood and kindleth it and warmeth himself, and baketh bread and roasteth meat; and the residue of his fuel he maketh a god; he boweth down to it;" and then, when he lacks bread to bake and meat to roast on his firewood, he takes the god made from its refuse, and raises therewith a few copper coins. Is there any limit to the reason-blinding power of the god of this world? Truly, were not the God we serve the Light- and Sight-giver, our service in this heathen land were hopeless.

THE WORTH OF FRESH AIR.

A humorous writer remarks of a certain locality that the advantage, if you go there for change of air, consists in the fact that you can cut off a portion and bring it home with you. Very strong likewise is the atmosphere at times in the experience of those who go in late to meetings; they certainly pay the penalty of unpunctuality in a feeling of heaviness and oppression that seems to pervade the building. "Never be late for service" is good advice, but worshippers may have been wanted elsewhere, and cannot always control their time. Entering amid the throng, they recognise the lack of pure air; but, whether realised or not, that want is harming very many, and detracting from the good wrought by the service. A medical contemporary points out that we must not too hastily blame the preacher, if drowsiness overcomes us in church—this may be after all a question of ventilation. The atmosphere is close and oppressive, and preacher and hearers alike suffer for want of God's free gift of pure air. We know a good lady who makes it her mission to tarry after Sunday-school is over to ventilate the place more thoroughly and renew the air. There are some who appear to possess a holy horror of fresh air in schools and churches, but when thoughtful care secures it to the exclusion of *draughts*, spirit and body are undoubtedly helped, and headache and weariness are prevented. "We are inclined," says the medical authority to whom we have referred, "to advocate, in winter, the admission of fresh air warmed by contact with hot-water coils beneath gratings in the floor, and numerous exhaust ventilators in the roof, provided with rings of gas-jets to keep up the temperature of the escaping air." In summer it is advised that the exhaust ventilators should still be used, fresh air being admitted by revolving panes in the windows, so as to secure an upward direction. Take care that the foul and injurious air escapes, take care that pure air is supplied without subjecting the assembly to draughts, and the services must certainly be brighter and more helpful, and congregational naps become "beautifully less."

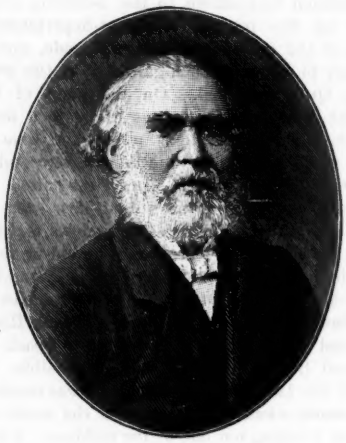
NEW BOOKS FOR BUSY WORKERS.

We hear much in these days of the effect of "modern critical research" upon the study of the Bible, and some of our friends have taken alarm at

what they have supposed to be the result of this criticism. Let them turn to the "Lesson in Biblical Criticism" which the Rev. J. Paterson Smyth, of Kingstown, offers them in his most interesting work on "The Old Documents and the New Bible" (S. Bagster and Sons, Limited), and they may be reassured. They may learn how, in the case of the Old Testament, the manuscripts of the Scriptures were preserved, and how the Jews were taught to read and interpret them, as well as the quarters from which errors of copying and the like are most likely to have come. The lesson is a most valuable one, and it is one that cannot but make us even more thankful for the open Bible which has come down to us by so many wonderfully ordered steps. A companion volume on the New Testament is promised.—"Rescuers and Rescued" is the title the Rev. James Wells, M.A., of Glasgow, gives to a volume of "Experiences among our City Poor," just published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. If there are any of our readers who are downcast because they see no fruit as the result of their diligent sowing, let them turn to Mr. Wells's book and read the instances there recorded of God's wondrous power and grace. And in the light of the author's clear testimony let them take fresh heart, as well they may.—In "Sweet Home" (J. Nisbet and Co.) we have a series of earnest chapters by the Rev. J. B. Figgis, M.A., of Brighton, on "Home, and the Way from Home to Heaven." Volumes have been, and might still be, written on the influences for good or evil of home, and no apology is needed for any thoughtful consideration, like this, of the subject. The keynote may be guessed from the beautiful dedication of the volume "to the memory of my mother and the 'Sweet Home' of my childhood." May this volume help to make hundreds and thousands of homes sweet, in the highest sense, in that they are gates on the way to Heaven. We are reminded of another sense in which homes should be "sweet" by Dr. B. W. Richardson's admirable condensation of a more elaborate work, by Sir E. Chadwick, K.C.B., under the title of "National Health" (Longmans.) For many years Sir E. Chadwick has been among the foremost experts in the land on this subject, and we heartily commend to all workers among the poor this excellent *précis* of his teaching. There are some chapters in the section on "Health in the School" that all Sunday-school officers ought to see and study carefully.

THE FRENCH COLONY IN LONDON.

M. Barbier's evangelistic work among the poor French in the neighbourhood of Soho has gone on steadily for about twenty-two years; the chapel and Sunday-school are in Portland Street, and in this school more than a thousand children (most of them belonging to Roman Catholic parents) have been instructed in the truths of the Bible. There is also a day-school, which has become an important part of the mission, and young foreign girls seeking situations as governesses or maids, are received in a Home under the immediate care of Madame Barbier. The employment agency has been a help to many in difficulty. Bibles and Testaments are freely distributed among the French in London by post; and among the young foreigners who are scattered all over Great Britain and the Colonies, this mission circulates a Gospel paper, *L'Ami de la Maison*, which has been a help and blessing to several who once attended the services. Amid the "French Colony" are many who have renounced Romish doctrines, but reject all that is Protestant; many refuse all religious ideas; yet from these ranks souls have been won, and the open-air preaching has been the means of reaching numbers who would never trouble themselves to enter a place of worship. "Think," says M. Barbier, "of these poor Frenchmen and Belgians in a foreign land, destitute in body and soul; our work is essentially a missionary one. We depend upon the help of our brethren and sisters in the work the Lord gives us to do in this great city."



M. BARBIER.
(From a Photograph by Mr. Louis.)

THE TASK WAS HIS OWN.

The desire to get wealth may easily become a numbing power in the life, affecting every form of Christian work. It has often proved so with the men who have migrated west, and ever farther west, in the new lands of America. Some time since there was a minister who went with the tide. He left his people and changed his occupation. Instead of testifying of eternal righteousness and infinite mercy, he gave all his care to money-making. But though he prospered, he was not happy. The sharp prick of conscience was in his soul. Years passed, and the old peace did not return. Here, on the edge of the wilderness, was a sad famine of all

provision for the spiritual needs of the people. The settlers themselves came to feel a want. One day the minister was standing at his gate, looking moodily out on a fair prospect. There was about him no mark of the preacher. His true calling was not known in the district. He saw two men coming down the track past his "lot." They stopped and asked a curious question. Could he direct them to a minister? The longing to receive Christian instruction had become too imperious to be denied. These men were a search deputation. It was a touching story they told. A light came on the listener's face. Was it not his Lord's gentle, forgiving summons to neglected work? He would forsake everything and obey. Very humbly he made answer, "I think, friends, the task is my own." He went with the messengers and did high and holy service. And if we are conscious of some duty evaded, some labour left unfulfilled, we too may rest assured that joy waits on frankly admitting in word and deed, "The task is my own."

THE PUNISHMENT OF UNDUTIFUL CHILDREN

is to have undutiful children. A man complained that never father had so undutiful a child as he had. "Yes," said his son, "my grandfather had."



FOR COASTGUARDS.

A kindly and helpful work has been arranged on behalf of our British Coastguards, many of whom lead isolated lives, and need all the cheer and the good influences that Christian correspondence and healthy literature can effect. Now and then appreciative visitors like to seek out, amid their travels, the picturesque-looking guardians of our shores, and to listen to stories of the sea that inspire the young with a longing to become Coastguards themselves, and pace the cliff-path at night to the music of the waves. The summer brings stray *largesse* at times to the Coastguard, admiring comments as to his spotless abode, sociable chats with tourists, sunshine across boat-house, rocks, and sands; the bright side of his life is visible then. The post of trust is valued by the seaman who has spent year after year on the changeful waters; home and home love are dear to him. "It's something to eat a good dinner cooked by one's wife!" remarked a Coastguard of our acquaintance once, sitting down amid snow-white surroundings, and watching the deft manufacture of an apple-tart. But the circumstances of Coastguards vary, and there is loneliness enough in their career to arouse the wish in Christian hearts that all should be supplied, on an organised plan, with tracts and Gospel papers in a monthly packet. There are bright, wholesome, attractive periodicals that set forth the way of salvation, the beauty of holiness, the things concerning righteousness, faithfully and earnestly; this mission would fain spread such among the Coastguards. Occasional letters of friendship and Christian counsel are also desirable, and highly valued by those who receive them. Those who, through personal knowledge of the Master, are longing to reveal Him to others, have here a field of wide and useful effort, and their labours will brighten many a home, fill lonely hours with helpful thoughts, and, above all, echo the Saviour's call in all its fulness of strength and comfort to the sentinels around our shores.

A CRY FROM AFAR.

The opium question is one over which controversy has now been waged for many years. The members of our various Christian Churches are probably almost unanimous in their view of it, regarding the trade in opium with intense abhorrence, holding that the drug is destructive to the body and soul of the man who indulges in it, and holding, further, that our country is responsible for having forced it upon China in what is familiarly known as the Opium War. There are persons, indeed—and persons whose opinions are likely to weigh with successive Secretaries for India and other Government officials—who deny this view, maintaining that the opium habit does not tend to excess, and that the moderate use of the drug is not only not pernicious, but positively beneficial. They deny also the responsibility of England in the matter, on the grounds that opium was used in China before its importation by the East India Company, and that of the opium used in China to-day, the larger proportion is native-grown. But neither the clerical nor the medical missionaries (who have a great number of opium patients passing through the hospitals every year) have been able to acquiesce in this more favourable estimate. These live in touch with the people as no

other foreigners can, whether consuls or merchants; and that this feeling accords with the feeling of the Chinese themselves is shown by the contents of a letter or memorial recently received from representatives of the Churches in Canton. This memorial is signed by fourteen Chinese Christians, belonging to six different missions representing 2,430 native communicants, and appeals to British Christians "to combine their strength in devising some efficient means to remove this curse of opium." As the accompanying English translation reads: "Our hope is that your Christians will with one heart exert themselves without regard to profit or loss, and be enabled to abolish opium, that the Chinese may be released from the yoke of bondage, and the obstacles to the preaching of the Gospel be removed." The memorialists affirm that "the calamities that opium brings are numberless," and proceed to enumerate some of them. The consideration to which most weight is evidently attached by them, and to which most weight ought to be attached by the English Churches addressed, both because of its gravity and because it is a matter the writers are most competent to judge, is the hindrance that the opium traffic places in the way of the spread of the Gospel. Rightly or wrongly, the Chinese associate together the opium merchant and the missionary. They are both British subjects, and the evil traced to the one throws suspicion on the intentions of the other. Moreover, the prejudice thus created against the missionary is the greater from the fact that the trader is not an individual who, though of the same nationality as the missionary, may be disowned by him, but a British Government, with which, in the Chinese mind, the British missionary cannot but be associated. These Cantonese memorialists urge upon us not only that the work of our missionaries is being hindered by the action of our Indian Government, but that our own character at home is touched. Very pointedly they ask: "Now, when your Government plants and sells opium to minister to the evil propensities of the Chinese, you are partakers with them; and what can you say in excuse thereof?"



"'I could tell her all about the flowers.'"—*p.* 638.

Lord Hartington, in a speech made in the House some years ago, when he was Secretary for India, after giving "some of the reasons why the House should not readily conclude that the importation of opium from India to China is an unmixed evil, or that the Indian Government, by sacrificing a large amount of revenue, would do any good whatever to the population of China," added: "But I am quite ready to admit that the Government of India is, in the circumstances of the traffic, placed in a somewhat invidious and false position. The Indian Government are, as regards Bengal, manufacturers and dealers in a drug which, though not universally abused, is capable of abuse. I think that a great deal of the objection entertained in this country to this source of revenue is owing to that circumstance."

THE BIBLE FLOWER MISSION.

This society has for its object the spread of Scriptural messages, and the visitation of hospital and infirmary patients, with a gift of flowers, to which a text is attached. Lavender-bags are sometimes presented, and ivies, mosses, grasses, ferns, small cones, acorns, or their empty cups, can all be utilised. This mission may be helped by cultivating suitable flowers, ornamental grasses, or "everlastings," writing texts, making bags, etc. In last year's report several interesting cases of help and blessing by means of the "voiceless lips" of flowers are thankfully recorded. "Shall I read the text?" asked a City missionary, as he offered a bunch of flowers to an infidel lecturer. The sick man said, rather ungraciously, "You can, if you like." He made similar responses on future visits; but the words of Scripture and the visitor's kindness at last touched his soul, and he is now restored and preaching the Gospel. We heard recently of a gardener who lay ill in one of the London hospitals, and was greatly cheered by the gift of a smiling posy and the kindness of the giver. "She stayed talking with me quite a long time," he proudly told his relatives, "for I could tell her all about the flowers, and every one of their names, seeing I've been

among flowers so long." Sometimes we feel too low and weak for the ministry of our fellow-creatures; what so restful and comforting then as the Lord's own words brought home to the heart by the sweet, tender faces of the flowers!

A DEAF-MUTE'S ANSWER.

A somewhat strange question was, we have heard, asked by a gentleman not so very long ago at a school for teaching deaf-and-dumb children. "Why," wrote he on the blackboard, "Why did God make you deaf-and-dumb?" An added silence—if we may so express it—fell on these silent children—a silence probably of surprise at the question, and of ignorance as to the answer; till one little lad stepped up to the board and wrote—"Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight!" The answer was surely of the very essence of childlike faith, and also of that wise and cheerful philosophy which resigns itself to the inevitable, and seeks to make the best of irremovable trials and difficulties.

AN UNANSWERED QUESTION.

We read once of a Christian man who was conversing with a sceptic, and who asked the question why it should so greatly shock society when a religious man falls into sin, while it excites little or no surprise for an unbeliever to transgress? The scoffer, who had been dwelling on the imperfections of professing Christians, was drawn into the admission that it was expected of believers that they should be holy. "Don't you see," said the other, "you are admitting Christianity to be a holy religion, and thus paying it the highest compliment in your power?" The sceptic could not reply; his very indignation against the inconsistency of believers was turned into praise for the religion which is good and pure, and claims truth and righteousness in its followers. Everyone cries out when a Christian falls. Praise be to God! there is no need whatever to stumble by the way, seeing He can keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the Everlasting Throne.

EAT SLOWLY.

Africius wished for the neck of a stork, so that he might enjoy his dinner longer. Without changing necks, we could get greater enjoyment and nourishment out of our food by simply eating more slowly. And it would do us more good—if, at least, Mr. Gladstone is right in attributing his success in life to a habit, acquired early, of biting forty times each bit of food. We commend the following to those who lately discussed in some of the papers whether our soldiers had enough to eat. Macaulay tells us that a man named Rumford proposed to the Elector of Bavaria a scheme for feeding his soldiers at a much cheaper rate. His plan was simply to compel them to masticate their food thoroughly. A small quantity, thus eaten, would, according to that famous projector, afford more sustenance than a large meal hastily devoured. "That nothing be lost" was the wish of Him who could feed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes.

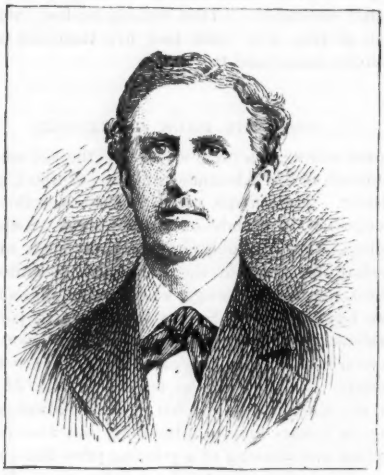
FROM THE DARK CONTINENT.

Just as we go to press we receive the sad news of the death of Mr. Alexander Mackay, of the Uganda Mission. The portrait which accompanies this note is engraved, by permission of the Church Missionary Society, from the only known photograph of Mr. Mackay, taken about the time when he sailed for Africa, fourteen years ago, when Mr. Stanley's letter from Uganda led the Society to send out a party of missionaries to Mtesa's subjects. Mr. Mackay was by profession an engineer, and turned his great mechanical skill to excellent service for the Mission and for King Mtesa and his successor Mwanga not only in house- and boat-building, but also in the erection and working of a printing press that proved a most valuable ally to the missionaries. It was Mr. Mackay who sent to Europe the news of Emin Pasha's position which led to the despatch of Mr. Stanley and his expedition to the relief of the beleaguered governor of the Equatorial Province, and it was to him also that we owe the recovery of Bishop Hannington's last diary. Mr. Mackay first reached Uganda, after many delays, in December, 1878, and there he lived and laboured until July, 1887, when (as his comrade, Mr. Ashe, tells in his admirable "Two Kings of Uganda") the missionaries were driven out of the country by the opposition of the slave-trading Arabs. Mr. Mackay retired, with his friends, to the south of Lake Victoria Nyanza, and there, it is supposed, he died of fever in February last. Any reader of Mr. Ashe's book will know how great is the loss which the removal of Mr. Mackay causes to this most enterprising Mission. God grant that the example of the noble martyr life and death of this hero of the Cross may stimulate others to follow in his steps—

> "Till each remotest nation
> Has learnt Messiah's name."

Some idea of the dangers which beset the missionaries in Central Africa may be gathered from Professor Henry Drummond's "Travel Sketches in our New Protectorate," which, under the title of "Nyassaland," Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton have just published. The little work consists of chapters reprinted from the same author's "Tropical Africa," and in its present handy form should prove useful to many readers who cannot procure the more expensive volume. In another work issued by the same publishers, "The New World of Central Africa," Mrs. Grattan Guinness tells once more the stirring story of the Livingstone Inland Mission. Alas! Mr. Mackay's is not the only bright young life that has

been sacrificed in the wilds of tropical Africa. But how grand is the heroic spirit which animates one



THE LATE MR. A. MACKAY, C.E.

and all of the labourers whose tale of service is here told! The story Mrs. Grattan Guinness tells is one that should be read in every Christian circle, for if it tells of the discouragements and the checks of the past, it tells us also of the work of the present and the hope for the future.

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from March 21st up to and including April 22nd, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month.

A Yorkshire Reader, Bradford, 5s.; C. K., London, 1s.; Snowdrop, Bristol, 2s. 6d.; Two Barrow Friends, 5s.; Anon., London, S.W., 2s 6d.; A Friend, Kilburn, 5s.; L. L., London, W, 5s.; John Peter, and Margaret Ballantine, 3s.; E. W. D., Sutton Coldfield, 5s.; An Old Maid, 5s.; For the Little Ones, Evesham, 2s. 6d.; Georgie and Arthur, Enfield, 5s; Friend, Gateshead, 2s.; J. J. E., Govan (thirtieth donation), 5s.; M. H. R., London, W., £1; Susie and Sister, Wellington, 1s.

The Editor begs to acknowledge, on behalf of Dr. Barnardo, the receipt of 10s. from Anti-Jesuit (Bridgnorth) for the Homes.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help movements referred to in the pages of this Magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

85. Our Lord, in resisting the first temptation of Satan, used a quotation from the Book of Deuteronomy. Quote some similar words used by Jesus as a warning against covetousness.

86. What parable of our Lord was spoken as a warning against the love of worldly things?

87. What did Jesus speak of as the true riches?

88. What words of comfort were specially addressed by our blessed Lord to those who gave up all in this world for His sake?

89. What words are used by St. Luke in his account of the Sermon on the Mount which teach us to trust God sincerely when praying to Him for our daily bread?

90. What is mentioned concerning the self-denial of the early Christians?

91. By what means was Nicodemus drawn to Christ?

92. What three great miracles of healing did our Lord perform on the Sabbath Day?

93. What is the teaching of our Lord as regards the observance of the Sabbath?

94. What did our Lord purpose to teach by the Parable of the Great Supper?

95. Quote some words which show that while God is long-suffering and of great mercy yet He will not always bear with the wickedness of men.

96. What lesson is to be learnt from the Parable of the Great Supper?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 555.

73. St. Luke ix. 28; St. Mark v. 37; St. Matt. xxvi. 37.

74. St. Luke ix. 31.

75. St. Luke ix. 28, 29.

76. 2 Peter i. 17, 18.

77. Into every city and place which He Himself purposed to visit. (St. Luke x. 1.)

78. The city of Chorazin. (St. Luke x. 13—15.)

79. When Moses found the work of judging Israel too great, God appointed seventy of the elders to assist him. (Numb. xi. 16.)

80. That we should be ready always to welcome those who come to us with the message of the Gospel. (St. Luke x. 5, 6, 16; 1 Cor. iv. 1; and Heb. xiii. 17.)

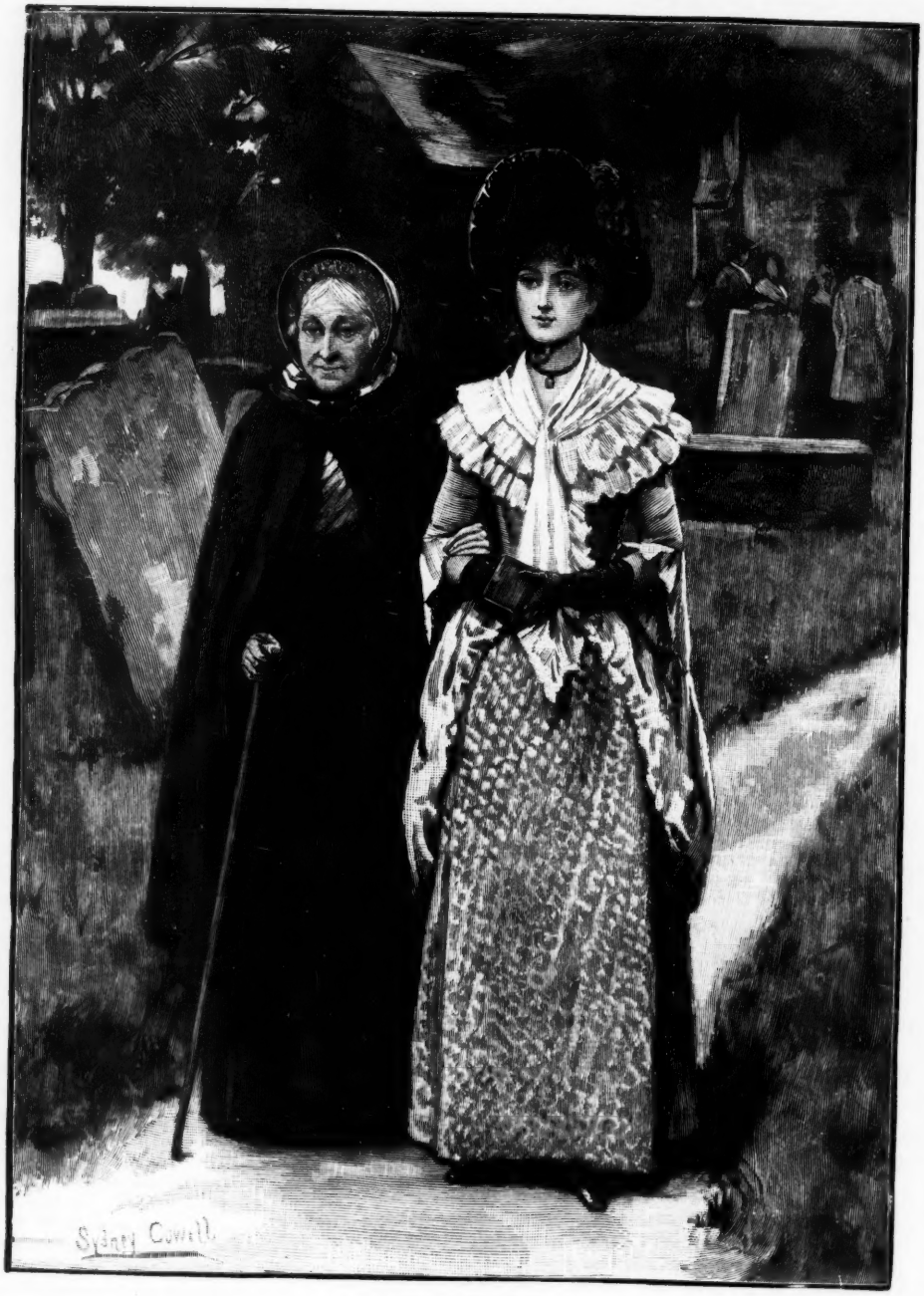
81. To deny ourselves for the sake of others, even as Christ did for us. (St. Matt. xvi. 24, and xxv. 40.)

82. Because St. John the Baptist had taught his disciples. (St. Luke xi. 1.)

83. Acts xii. 5. and xxvii. 22—25.

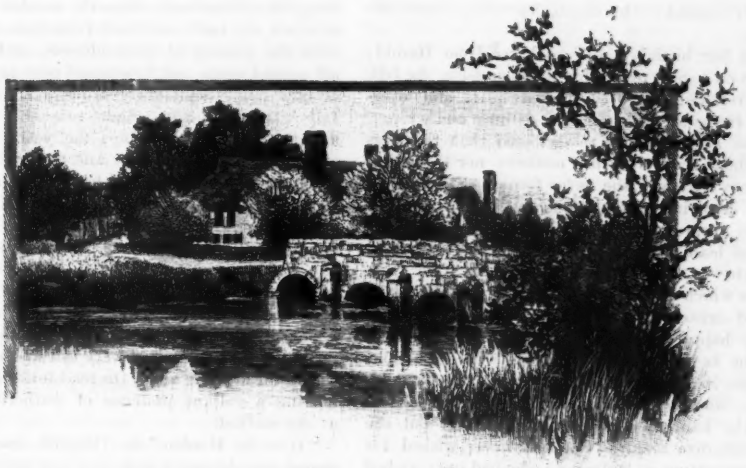
84. St. Matt. xv. 22—28.





THE DAY OF REST.

(See p. 713.)



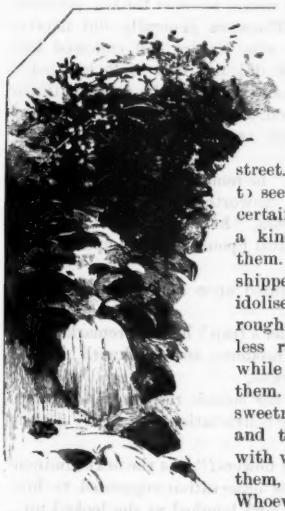
THE OTHER SON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NOT ALL IN VAIN."

CHAPTER I.

THEODORA.

"So tired, so tired, my heart and I!"—Mrs. Browning.



"NO letter to-day, Miss Theodora."

Theodora went wearily out of the tiny post-office, and down the village street. The villagers liked to see her pass, she was so certain to have a smile and a kind word for each of them. The women worshipped her, the children idolised her, and even the rough men and boys were less rough and uncouth while she spoke with them. They knew the sweetness of her smile, and the gentle patience with which she bore with them, and helped them. Whoever else forgot them, Miss Theodora never did. She never confused their histories one with the other; she always knew whose lad it was who had got into trouble poaching, and whose boy was the pride and joy of his parents' heart; she never asked one old lady after the pains and aches specially appertaining to another; she knew all about them, and carried her share of their every sorrow. Wherever sickness came, or want, there too came Theodora Holbrook, her very presence bringing help, and comfort, and light.

To-day, however, she did not stop upon her way to speak or smile, and the villagers, watching her go by in her soft grey floating draperies, did not guess that there were tears in the brown eyes usually so calm and bright. Long years of pain had graven very patient lines about her mouth, but nothing had ever seemed to dim the dewy softness of those wonderful brown eyes. The light in them was like the light in some precious stone: inherent, not affected by environment or circumstance; but to-day they were dim and heavy, and the long dark lashes were down-drooped to hide the hot tears of disappointment that would come, despite her best efforts.

She walked steadily on, leaving behind the little red houses and the great grey old church.

The open country was not very beautiful just about here. It was flat and colourless, the road bordered with rows of Scotch firs. On this still, grey day the distant outlines were blurred and dim, the clouds lay low, the brook in the copse beyond the meadow murmured sullenly, the birds only feebly chirped now and again as they flitted across the road: all Nature seemed to have paused and swooned.

When she reached the open country she sat down by the wayside, for she was weary physically as well as mentally. Across the meadow the larches on the rising ground beyond the brook lifted their yellow branches against the lowering sky. On a fine day, even this flat unlovely country did possess its own glory; the river's song would be all of life and laughter; the birds would sing; mayhap a lark would mount up, full-throated, just above where she sat now, and pour its ecstasy out in thrilling song; the rooks would sail and caw in long lines across the sky; the rabbits would scud in the open with a whisk of white tail, and disappear; there would be life all round: life upon tree and field

and river, instead of this dumb, depressing, death-like stillness.

It was her birthday, and no letter from Harold; this was no cogent reason for the depression she felt, but it relieved her over-charged heart and over-wearied frame to sit there in the stillness and weep.

No one at home had remembered that this was her birthday: not even her mother; nor the children, whose birthdays she never forgot. She realised forcibly how irretrievably gone was youth; whatever the future might hold for her in store, this much, at least, was certain. She might be happy, she might be contented, she might be free from the cares which now beset her; this wretched, baffled, thwarted existence might glide into the past, where so many happy days had vanished, but never, never could she be young again. Youth, with its dreams and hopes, its perennial springs of joy, its charming illusions, was gone. For many years now she had stared the hard facts of life in the face, and she was twenty-five to-day. She had never wished for riches, or position, or influence; she had only wished to be loved. First her father's love—and he had gone away into the great silence so many years ago; her mother's love she had never possessed. And Harold? He was in far Australia, working as his father's son ought not to have to work; what was his love to her? And once, when she too was young, and believed, as young things always do, that surely happiness was to be her lot, another love had come to her. Hearts had met, though lips were silent: and—why she never knew, though never did she mistrust him or doubt his truth—he had gone away.

It is a dreadful thing to be tired of life when one is only twenty-five. And Theodora was honestly and heartily sick of hers. It was with her no ephemeral passion of discontent, which would pass when the sun shone and the skies overhead were blue. She had a pain in her heart the whole day through, from the moment when she opened her eyes in her little attic under the roof, until late at night, when she went wearily back there. She, who so seldom wept, now wept strongly, every tear like a separate drop of purest pain wrung from her heart; she was so weary of life; sick of the years that came and went, and brought no good thing; sick of the sordid, narrow, jarring home life; weary of the clamour of the children, and the mother's peevishness and the father's coarse vulgarity; weary of the insolence of servants, and the hard words of creditors; weary of the bickerings and the lovelessness; weary of the great and real sorrows; and oh! how pathetically weary of the thousand and one little daily pinpricks. She saw no good in anything to-day; no gleam of brightness anywhere. Not trees, nor skies, nor running water could charm her, nor the pale primroses beginning to bloom along the hedgerows. So often she had with loving eyes watched Nature unfold, so long she had listened to that brook singing on its way to the river, so many times the trees had lit into tender vivid green before her eyes, in so many springs she had watched the chestnuts unfurl their wide green fans, dropping the pink silvery husks upon the meadow grass below, so often she had seen those fruit-trees yonder blush with the fulness of their blossom, and the flowers all around come and bloom and pass, and the foliage of how many Septembers crimson and tremble and fall when the wild winds rose and blew hither and thither. To all things the years brought life and the fulfilment of life. And to her? Nothing.

At the present moment, however, something was coming to Theodora. A high-stepping bay mare under a doctor's gig was swiftly traversing the high road from the village, and in the doctor's gig, driving the bay mare, was a young man. Theodora heard the wheels, and sprang to her feet, earnestly hoping her eyes were not obtrusively swollen or her nose very remarkably red. With what dignity she could command—and Theodora was very tall and very stately—she began walking along the road towards the village, making a gallant pretence of gathering primroses as she walked.

"It is Dr. Harden," she thought, stooping for the sparse pale blooms which here and there peeped out.

The next moment the driver of the gig, recognising the figure of the primrose-gatherer, drew rein with an exclamation of pleasure, not unmingled with surprise.

"Why, it's Miss Holbrook!" he exclaimed; and Theodora had to raise her eyes perforce to his. It was not the old doctor, with his keen shrewd face, but William, the doctor's only son, the pride, and prize, and joy of his home. William sat staring at her, as if he could by no means account for her presence. The mere sight of Theodora generally did deprive William of the few wits Nature had endowed him with. Miss Holbrook did not care that he should know that she had been crying, so she toyed with the primroses in her hand, and awaited further development of the situation and of William's genius for conversation.

"So there you are?" he remarked, with a grave pride in the discovery not unworthy of a second Stanley.

"Yes," said Theodora, "here I am."

She did not feel called upon to enlarge upon so very evident a fact.

William sat and gazed upon her from his exalted perch.

"I am driving father's trap," he next remarked.

"So I see," said Theodora; and forthwith another abyss of silence yawned.

William smiled at her laconic response, and seemed to imagine that the conversation was really getting on very well.

"You're gathering flowers?" was the next luminous remark his powers of observation suggested to him.

"Yes," she replied, and laughed as she looked up.

She wondered how soon William would get through his list of announcements, and leave her in peace. If this went on much longer, he would soon tell her that this was the fifth of April, that the season was backward, that the wind was in the east, or perhaps that Queen Anne was dead.

But William said none of these things. On the contrary, William's next remark surprised her very much indeed. William was rather a genius in that

slow way of his; at least, he was most alarmingly veracious, and always spoke the thing he thought, which—good and lovely as is the truth—is not ever and always an advisable proceeding. And so Theodora was not a little disconcerted when William proceeded to inform her, "You've been crying."

"Yes," said Theodora, "I have."

"You shouldn't," said William earnestly. "You'll spoil your eyes, and that would be a pity—they are so pretty."

Theodora looked at him with grave reproach.

"You must not talk like that, Mr. Harden. I do not like it. It is silly."

William flicked his whip absently.

"Whether I'm silly or not, Miss Holbrook," he said, his voice brimful of honest meaning, "I do wish you would not cry. It makes me quite unhappy only to think of it; and what must it be to you to do it?"

"Oh, but it does me good" she replied lightly.

"But I don't like it. Why should you do it? If anything frets you, can't you come and tell mother? She loves you as if you were her own daughter."

And William blushed to the roots of his hair; but Theodora did not see—she was still arranging and re-arranging her primroses.

"What do you cry about, anyhow?" he asked, as she made no reply.

"Oh, hundreds of thousands of things! Chiefly because I want plum-cake, and get nothing but stale bread."

"Cake!" cried William, thoroughly mystified, as perhaps naughty Theodora meant he should be. "And stale bread! Why don't you speak to the baker, if he brings it stale?"

Theodora threw back her head and laughed. Another man would have been offended, but not so William; he was thoroughly gratified to hear her laugh. A smile spread itself in response over his wide face.

"That's better. I like to hear you laugh," he said.

"I beg your pardon," she said; "I was talking nonsense. I talk nonsense very often, though you might never suppose it; I do it with such gravity."

"Whatever you do, I like," said William decisively, closing the discussion upon that head. "Mother is making cake to-day. She never makes plum-cake, though; she says it is not wholesome."

"She is right, I am sure," said Theodora.

William wondered if he had said anything witty without knowing, Theodora's eyes were so bright.

William Harden was not beautiful: in fact, one could call him downright ugly without being libellous. He was a big young man, square-shouldered and raw-boned. At least, I suppose his bones were not rawer than other people's, but when bones obtrude themselves upon public notice in the way William's did, it appears to be the usual thing to call them raw. His nose was remarkably long and remarkably red, going off to violet at the tip. His hair was a brilliant red, so were his eyes, and his large flat hands were as red as they could be. And when Theodora smiled, he did not know the reason, but he liked her to smile, all the same.

"I am going to fetch my father from Hinkley. Will you come?" he asked. "Father was sent for there for a consultation. Things are so upset in consequence. Here am I driving out, instead of studying my three hours. And my mother is making cakes in the afternoon—a thing she never does."

"A general upheaval of everything," said Theodora. "How glad you must be! What I most dislike in life is its monotony."

William looked alarmed at this revolutionary speech. "I never feel like that," he said. "I like things always the same. Then you don't get puzzled. When you know just straight along all day what you have to do, it's far easier than having to ask every minute. But will you come to Hinkley?"

Theodora would have liked the drive in the swift keen air very well, but she hesitated. It was time for her to go home and get the children's tea. But her letter would probably be at Hinkley, and she would dearly love to go and fetch it.

"No, thank you," she said at length; and William drove away alone.

Late in the evening, when the younger children had gone to bed, Theodora sat by the window of the room popularly known as the schoolroom. The elder children were romping in the hall—proof sufficient that the master was out. A shadow fell across the work she was bending over, and she looked up in alarm. She beheld William Harden just going out at the little gateway which gave upon the street. He saw her as he turned to close the gate after him, and pointed towards the window. She saw on the sill a parcel in white paper lying there. She took it in. It was square, and soft, and warm, and a note in William's straggling hand announced:—

"This is a sponge cake. I am sorry it is not plum, but mother never makes any. The letter I got at Hinkley. "W. H."

The letter—joy of joys—was Harold's missing birthday one. He had never failed to write to her for her birthday, and, dear old boy! he had not failed this time. It had been the postman's fault, not his.

CHAPTER II.

LITTLE BETH.

"Of all things in the world, a great heart in a small house is that which touches me the most."—Lacordaire.

The schoolroom was in a condition of the wildest clamour. All the children were piled up one upon the other in the sole window the room possessed, looking out. In vain Theodora, by the table, called to them to return to their tasks.

"We can't come. We must see the start. The Clockwork Family is about to take its daily drive abroad, and we *must* see," replied the eldest girl gleefully.

"I think you have seen the sight quite often enough," said Theodora.

"'Time cannot wither nor custom stale its infinite variety,'" said Alfred, looking up from his books. He

alone, of all the youthful Ansleys, paid any heed to Theodora.

"Here comes Mrs. Harden and the grey shawl," shouted Vincent.

"And here is sweet William," giggled Maggie, the second girl, with her chin sharply perched upon Vincent's shoulder.

"And he's blushing. He knows Theo is looking at him," cried another.

"But she is not," put in Alfred from the table.

"But he thinks she is, so it's all the same. He thinks she's spying through a hole in the curtain," said Polly.

"There *are* a good many holes in our curtains," said Maggie, contemplating one; while Vincent seized the other, and ran as far into the room as its length would permit. Then, with a wrench, he dislocated two of its feeble attachments to the pole, and rushed to the window again.

Theodora went on correcting Vincent's Latin themes. It seemed sometimes as if Vincent deliberately went wrong: either that, or his genius for mistakes was superhuman. Presently the children came, dropping back reluctantly, one by one, to their tasks—Vincent to frown over the long scores drawn by Theodora's pencil through the absurdities of composition and spelling he had indulged in; Maggie to grumble audibly because half of her drawing had to be rubbed out and done in again; Polly to crumple her white brows over a piece of French translation; little Alice, the pet, whose lessons were done, to draw "ladies" with blue and red pencils in an old copy-book of Alfred's—such wonderful "ladies," the like of which were never seen on sea or land, such mincing mouths they had, and such pointed toes, and tightened waists. The little one sat absorbed, and Theodora smiled at the pretty picture she made, with flushing cheeks and the mane of golden hair falling forward to the table.

"William is coming here to tea to-night," remarked Margaret presently.

"Yes," replied Polly. "I saw a stern resolve to do so legibly expressed in that very remarkable nose of his."

Theodora looked up from her book.

"Does your head ache, Theo?" asked little Alice lovingly.

"No, dear. But, Maggie and Polly, I do not like to hear you continually mock and gibe at William Harden as you do. There is really nothing at all funny in it, and it is rather vulgar."

A dead silence, and all the eyes in the room fixed on her brought a slight flush to Theodora's face. Before she could continue with her little elder-sisterly speech, the audience burst into a roar of unlimited laughter.

"Yes, I mean it," said Theodora, lifting her voice above the tumult. "It is wrong and unkind to mock him as you do. It is a thoroughly mean thing to receive kindness at anyone's hands, and then ridicule that person. William has been very kind to every-one of you. What is there to laugh at in him!"

"His nose."

"His eyes."

"His hands."

"The way he coughs."

"How he blushes when he looks at you."

"He's such a goose, take him for all in all."

"Such a duffer—can't ride, or skate, or shoot, or anything."

"He's a silly old thing. Offering me *dolls* and things."

And at this seven-year-old verdict, even Theodora, who was doing her best to look solemn, had to smile. William had grievously offended Alice the last time he returned from London by the gift of a waxen doll, fit for a baby of five years, perhaps, but not a suitable offering to make to a lady of her mature years.

An idea dawned upon the audience. It originated in Maggie's romantic brain, and Polly, who read surreptitious penny-dreadfuls, was quick to receive it. The blunter masculine mind did not all at once grasp it, but when it did it spoke out with truly masculine directness.

"I believe you're soft on William," said Alfred, looking wonderingly at his sister's fair flushing face, and the eager light in her brown eyes.

"If you mean by that that I like William," she said, looking at him in a way which made him feel rather ashamed of himself, "you are quite right."

"She likes him!" murmured the astonished crowd.

"We'll have a wedding in the family directly," cried Polly, getting up, and executing a war-dance round the table.

"Theodora Harden—Theodora Harden!" chanted the little boys, as they also jumped and pranced.

"Oh, that will never do," cried Maggie; "for you know, 'To change the name and not the letter, is to change for worse, and not for better.'"

"'For I'm to be married to-day, to-day!'" sang Polly, still dancing.

"To-day, to-day!" shrieked the small boys, only too glad to make a row.

Theodora had fairly brought the house about her ears, and she laughed merrily.

"Think of his nose, Theo!" implored Maggie.

"I don't mind his nose," said Theodora, standing up. "I know other people whose noses are very straight and handsome, and yet who are not half so kind and tender to poor sick weak people as William Harden always is. And if he is ugly, he has a very beautiful heart, and for that I like him."

And then the bell rang for dinner, and the children ran away.

Theodora put the place straight, tidied the rumpled carpet, pulled the inky tablecloth into place, and made up the fire. Then she went up-stairs to fetch down little Beth.

Poor little Beth! how still she lay, and how waxen-white was the small face, when Theodora gently placed her on the old schoolroom sofa, which the boys often grumblingly said was as hard as the nether millstone. The child was blue and wan with cold, for there were no fires permitted except in the drawing-room and the schoolroom. And when Beth's head ached she could not endure the noise and racket of the schoolroom—at least, so the loving elder sister fancied. If the child did suffer from the clamour her brethren raised about her couch, none could tell. Little Beth could not speak—had never spoken—for in some

mysterious way she had been paralysed from babyhood —never spoken with her lips, but the great mournful dark eyes had spoken straight to Theodora's heart. Those dark sad eyes asked questions which no one could answer—told of pain silently endured, pain which no love could reach or relieve. And piteously, it seemed to Theodora, they prayed for release, wondering what all this suffering meant. If she could have wept and wailed and struggled like other children, it would not have been so pitiful; but this pathetic unbroken silence, and the mute pain which was never to be told, was sad in the uttermost. Theodora never could tell if all her efforts helped or hurt the child, nor if she soothed the pain in any smallest degree. She had tried everything that tenderness could devise, and yet she knew that within that little fragile frame was torture she could never reach, nor could she ever answer the questioning of the wild suffering eyes. Beth was Alice's twin—Alice, the little dancing, radiant fairy, with blue eyes always smiling, and laughter for ever bubbling from her rosy lips, the picture of health and grace; her mother's pride, and the only one the father's roughness spared. And Beth, a forlorn little cripple, all the young life passing over in unfathomable mists of pain—pale lips that never smiled, wan eyes that did not weep, shadows that lay deep about the pallid brow and lips. A hideous child, the mother said, looking from her to Alice; and yet Beth's little face was not plain—to Theodora it shone at times as the face of an imprisoned angel.

The door opened, and Mr. Ansley walked in. After one glance at his face, Miss Holbrook laid the child on the sofa, and stood up, facing him.

"Do you suppose I am going to touch the child?" he said savagely.

Theodora folded her hands together and made no reply, for he had been drinking. The pretty pink colour faded from the girl's face; but it was disgust, not fear, that she felt, as she stood motionless by little Beth's sofa.

"The child is my own child," he went on in his savage blustering way. "I needn't let you be with her, or have the care of her, except I choose."

Still Theodora held her peace. She seemed frozen into stone. She was no longer the tender, loving, breathing woman who had bent above the child, but a statue, cold and repellent, her eyes stern, her lips unsmiling. This man's blustering ways and rude speeches never touched his step-daughter. He felt this, and fumed at the knowledge. He knew he had no power over her, that she alone of all his household stood apart, untouched by his influence. She did not care one whit if he smiled, or shrink if he stormed. She was as far above him as the sunset clouds or the stars in the midnight sky. Presently he remembered with what object he had sought her, and his manner abruptly changed.

"But indeed, Theodora, you wear yourself out with the child," he began, altering his voice and manner. "She can't want all the attendance you give her, though I am sure it is very good of you."

He walked across the room, and stood at the window, looking out, his hands buried deep in his pockets. An April shower was falling, the raindrops raced down the window-panes, and the ragged curtains eddied dismally into the room. Theodora went on attending to the child, as though he were not present. Her lip quivered as she noticed the flush on his blurred handsome face, and the unsteadiness of the hand which drew the blind up. The morning had been spent, as so many of his mornings were, lounging about the bar of the village inn, "The Dew Drop" its innocent and pretty name—the "Do Drop in," the Ansley children facetiously termed it.

"Have you any money about you, Theodora?" he asked, endeavouring to make the remark sound casual. "I want five pounds at least," he added jocularly; "so hand it out, there's a good girl."

"I have not got five pounds, Mr. Ansley," she replied.

He turned upon her.

"What you do with all your money passes my comprehension," he exclaimed. "How much have you, then?"

"I have twenty-five shillings exactly."

"Give me that. I'll pay you——" He paused.

"When?" she asked, raising her dark eyes to his.

"Oh, some time; when I can."

"That means never, Mr. Ansley, and I want this money. Beth has nothing for the summer."

"What does that cripple want with finery?" he said, fuming. "And you heard from Harold yesterday. Did he send you no money? He's a model brother!" he went on, with a sneer. "I wonder he wouldn't be ashamed to have you here living on us."

Theodora made no reply, though many a true and crushing one rose to her lips: she thought of Harold's money, and the road it had gone during his minority.

"Come," he said roughly, "no more humbug, Miss Holbrook! You live in my house, and you must pay your way. Will, or will you not, give me that money? or must I go to your room and take it?"

"I do not want to live in your house, Mr. Ansley," she said, with dignity; but he held up his hand warningly.

"There, there! don't fly out at me about nothing. I am sure I am very glad to have you here; and you are a very good girl, Theodora, and you take good care of the children. I do not know how we'd get along without you. I wish you to stay here and share our home, so don't mind what anyone else says to you."

In silence Theodora drew out a shabby little purse, and laid a sovereign on the schoolroom table. Mr. Ansley took it quickly, wondering audibly what good a paltry sum like that was to him. Then he left the room.

Half an hour later Theodora crossed the hall with little Beth in her easy-chair. Mrs. Ansley called to her from the drawing-room, and Theodora obeyed the call. William Harden had made this little chair on wheels, because he could not bear to see Theodora carry the sick child in her arms as she used to do; he was clever with his lathe, and would positively have shone in life if his parents had only been satisfied to allow him to be a carpenter.

"Oh, you're going out, of course," said Mrs. Ansley,

as she looked at her tall daughter standing in the doorway, "amusing yourself?"

"I'm taking Beth out, mother."

"Oh, that child, of course! All the world must give way to her. No one ever thinks of the life I lead."

"Will you come with us, mother?"

"Do you imagine I would be seen with that child, in that ridiculous chair, and you pushing it like a common nursery-maid?"

"Well, when I come back with Beth—will you come out then? We could walk round by Ivy Bridge before tea, and I will try and not look like a nursery-maid."

"Theodora, you surprise me very much. You persist in wilfully ignoring how delicate I am. You should really struggle against the selfishness of your nature. Because you are big and strong, and able for everything, you forget that there are more highly strung nerves and more delicately organised constitutions in the world."

"Then, what did you call me for, mother?" asked Theodora, drawing on an exceedingly shabby pair of gloves as she spoke.

"I wanted to ask you if you have lent your father money?" said Mrs. Ansley plaintively. "Of course, if my own daughter cannot afford me five minutes of her valuable time, I can't help it. You are really very brusque, Theodora, and no truly lady-like girl ever is brusque. And I notice Mary and Margaret are getting brusque also. They are learning it of you, and it is most painful to me. When I asked you to undertake the girls' education, I am sure I thought you would have made their manners presentable also. I cannot positively take any of my children out but Alice. There is a natural grace and refinement about that child. Please don't stand there so stupidly, but tell me did you lend your father any money to-day?"

Theodora winced. "Mr. Ansley"—with a deliberate emphasis on the words—"Mr. Ansley asked me for money; but, as you know, I had hardly any left."

"What do I know of your affairs, Theodora? You keep everything from me. Even Harold's letters you do not show me. I know you had one this week."

"Because when I did, you told their contents to Mr. Ansley," replied Theodora, buttoning on her gloves. "But I had nothing but a sovereign to lend to-day."

"Oh, I don't want the details of your expenditure, I am sure," Mrs. Ansley cried peevishly. "You are old enough now to manage your own affairs, surely. But how foolish of you! Do you imagine he will ever pay you?"

"I should need to be very sanguine if I did, mother," she replied, with a slight smile.

"He's been playing cards all the morning at the inn," went on the wife. "He smelt so abominably of bad whiskey and vile tobacco, I had to ask him to leave the room just now. Then he went off to look for you, although I assured him I knew you had no money. Why did you not tell him so?"

"I had twenty-five shillings, mother."

"What's that? You might easily have said you had nothing, if you had only that much. And really, Theodora, I want a bonnet so badly: the one I have is not fit to go to church in. And knowing that, you fling away twenty-five shillings: actually helping that man to continue in his bad ways."

"I can't help his ways, mother," the girl replied. "And you know the scene there would have been—that there always is—if I refuse him my money. He watches it from the moment I get it: in fact, I believe he keeps a more accurate account of it than I do."

The scorn in her voice roused her mother. "Why, in what a disrespectful way you speak of him!" she said wrathfully—"the man that is in your father's place! I am surprised, Theodora."

"He is not in my father's place so far as I am concerned," said Theodora, her voice vibrating with feeling; "and never, never has been. And you know that perfectly well, mother."

"Indeed, your disrespect towards him from the very first has been only too pronounced," said Mrs. Ansley. "And you taught Harold the same thing; and now you are teaching his own children the same."

"Mother, I have never spoken slightingly to the children of their father—never. I do not speak of him to them ever, because there is nothing to say that is not dreadful and painful. But I cannot help that the children see him as he is. Can you expect them to love, and honour, and respect him?"

"If you set them the example, they would," said her mother tearfully. "What would your poor father say if he could look out of the grave and see the miserable position I am in?"

"What indeed?" thought Theodora.

CHAPTER III.

THE HARDENS' OTHER SON.

"The lad took up his knapsack: he went, he went his way."
JEAN INGELOW.

ONE narrow street, badly paved with cobble stones laid down some time in the last century; two rows of small irregular houses, some of red brick, some of yellow, all the worse for the wear and tear of time; a smithy, an inn, and a pump in the middle of the roadway just opposite the inn, composed the village of Drueling. There are many hundreds of pretty villages in England, nestling amongst fruitful gardens, and surrounded by opulent pastoral landscapes, but Drueling was bleak and ugly, in the heart of a flat, wind-swept country. Why built, and why, when built, anyone lived there, was, to an inquiring mind, a problem. There was nothing to see, or to do, or to think about. People just existed, and it was hardly a change when they went to the churchyard and stayed there. A narrow, aimless, objectless existence—no knowledge about, no interest in, the great living outside world which went on its way, and heeded not Drueling—Drim-and-Drueling the Ansley children, who had a genius for the inversion of names, called the place. The post-office was an "innovation," with its green shutters, and postal directions nailed outside. It was the only link the place had with the great world. To send a telegram, you must go to the nearest town; likewise to do your shopping; for although Miss Oldham held

sway over what she called "an emporium of goods," still you sometimes do need, in your transit through this world, other articles of commerce besides penny reels of cotton (for twopence), and sixpenny packets of needles (for a shilling), and note-paper and envelopes, and balls of twine, and sweets, and slate pencils, and thimbles, and boot-laces. Man wants but little here below, but still the mildest man wants more than he could get at Miss Oldham's shop. Miss Brown kept the post-office, and in her leisure moments attended upon the curate, who lodged upon her drawing-room floor. Opposite the great old grey church, upon its grassy slope, was the rectory. The inhabitants of Drueling might easily have fitted in the chancel of the church, so great and grim was it. One hav
at the gate, circled about with a rustic wo
was all there was there in the way of
A few square tombstones in the grass borde
path from the gate to the porch, and the paths were laid down in cinders, which crunched unpleasantly beneath one's feet. The rectory was screened from the vulgar gaze by a high stone wall. Within, a long, low, rambling house, of stone like the church, a grassy lawn, which was gorgeous at the season of red and yellow tulips, and dull all the rest of the year, and a row of tall elms, where the rooks built in the spring. Half-way down the village street, in a square house, with a pseudo-Greek portico in front, lived the vicar's



"She saw no gleam of brightness anywhere."—*p.* 644.

as she looked at her tall daughter standing in the doorway, "amusing yourself?"

"I'm taking Beth out, mother."

"Oh, that child, of course! All the world must give way to her. No one ever thinks of the life I lead."

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"Because when I did, you told their contents to Mr. Ansley," replied Theodora, buttoning on her gloves. "But I had nothing but a sovereign to lend to-day."

"Oh, I don't want the details of your expenditure, I am sure," Mrs. Ansley cried peevishly. "You are old enough now to manage your own affairs, surely. But how foolish of you! Do you imagine he will ever pay you?"

"I should need to be very sanguine if I did, mother," she replied, with a slight smile.

"He 's been playing cards all the morning at the inn," went on the wife. "He smelt so abominably of bad whiskey and vile tobacco, I had to ask him to leave the room just now. Then he went off to look for you, although I assured him I knew you had no money. Why did you not tell him so?"

"I had twenty-five shillings, mother."

"What 's that? You might easily have said you had nothing, if you had only that much. And really, Theodora, I want a bonnet so badly: the one I have is not fit to go to church in. And knowing that, you fling away twenty-five shillings: actually helping that man to continue in his bad ways."

"I can't help his ways, mother," the girl replied. "And you know the scene there would have been—that there always is—if I refuse him my money. He watches it from the moment I get it: in fact, I believe he keeps a more accurate account of it than I do."

The scorn in her voice roused her mother. "Why, in what a disrespectful way you speak of him!" she said wrathfully—"the man that is in your father's place! I am surprised, Theodora."

"He is not in my father's place so far as I am concerned," said Theodora, her voice vibrating with feeling; "and never, never has been. And you know that perfectly well, mother."

"Indeed, your disrespect towards him from the very first has been only too pronounced," said Mrs. Ansley. "And you taught Harold the same thing; and now you are teaching his own children the same."

"Mother, I have never spoken slightingly to the children of their father—never. I do not speak of him to them ever, because there is nothing to say that is not dreadful and painful. But I cannot help that the children see him as he is. Can you expect them to love, and honour, and respect him?"

"If you set them the example, they would," said her mother tearfully. "What would your poor father say if he could look out of the grave and see the miserable position I am in?"

"What indeed?" thought Theodora.

CHAPTER III.

THE HARDENS' OTHER SON.

"The lad took up his knapsack: he went, he went his way."
JEAN INGELOW.

ONE narrow street, badly paved with cobble stones laid down some time in the last century; two rows of small irregular houses, some of red brick, some of yellow, all the worse for the wear and tear of time; a smithy, an inn, and a pump in the middle of the roadway just opposite the inn, composed the village of Drueling. There are many hundreds of pretty villages in England, nestling amongst fruitful gardens, and surrounded by opulent pastoral landscapes, but Drueling was bleak and ugly, in the heart of a flat, wind-swept country. Why built, and why, when built, anyone lived there, was, to an inquiring mind, a problem. There was nothing to see, or to do, or to think about. People just existed, and it was hardly a change when they went to the churchyard and stayed there. A narrow, aimless, objectless existence—no knowledge about, no interest in, the great living outside world which went on its way, and heeded not Drueling—Drim-and-Drueling the Ansley children, who had a genius for the inversion of names, called the place. The post-office was an "innovation," with its green shutters, and postal directions nailed outside. It was the only link the place had with the great world. To send a telegram, you must go to the nearest town; likewise to do your shopping; for although Miss Oldham held

sway over what she called "an emporium of goods," still you sometimes do need, in your transit through this world, other articles of commerce besides penny reels of cotton (for twopence), and sixpenny packets of needles (for a shilling), and note-paper and envelopes, and balls of twine, and sweets, and slate pencils, and thimbles, and boot-laces. Man wants but little here below, but still the mildest man wants more than he could get at Miss Oldham's shop. Miss Brown kept the post-office, and in her leisure moments attended upon the curate, who lodged upon her drawing-room floor. Opposite the great old grey church, upon its grassy slope, was the rectory. The inhabitants of Drueling might easily have fitted in the chancel of the church, so great and grim was it. One hawthorn-tree at the gate, circled about with a rustic wooden seat, was all there was there in the way of verdure. A few square tombstones in the grass bordered the path from the gate to the porch, and the paths were laid down in cinders, which crunched unpleasantly beneath one's feet. The rectory was screened from the vulgar gaze by a high stone wall. Within, a long, low, rambling house, of stone like the church, a grassy lawn, which was gorgeous at the season of red and yellow tulips, and dull all the rest of the year, and a row of tall elms, where the rooks built in the spring. Half-way down the village street, in a square house, with a pseudo-Greek portico in front, lived the vicar's



"She saw no gleam of brightness anywhere."—*p.* 644.

sister, Mrs. Casson, and her niece, Belle. In "Golden Hall," standing away from the roadway, with two chestnut-trees in front, resided Major Morley and Mrs. Morley, and Julia—sole daughter of their house and heart. At the other end of the village the Ansleys and the Hardens lived. These families composed the upper circle of Drueling society, except when His Grace the Duke of Raylington was at the Castle, when the upper circle consisted of him alone. There were, indeed, the three Miss Darleys, a little way from the village, but they called themselves county people, and had to be very particular indeed as to whom they knew, being quite unprotected and alone in the world.

Mr. Dobson, his Grace's land-steward, was standing in front of the gate of his little cottage garden, debating in his own mind, apparently, in which direction, up or down the village street, he should turn his steps. While he mused, Theodora, pushing little Beth's chair, came in view, with Alice, skipping now in front, now beside them, now pausing to study the games of sundry village urchins playing in the roadway. "Hard work, pushing that chair," thought Mr. Dobson, who hated to see a woman doing anything laborious; "and she looks tired and pale. Poor girl! she's a bad enough life of it, I am sure, with that Ansley; and her mother seems a stinging lady enough."

Theodora stopped, with a pleasant smile, to speak to Mr. Dobson, and that worthy gentleman beamed all over his honest ruddy face.

"And how is the little lady to-day?" he asked, with a compassionate glance at Beth's mute suffering face, putting a bronzed finger for an instant on the small waxen hand.

"Not so well. The sharp spring weather tries her," replied Theodora sadly.

"These winds will soon be over now," said the steward—he always took the cheeriest view of life—"and then you must all come for a day to Raylington. His Grace is shooting in the Rocky Mountains now, so we have the place to ourselves. The little ones will like a run in the country."

Alice skipped and jumped with joy at the mere suggestion of such an expedition. She knew what Mr. Dobson's hospitality meant. A day at Raylington under his auspices was a day of unlimited bliss. Fruit, cream, cakes, and liberty without end. Alice jumped and her eyes shone. Beth lay still and pallid in her little chair.

"What a difference!" said Mr. Dobson, looking from one twin to the other. Theodora sighed, and stooping, settled Beth more easily, and kissed her.

At this moment the vicar's daughter, Selina Marks, and her cousin, Belle Casson, bore down upon the little group, perceiving which, Mr. Dobson raised his hat and fled. The spring-like sunshine had tempted the young ladies forth in very astonishing costumes, not more than two years behind the fashion, and Selina twirled a scarlet parasol, to the great envy of Belle, who had only a white one rather the worse for wear.

"We were just coming to see you," said Selina graciously. "But to meet you will do just as well. You need not think of turning back; we can go on and call at the Darleys, Belle, as Miss Holbrook is out."

"Such news!" cried Belle: "the Morleys' second son is at Golden Hall. We saw him draw up the blind just now as we came past. He arrived last night."

"And the weather has become so delightfully fine, we are beginning tennis to-morrow. Mamma bid me ask you will you join us? So happy, if you will. We can't make up eight any other way. There's Belle and me, and Mr. Wilkinson, and Captain Morley and Julia, and William Harden, and the youngest Darley plays, though at her age it's absurd."

"Either Maggie or Polly, or even Maudie, play better than I do, Miss Marks. I am getting too old for these violent amusements," said Theodora.

"Nonsense!" cried the young ladies—neither of whom would ever see thirty again.

"But Polly can come if you like," said Selina ungraciously.

"That reminds me," said Belle, with cheerful irrelevance: "did Mrs. Harden ever tell you about their other son?"

"The Hardens' other son!" repeated Theodora. "No; why, there is no such person."

"We were thinking perhaps you knew and could tell us," said Miss Casson, "as you and she are so much together, and everyone says you 'll marry William some day. Selina overheard her mamma and papa talking about it. I asked auntie, but she knows nothing. You know, we're not long living here; but from what Selina heard, the Hardens have another son, and he did something disgraceful and ran away. You could ask your stepfather. He has always lived here; Selina was so long abroad at school, you know. Couldn't you find out from Mrs. Harden? We're positively dying to know all about it."

"I would not tell you if I knew," said Theodora bluntly, with a sudden colour in her cheeks; and very stiffly she said good-bye, and pushed on Beth's chair. Neither of the young ladies had noticed the child, nor Alice, who had stood listening, open-mouthed, to their conversation.

"Ain't they rude things?" said Alice, with keen juvenile scorn, as they moved on. "Selina is as mad as anything, all because William likes you; as if he would look at her! And she's too grand to speak to Mr. Dobson; and I like 'im," said Alice valiantly, although a trifle uncertain about her h's.

Theodora could not believe that the Hardens had any such secret in their calm, colourless, untroubled lives; their life was patent to all—the doctor's kindly benevolence, the quiet goodness of the doctor's wife. Year in, year out, they lived the same ordered and unvarying life. One day was the same as another in the Hardens' household—"The Clockwork Family" the disrespectful young Ansleys had named them long since. No disorder, no confusion, ever was known within the walls of their house, and also no change, no variety. To think that so carefully regulated a household should be living upon the buried cinders of a disgrace or crime was simply impossible. There was not even a

photograph of the vanished son, nor a book with his name on the flyleaf. Theodora felt quite sorry for him, and wished he would come home again. He could not have done anything very bad, and be his father and mother's son. Upon that point her mind was quite made up.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VEILED PICTURE.

"No cord or cable can draw so forcibly, or bind so fast, as love can do with only a single thread."—BURTON.

THE doctor's house faced the Ansleys' disreputable abode, and was a great contrast. There were two windows each side of the hall door, and five in a line above, each with a half-blind of muslin tied into the shape of an hour-glass with a band of blue ribbon. The brass knocker, letter-box, and handle were literally dazzling. At each side of the steps was a terra-cotta vase upon a pedestal; and a neat tiled walk, between two carefully clipped rows of box, led to the garden gate. At the Ansleys', chaos reigned supreme. Theodora, single-handed, had struggled for years, and struggled still, to keep things straight; but when ten people continually and for ever put them crooked, the efforts of one do not count for much. Her arrangements were reduced to chaos almost before she had them completed. Ink was spilt, water overturned; carpets were torn, curtains dragged down, rugs burned, window-panes smashed daily and hourly, so that the only wonder was that there was anything left to burn, or break, or rend. In her own little attic room Theodora could indulge her taste for order. When one of the children was sick, or naughty, or in affliction, the sufferer prayed to be allowed to go to sister Theodora's room. There, in the silence and neatness, tired nerves were apt to settle down, and bad tempers to vanish; and it was almost a pleasure to be sick there, and have Theodora to attend upon one's wants.

The outer gate hung by one hinge; the path was rough and partially unflagged; the small garden plot was full of weeds. Theodora was housekeeper, cook, nurse, governess, butler, carpenter, doctor, and general contriver to the house, but could not fit in gardening and smithy work, or I believe she would have mended the gate and dug up the weed plot outside. The bell-handle had long since been torn from its roots, and hung out disconsolately; it was a feat of agility to knock anything but your own fingers with the wobbling knocker, and all the windows and all the blinds were maimed in some way. The doctor's house across the way was a standing reproach. There everything marched along in majestic order. At seven the rising-bell; at eight the praying-bell, as Mrs. Harden called them in her gentle, vague fashion; at eight precisely the door of Mrs. Harden's room opened, and she came down the stairs, looking like a rose, with her soft grey gown and pink ribbons in her cap; the doctor appeared from the garden, where, wet or fine, he took a constitutional every morning. William, with his wide smile, rubbing his large red hands, came from the study, where he had been having his morning hour of study; and Johnson, and Anne, and Peter the boy, filed upstairs, from the kitchen. The doctor cleared his voice, put on his spectacles, and read prayers; Mrs. Harden's gentle eyes rested upon her hands folded in her grey lap; William blinked in the morning light, and endeavoured not to think that Theodora lived right opposite.

William at breakfast had a particularly stolid appearance. He stowed away large quantities of toast and eggs, fish and ham, scones and marmalade, in that capacious mouth of his. After breakfast he retired to his father's waiting-room, which looked out at the end of the house, and commanded a full view of the village street—a waiting-room in which no patients ever waited, for in the country the doctor goes to his clients. The room might as well have been designated William's study; but was not, lest it might make him uppish. William, if you asked his parents what he was doing, was in that transition stage known as "going into the Church." William had studied at Cambridge, but while there, had been unable, owing to the magnitude of his mind, to thoroughly explore its depths, and find out to his satisfaction what he really wanted to be. Of course all positions were attainable, the difficulty was to choose—at least, so his fond parents thought. William himself felt he would like to "do good," and as he was an honest, true-hearted fellow, he was quite likely to succeed, although he was not clever. His progress towards the desired end was snail-like, for, unaccountably enough, no matter how hard he read, the examiners never thought of touching upon subjects which he knew. And so many long hours floated by, and found William patiently reading in this little den. So steadily he stuck to his work, that if he knew Theodora was walking along the village street, he would not have "left the web and left the loom," or "made three paces through the room," to see her pass. At luncheon-time he was free to lay aside these perplexing tomes, and hie to his mother's side. At luncheon they talked about the weather and the crops, for neither Mrs. Harden nor William shone conversationally, and the doctor was never in the house at luncheon-time. Anne attended, and reproved William with much asperity whenever she considered that he needed it. Then William and his mother took a short drive, and after that William did his "three hours'" reading. William and his "hours" were an unfailing source of amusement to the Ansleys, as was also his patent adoration of Theodora.

It was like haven after stormy seas, cool twilight after burning noon, rippling waters after desert sands, to Theodora to find herself a guest at Mrs. Harden's. The old lady, so sweet and placid, with her serene gentle smile, her knitting, her pretty grey gown, her cat purring at her feet, and her soft cooing voice, was a soothing presence after the uproar of her own home. The orderliness charmed her; nothing broke the silence but the "drip-drop" of a water-clock—the doctor's "own invention"; the furniture stood decorously round by the walls, the carpet was straight, the curtains fresh and dainty, the table set for tea in the old-fashioned way, with snowy damask, and silver and flowers. How Mr. Ansley had scoffed at



"'Mrs. Harden,' said the girl suddenly, 'what is that curtain for?'"—*p.* 653.

the notion of flowers upon his dining-table when Theodora had put them there when first she came home to live! Theodora loved Mrs. Harden, and the rest and quietness of this true home attracted her strongly. It did not occur to her that William thought of her too much for his comfort. She knew the children mocked about William's adoration for herself, but she knew also that they had learned this delicate style of badinage from their father, so she paid no heed to it. She felt herself as likely to fall in love with Peter as with William.

"Yes," said Mrs. Harden gently, as Theodora handed her back the socks she was knitting for William, with the stitches counted. "Yes, my dear Theodora, it is a great pleasure to me to have you over here of an afternoon, and it is very good of you to come to an old woman like me. I always wish I had had a daughter, my dear: she would have seen after things. I sometimes feel the house is not quite what it ought to be. I fear the things are old-fashioned, but the doctor and William seem quite contented."

"Of course they are contented when they have you," said Theodora, with the smile which was one of her chief charms.

"If you would make suggestions, dear, I should be so glad," said the old lady, looking round her with a troubled glance. Theodora thought her suggestions would be rather sweeping, perhaps. Over the massive sideboard hung the similitude of a ship in full sail upon a grass-green sea, worked in tapestry-work by Mrs. Harden when she had been Letitia Morton. A portrait of the doctor faced the windows, a beautiful

temple (of Fame presumably) behind him in the middle distance, and his hand resting with an air of achievement upon a pile of books. Under this one of William's certificates, framed and glazed for all the world to come and wonder at; over the mantel-piece a portrait which had always exercised Theodora's mind when she spent an afternoon in its society. Mrs. Harden was there—represented by an artist, who had caught the plainness of her face, but missed the beauty of her smile; and upon her lap reclined William, an exceedingly ugly baby in a flowing muslin robe, and with a fair promise of what his nose was to become in the future. But what disturbed Theodora was that half the picture was concealed from view by a heavy curtain. Now, the Hardens were not "cultured," and "draping" was unknown and undreamt of in their philosophy, so this curtain must have meaning other than "artistic"—which it certainly was not. As Theodora did not answer immediately, Mrs. Harden went on with her knitting. She always counted her stitches in French. She said it kept up her memory of that language, in which she had been considered very proficient in her youth.

"Un, deux, trois, quatre." And the canary began to sing, and the water-clock "drip, dropped" on its way, and the great clock in the hall ticked solemnly. Anne had just replenished the fire, and it burnt steadily; and Theodora as she sat wondered if Mrs. Harden could be excited or surprised about anything, and then she suddenly thought of the missing son, and if the mother had forgotten him, and why had he gone away.

"Mrs. Harden," said the girl suddenly, "what is that curtain for?" Theodora never knew what possessed her to ask this question. She was reserved enough herself to respect the silence of others, but the words left her lips without reflection. Mrs. Harden's knitting fell from her hands, her face grew pale, almost as white as her hair, and her lips quivered. Theodora rose and knelt beside her. "Forgive me!" she cried, putting her strong young arms round the old lady's trembling form.

But Mrs. Harden put her away gently, and rising from her seat, walked to the window. She made a pretence of straightening the canary's cage upon its chain, then she came back to the fireplace, where Theodora stood looking the picture of misery.

"Do not look so unhappy, my child," she said, with a sweet patient smile, though her eyes were dim with tears. "I am a foolish old woman, and easily excited. Sit down, and I will tell you all about it."

"No, no; pray do not," pleaded Theodora. "It was horrid and rude, and utterly thoughtless of me. It will be a punishment if you tell me anything."

"It will comfort me to tell you," said the old lady. "Indeed, dear, I have often wished to do so. I have often been upon the point of telling you, but that I did not like to shadow your life with my sorrows. Sit down here. No, stay; look in the hall, dear, that we may not be overheard."

Theodora went to the door. The hall was empty, save for the clock and two long slanting rays of dusty sunlight which came in each side of the hall door.

"Leave the door open," said Mrs. Harden. "When you have anything special to say, it is much the safest plan. Now come here, close to me, dear child, and I will tell you about my Jack. It is Jack's picture which that curtain hides—I sometimes draw it back and look at it. The doctor wanted it painted out, but I begged and begged, and then he let it remain. Such a dear little lad as he was, how could I bear to have his little face painted out, just as if he had never lived at all? Everyone loved him, he was so sturdy and strong and graceful; and in all his little life I never knew him deceive me. 'Mother, it's the real truth,' he would say, when I questioned him about anything. My brave little Jack! we never speak of him now. My heart is very full of him often; for how can a mother forget? Do you think it is very wrong of me to remember him and to love him, Theodora?"

"Why should you forget him, dear Mrs. Harden? Who would think of him if his mother did not?"

"But my husband would not be pleased. The doctor is so upright and honourable, you know, that it was agony to him that his son should have done what was wrong. But men judge each other in that hard way, my dear. I love my darling still, and I pray for him day and night; and surely God's goodness and tenderness must be greater than a mother's, and He will pardon the lad, I surely think."

"You are right to love him, and think of him, and pray about him!" exclaimed Theodora.

"Do you think so, dear? I am very glad. For a woman's first duty is to obey her husband; and my husband said to me that dreadful day, 'Remember, he is son of ours no longer, Letitia; never speak his name again.' It was hard to try to obey. My eldest, first little son, I always loved him the best. Perhaps I spoiled him. He was so bright and clever and handsome, always saying such clever, funny little things; and I was so proud of him. And then to be told that he was to be dead to me henceforth!"

"And is he dead?" asked Theodora softly.

Mrs. Harden was weeping bitterly. She bowed her head in answer.

"Then let him be forgiven," the girl said, and with deliberation she swept the curtain from before the picture. A lovely little lad stood there by his mother, with brave laughing blue eyes, his golden curls thrown back from the eager child face. The artist had done Jack justice at least, although he had dealt out justice untempered with mercy to the long-nosed baby. It seemed to Theodora that the boy looked straight at her, smiling his thanks for letting him see the light once more. It was incredible that this laughing, lordly, lovely boy should be William's brother. And it seemed to her also that the longer she looked the more familiar was the child's face. Surely she had somewhere met that frank gaze, had looked into the clear truthfulness of those eyes, had known that sunshiny smile? Faint echoes of the past thrilled through her as she stood and looked, wondering, more deeply puzzled every moment. It was not possible that she could ever have met and known Jack Harden, and yet his pictured face was perfectly familiar to her.

(To be continued.)

MUSIC IN THE CATACOMBS.

BY J. F. ROWBOTHAM.

IN the days of Imperial Rome, during the second century of the Christian Era, and while the Christian disciples of the faith were compelled to carry on in secrecy and stealth the rites of the new dispensation which had been revealed to them, the following incident was not of uncommon occurrence :—A belated banqueter, coming home from those glittering entertainments which marked the downfall of Roman nobility but the rise of Roman luxury, as he passed along the Flaminian or the Latin Way, or along a similar road on the outskirts of the city, would have his attention arrested sometimes by the sight of lights moving among the tombs, or glimmering from the catacombs underground. Muffled voices would strike his ear as of men engaged in secret prayer, or in the practice of forbidden mysteries. He had been, let us say, at an entertainment given by one of the Lamias, the proudest family in Rome. He had seen the progress of a brilliant banquet, extending over eight or ten hours and accompanied with all the meretricious delights which luxury and effeminacy could procure—tight-rope dancers bounding above the heads of the banqueters, swells of delicate and melodious music from the sweet instruments of Syria and the East, odours of the most priceless rarity burning in boxes and diffusing their perfume through the apartment. From this scene, and from the midst of such a world of the senses, he was brought face to face with the extraordinary and mysterious doings among the tombs and catacombs of the Latin Way. What would he think of those strange anchorites? How could he in the slightest degree sympathise with their feelings and their faith?

The singing and the services of these early Christians have fortunately not been suffered to pass away without sufficient description being handed down to us to enable us to form a very faithful, if not a minute, picture of the manner and practice that prevailed. Their singing was limited to psalm-singing. There were no hymns then. The hymn—that melodious joy of worship—had not at that time come into being. The first hymns date from a considerably later period, and not till the time of Prudentius, Ausonius, and Hilary of Poitiers do we find any traces of what has been well called "the sweet prattle of the soul." There was no sweet strain such as this to rejoice the hearts of those poor outcasts. In psalms alone could they lift up their voices—psalms which had little that could be considered rhythmical or musical about them, but were simply the Hebrew Psalms of David translated into the vernacular Latin, without metre, poetical form, or measured cadence. The peculiar circumstances under which the rites were performed rendered loud and hearty singing out of the question; and we are told that the furtive worshippers "muttered or mumbled them rather than sang them." They repeated the words, therefore, in a low and timorous voice, not daring to vent their emotions to the full. On holy days and feast days they would exalt their voices a little, and use a louder cadence, according to Isidore of Seville; but yet, he tells us, even this was far from what we understand by the word singing. Their psalmody has been compared to the murmur of the sea by one of the Fathers; and doubtless such a description came very near the truth, when the psalms were heard ascending from the depths of the catacombs by chance listeners or passers-by overhead.

Of the service which accompanied this early psalmody we know the outline, and are captivated by its solemn simplicity. Their worship began with reading the Scriptures; after which an address was given by the Presbyter or the chief man of the meeting. Then came the psalmody; and then they would read from the diptychs, or tablets of wax, the names of those Christian martyrs who had died for the sake of the Lord Jesus, as they, too, were prepared to die.

The psalms in the Latin translation wore the same form which they do in the Hebrew original, and which is so well preserved in the Prayer Book and Bible versions of them in the English text. That is to say, the verses were divided into two well-marked parts. We separate these parts by colons, and this is but the continuation of a method which the earlier pointing of the manuscripts indicates. The peculiarity of structure here mentioned gave the first rude outline of form to the untrained psalmody of the singers. But for some such source of steadiness, their tones would have been "like the sea" indeed—vague, confused, and meaningless. This simple feature, however, brought order with it. Three distinct customs were prevalent in chanting, or, as we should rather say, in murmuring, the psalms. It was the custom for one singer to begin the verse and repeat it half-way through; then for the rest to join in at the second half and sing along with him till the end of the verse. Another method was even more peculiar. One chosen singer or reciter would declaim the whole psalm until the last verse of all was reached; then the congregation would take up the singing, limiting themselves to one verse alone. The third method approximated somewhat more nearly than the preceding to a habit of singing usual at the present day: the congregation would divide itself into two parts and declaim verse about, or the halves of verses, and in this way go through the entire psalm. The latter custom of chanting does not appear, on investigation, to have been in any degree more common than either of the two former, though naturally we might be led to think so, because we find in it the rudiments of the modern practice.

Each of the three before-mentioned styles had its name. The first was called the Acrostic style of psalmody—the name "Acrostic" being derived from

the last line or last half of the verse at which the congregation joined the solo singer. The second style was termed the Acroteleutic, because the "end verse" was the one selected for the entry of the other voices; while the third manner of psalmody was known as the Antiphonal, and may be supposed, on very good grounds, to be identical with the manner of singing the psalms that prevailed in the Temple services at Jerusalem. Such a hold did these primitive means for variety take on Christian minds that, even under the gilded cupolas of Constantinople some centuries later, the Acrostic, the Acroteleutic, and the Antiphonal styles of psalm-singing were cultivated in their several characters by the artistic choristers of the Byzantine Court.

How very different was such simple and unsophisticated music, which curious Romans might hear issuing from the weird receptacles of the dead, from the gay and vivid Pagan melody which at this time was in its heyday in the Imperial City! Yet which had the greater vitality, and which has lasted longer—those tremulously murmured cadences which were the veritable beginning of the great literature of ecclesiastical music, or the light and buoyant tunes of the theatres and the pantomimes, which, except from hearsay, have passed entirely out of memory? Had the art of early Christianity been in any sense a carrying on of Pagan traditions instead of, as it was, an entire severance and breaking therewith, we should have had a very different music in our churches to-day. By the times of Imperial Rome, Greek minstrelsy had reached its climax of magnificence, and was conducted in a style of grandeur and extravagance which well might recall the descriptions of fable. Its rhythmic, melodious strains were rung out in the theatres by many hundreds of singers, who were accompanied by vast orchestras, wherein every instrument of Greek or Oriental invention had its representative. "The passages are full of singers," says Seneca, speaking of one of these occasions, "the orchestra is thronged with trumpets and every kind of musical instrument peals from the stage." Gibbon, in narrating these stupendous performances, describes the gigantic lyres, the immense water-organs, and other paraphernalia of secular music which were assembled in those temples of pleasure and of sin—the Roman theatres. In contradistinction to these forms of music, the early Christians, from the very first, took up an entirely opposite attitude. There was something of the reactionary spirit in their views; they went to the contrary extreme in everything, deeming that purity and propriety in their art could only be gained by placing as great a distance as they could between themselves and the Pagan fashions. The simplicity of their early singing, which we have recently described, may in a great measure be accounted for by the desire to act counter to the spirit of the world around. There, in that great world of Pagan Rome, they might hear echoing from the taverns in the Campus Martius, or from any of the dens of impiety which were so rife about the city, the sweet, sugared melodies of Greek composers, the florid runs, the trills, the embellishments which the late art of Athens cultivated in such profusion, and which Rome had received among other heirlooms from its sister race, and had multiplied and improved on. But in direct contradiction and opposition to this came the severe exhortations of the teachers of the infant Church. "Servants of Christ," says one, "let the words of your singing be your delight, and the holy thoughts those words convey; not the tones they come and go in." They were bidden to despise melody and its beauties as a thing of no concern, and to concentrate their whole aims on breathing through their voices the fervour of the spirit. "God desires no such vanity," says another early writer, "as sweet tunes and melodious utterance." "It is not with the voice, but with the heart, that we must praise the Lord," maintains Jerome, clearly hinting thereby what contempt he entertained for anything approaching to laboured and artistic tune.

In a similar spirit, all artificial aids to song were looked upon by the early Christians with disfavour. Instruments of whatever kind were eternal absentees from their services. Partly, the reason came from the close connection of musical instruments with those performances in the theatres which contained so much of evil, and were, in their strong language, characterised as "temples of demons." Partly also the cause lay in the meretriciousness of sound which instruments add to melody, and which, when it occurred, even in the simple outpourings of the voice, was, as we have just seen, regarded with bitter aversion. But let us hear some of the prohibitions of this instrumental music, and see how fervently it was denounced. "The only instrument we use," says one of the early Christian writers, "is our voice. The Word and the word of peace is enough for us. Let syrinxes be given to silly clowns; the pipe to superstitious men who pay honour to idols. Such instruments ought to be banished from all sober company, and are more fitted for beasts than men. How far, then, must they be kept from the assemblages of Christians? Be far from us their florid strains, and dissipated music, such as theirs, which corrupts the morals." Another claims Divine sanction for the exclusion of instrumental music: "As David sang psalms on a harp to the Lord," he says, "so do we too sing; but on a harp whose strings are alive. Our tongues are the strings, and more the Lord does not require."

The Christian service and singing, established and conducted as we have described it, remained the ideal of the early Church for centuries to come; though it was often departed from as time wore on and refinements were introduced on the ancient simplicity. So late as the time of Athanasius we have that prelate maintaining that Christian singing should proceed with as little inflection of the voice as possible, that it should be the prime of simplicity, in imitation of those early services of the infant Church. Isidore of Pelusium, in like manner, inveighs against any approach to honeyed melody as a thing impious and profane. Innovations with this end in view always provoked an outcry in the early Church. The introduction of a phonascus, or "voice-trainer," to lead the psalmody and keep the congregation steady—whose office is mentioned in the "Apostolic Constitutions"—

was one of the first departures from the ancient simplicity. Next came the establishment of regular choirs, and, lastly, the admission of women into these choirs. This latter step was thought nothing short of a desecration by the severer Christians. The female choirs of Paul of Samosata and their theatrical displays are familiar to readers of ecclesiastical history. But females in a choir at all excited much heart-burning in the Church, and were said to impart those very elements into the service which the zeal of earlier times had striven to eliminate. They endeavoured, we are told, "to thrill the senses of their hearers with mellow tones and sweetness of voice, which was a vicious thing to do." Various similar charges are laid against the female choristers, all of them testifying only too plainly to what the genuine ideal was, and how far it had been departed from. The rudimentary service laid down by the first followers of the Church, which went no further than psalm-singing of so simple a character that it differed but slightly from ordinary speech, remained as the unapproachable beauty of purity, which every century gravitated further from.

The legend of St. Cecilia, which belongs to the early ages we are speaking of, has suffered some corruptions in its passage through hands unacquainted with the real character of early Christian song. There was a time, as the picture of Domenichino informs us, when the popular belief was ready to accept the fact that St. Cecilia was a player on the organ, and that with this instrument she produced those beautiful tones which "drew an angel down." Later times admitted that an organ was an anachronism, and the lyre or lute took its place as the instrument of the celestial singer. At length even this assumption must be waived, if we would retain the last shred of credibility in the beautiful tale. "A Christian maiden," said Jerome, "must know nothing of any such profane things. If by chance she ever hears a Pagan song, she must shut her ears and not listen to it. As for a flute, a lyre, or a harp, she must not even know what the words mean."

To follow the consequences of these early establishments of musical ritual would be too elaborate an attempt for our present purpose. Suffice it to say that the main element of the service at the present day—the simple chanted psalm or canticle—was laid down and organised in the primitive worship of the Catacombs. That dual arrangement of the music, which we may still observe in single and double chants, was even at this early time in existence; and the contour of the melody then differed but little from ours except in being less buoyant and gay, in wearing a more sombre and sedate hue. When Gregory the Great made his collection of chants for the first antiphonary, we are assured by reliable tradition that many of the old melodies which had grown up in the secret assemblages during the times of persecution were incorporated with loving care, and with a laudable desire to preserve scrupulous correctness; and the strains of the primitive psalmody were thus preserved for purposes of future art in many of the Gregorian tones. The corruptions which crept into the Gregorian system as centuries wore on were almost as numerous as those which vitiated the purity of worship itself; and the effect of the Reformation was in both cases to restore the primitive simplicity. In the plain and straightforward Anglican chants at the present day, we may rest assured that we have as near an approach as it is possible for modern scales and harmony to make to the ancient music of the Catacombs. The tunes, of course, are different, but the musical outline is precisely identical.



"CAN'T KEEP STILL."

"THAT TROUBLESOME CLASS."

BY A SUNDAY-SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

"MR. ——, I shall really have to give up that class of mine." Is there a superintendent past or present who has not had to listen more than once to this confession? It may differ a little in form, and in the voice that makes it, but whatever shape and accent it may have, it is a confession of felt failure. Often it is not a confession of real failure, but only the result of a temporary despondency, and often it is the cry of an earnest heart, trying to do "some great thing" for God, and forgetting for the moment that in His Kingdom there are no such distinctions as great and little works. Whatever may be the cause, the class has really nothing to do with the matter. The disease is in the teacher, and to him the remedy must be applied, either in the form of kindly encouragement, or of honest practical instruction as to the true character of Christian work.

There are times, however, when this cry really arises from the class work, and the question how to deal with it then may well demand the most prayerful thought, and the most careful action on the part of both superintendent and teacher. If the trouble always arose from the same cause, the remedy might easily be discovered, and having been found, could be at once applied; but unfortunately the causes are numerous and widely different—sometimes, indeed, directly opposite. Still, they are capable of classification, and may be broadly described as of three characters—those which arise from outside causes;

those which arise from individual scholars; and those which arise from the class as a whole, or, as it may be put, from it as one corporate body.

There are times when an epidemic of misconduct appears to rage, some classes suffering more severely than others, but very many of them being affected. As it is highly improbable that a majority of the



THE TOO CLEVER ONE.

teachers are incompetent, or the bulk of the scholars utterly bad, this is evidently a case of outside causes; and ventilation, warming, the arrangement of the classes, and similar details, need attention. Many a scholar and teacher have been blamed for the errors of the architect or builder and the poverty or parsimony of the church with which the school is connected.

It is, however, rarely that class trouble can be put into this first category as due to outside influences, for generally it is confined to one description of scholar—the boys of from thirteen to sixteen years of age. Girls of all ages, and boys younger than thirteen, can form some very unpleasant combinations, and at times have a peculiar aptitude for getting into mischief, but as a rule they are fairly amenable to control if it be just and regular. I have one boy in my own school with whom for a long time no teacher seemed to be able to cope, though at that time he was only about ten years of age. I had at last to make a class of him to himself, and give him a seat in front of the desk. There, with his back to the school, I set him to learn texts, and when I could spare a few minutes, I sat beside him, hearing and helping him, and trying to get him to grasp the meaning of what he had read. After some weeks of this training, a new teacher joined us, and to him this boy, with others, was entrusted, and he has proved himself by no means a bad scholar. Such cases are comparatively uncommon, and, as a rule, a slight exercise of the superintendent's authority will check trouble in the younger classes, particularly if not allowed to go too far. With the elder boys, who are just beginning to feel themselves of importance in the world, and are perhaps in the first glow of pride at having left school and "gone to work," the case is very different. Among such there is frequently a rooted belief that they are conferring a favour on the school, and all connected with it, by coming at all. Considering the many rewards which are given in one form and another for mere attendance, the idea is not unnatural, but it is most serious in its consequences. The scholar feels that having so far obliged the school officials, as to come, the least he can do is to reward his own virtue by acting according to his own sweet will while he stays. In such a case a clear and sharp assertion of the true position of affairs has a salutary and very often a prompt effect. Sometimes these scholars are possessed with a spirit of malicious and intentional insubordination, which is the very worst form in which trouble can arise. Happily such cases are rare in most schools, but when they are found they permit but of two courses: reformation or expulsion. From the latter everyone shrinks, for the thought will come—what will the boy do? Still it is far better to accept this alternative, with all its responsibility, than that the spirit of insubordination should spread through the whole school, as it inevitably will do if any one scholar is permitted to be master. Many of our children receive their only lessons of submission to authority from their Sunday-school teacher, and if that principle be not there enforced, they are injured rather than helped. The extreme penalty need scarcely ever be threatened, and certainly will never have to be enforced, if superintendent and teacher both possess the three great qualifications for control—firmness, patience, decision. These are needed in all classes, but they are absolutely essential in



MISCHIEF BREWING.

dealing with those which are troublesome. Every scholar is quick to discern any uncertainty or wavering in the minds of those who attempt to control him, and the worst offenders will submit if they feel that there is "the iron hand" in "the velvet glove," while comparatively tractable boys will break out from the rule of a teacher who has not a clear idea of what he wants, and a firm determination to get it, and never to relax his efforts until then.

Much more common causes of trouble than this intentional insubordination are those which arise from no vicious motive, but because the scholar really cannot help it. For instance, in many schools there will be found one or more boys, generally of respectable parentage and fair education, and by no means unlovable, who cannot possibly be still. Such a boy is moved from class to class, in the hope that some teacher will be found who can control his mercurial temper. It is a vain hope, for the remedy intensifies the evil. Fresh teachers and fresh class-mates excite rather than check, and the mere fact of moving into a new class is a pleasure to such a boy, and a thing to be sought rather than shunned. Yet something must be done with him, especially as, like all troublesome boys, he has the material in him for making a good man, if it can only be properly wrought. Experience and report tend to show that the best thing for nearly all classes is to have a separate room for teaching; but with the present system of school building that is impossible to obtain. A class-room for the teaching of this restless lad is absolutely imperative; he must be out of sight of other classes, and of all the things in the general school at which he can look, and to which he can draw the attention of his fellows. If, in addition to being put in a class-room under an able and conscientious teacher, he can be put into a class of well-behaved and studious boys, his cure will be so much the more rapid and complete. In a class-room the sounds—or perhaps more often the silence—of incipient mischief are more easily noticed than in the general school, and it can be nipped in the bud; and there being no outer attraction, interest in the lesson is contagious, and will ultimately be aroused in the most careless. This kind of scholar is intermediate between the wilfully insubordinate and those who have not the slightest wish to upset their teacher or annoy their fellows, and yet who contrive to do it thoroughly. Typical among these are the dull ones who cannot take an intelligent interest in the lesson, the idle ones who will not, those who are too clever, and those who think they are so. The dull or idle boy will either sink into passive inattention, and thence into becoming a disturbing element, or he will irritate his fellows by asking questions and saying things they consider silly, and become their laughing-stock and butt. The too clever boy will answer all questions, find all references, and ask for all information, and unless the teacher is possessed of an exceptional amount of self-denial, he will practically become the only person in the class so far as teaching is concerned. The other boys cease to care for the lesson, and in addition to that, they think their teacher favours their cleverer compeer, and that he himself must fancy himself better than they are. They thus come to dislike their fellow, and to have little respect for their teacher, and carelessness, indifference, mischief, and annoyance ensue.



"HE CONDESCENDS TO COME."

The boy who simply thinks himself too clever must be left, with the idle boy, to be dealt with by the teacher, who, by judicious snubbing or spurring, may repress the one and stimulate the other into better ways. The ignorant and really clever boys can only be dealt with by prompt removal to a class more fairly on a level with themselves, whether in ignorance or knowledge. Very often this is a task of considerable difficulty and delicacy, as the dull boy may have to be put among those much younger than himself, and he does not like it, while the clever boy has to be put among those much older than himself, and they object. In the latter case there is the added difficulty that no teacher quite likes to lose his very best scholar, and to have left with him only those with whom he has not been working altogether amicably.

Where a whole class is found unmanageable or troublesome, in every instance I believe the fault may be traced to the teacher, and not to the scholars. Not for a moment should it be thought that the teacher does it intentionally, or even that he dreams that he is to blame, yet it is not the less true. It may be that he is not fitted for that particular class—superintendents, so far as I know, not being able to tell on a first glance exactly what every person they meet is best able to do. Hence, a teacher who has frequently to complain of his class as a whole had better have a new class found for him, and there possibly he will be more successful. On the other hand, it is possible that the teacher is utterly unfitted for Sunday-school teaching—some of the very best of Christians are so. One most estimable man whose history I know, had a continually unfortunate experience. He was well educated, being particularly well read in Bible subjects and in the branches of general knowledge which tend to make Bible study interesting. He was not ill provided with anecdotes, and could put the sacred narrative into descriptions which always proved interesting to adults; yet as a teacher he did not succeed. The cause of failure seems to have been the want of that self-assertion which must accompany mastership of any kind. The want of this

—whether from Christian goodness or any other cause —boys are quick to detect; the teacher is looked upon as weak, liberties are taken with him, and then, so far as that class is concerned, comes chaos. He visits the homes of the scholars and talks over their shortcomings, not with the intention of complaining, but hoping to be strengthened by the parental authority. That hope is quite a broken reed, and provokes rebellion rather than submission. Home visits should be visits of friendliness to scholars and parents, the troubles of the class being kept secret except as a last resource, and then the complaint to the parent should be by the superintendent, and not the teacher. Many a boy who would have become utterly bad through complaints to his parents, has had his heart won by the "brilliant silence" of his teacher in the periodical visit. Other teachers who cause their own trouble are those who will not prepare their lessons; who are sometimes very free, and sometimes mightily dignified; who attempt to make up for general laxity by occasional outbursts of extreme severity; and above all, who, having made a promise or threat, do not carry it out.

The periodical visitation, and personal week-day acquaintance of teachers and scholars, is perhaps the best of all preventives of class troubles; but as it is part of the duty of every teacher, it can hardly be said to be a special means to that end or a remedy for trouble when it has arisen. Remedies must be sought in attention to comfort; by selection and arrangement of scholars and classes; and by careful appointments or alterations of the teachers. These are matters for the superintendent; but nothing he can do will be of permanent good unless the teacher has mastered the real secret of good government—decision to know what he wants, firmness to insist on having it, patience to keep on striving after it in spite of apparent failure. When I was quite young in the work, I had occasion to notice one particular class. It consisted of ten boys of about fourteen years of age. They were working lads, somewhat rough, with little or no home training, and they had just entered on their career of wage-earning, and had not learned the Apostolic injunction, "Not to think more highly of themselves than they ought." For many Sundays after the class was formed, the teacher never seemed to have a moment's peace in his work. His eyes had to be everywhere and his ears constantly open, and though unimportant things never appeared to be heard by him, every tendency to insubordination was checked. Often it was after a long struggle and with great difficulty, but it was done at last. He prepared his lessons carefully, and with an eye to his own particular class; and he knew the homes and parents of his boys, never passing a scholar or a parent, or, I really believe, any member of any of their families in the street, without recognition. The work told, and the class became regular and orderly, and more than once strange lads put into that class for one day have in it been kept in order not so much by the teacher as by the scholars.

HIS LAST PICTURE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"WHY, how worn you look, Phillis!" a young lady remarked, as she entered a room, half studio half living-room, which the other was setting straight. "What is the worry now?"

Phillis Whately turned and laid down the dust-brush she held. "Oh, Helen, how glad I am to see you! Sit down. No, it is past worry; it is real trouble."

"Is your brother's cough worse?"

"More than that. He has an attack—slight, the doctor calls it—of inflammation of the lungs, brought on by coming through the fog from that wretched dealer's. He is in bed, and cannot touch a brush for a week at least."

"Poor Jem! And so much work as he has in hand. Is that his 'Close of the Day' you have turned up from the corner? How beautifully it promises! What a shame that it is laid aside!"

"Yes, yes; but there are other things more important. You know he has been copying lately. He hates it; grudges the time spent while unpainted pictures crowd his brain and his sketch-book; but it pays, and promptly. A while ago Gibson, the dealer, gave him an order to copy the new Paolo Veronese of the National Gallery, 'The Vision of St. Helena.' The same gentleman who had bought the little Raphael Jem copied—a great art-connoisseur—wanted it. Well, Jem did not hurry to begin: he was just full of an original sketch, and on cold days I tried to keep him from the Gallery. But he began last week, and then Gibson sent word that he heard he wasn't getting on, and that if he could not execute the order at once he must relinquish it. And now Jem is laid up!"

"The picture and Gibson will have to wait."

"But he won't wait. He was very serious; his client wanted the picture, and someone else must do it, he said, if Jem could not. (I can't help thinking he has found someone who will work cheaper for him.) He even said if Jem were not at the Gallery on Thursday, he should expect the first instalment already paid to be returned. And now comes the worst of it, Helen. That ten-pound note that lay in the desk—our bank—is already broken into! I had begun to use it—so many extras as there have been lately."

"Oh! And does Jem know?"

"I can hardly tell: he takes so little notice of money. But he said this morning, when he found he

was too ill to get up, that Gibson must have his ten pounds back. I could not distress him by a discussion then."

"What is to be done? Do you think if I went to Gibson——"

"It would be no good in the world, Helen. He is a hard, bad man, who would not go from his word if it were to kill Jem."

"And the art-connoisseur—do you know his name?"

"Yes, it came out accidentally: Mr. Bosanquet, 18, Beckwith Square."

"Suppose you appeal to him. With his sanction for Jem to wait, Gibson would be powerless."

"I never thought of that. But how can it be done?"

"I can go."

"You, Helen?"

"Why not? You cannot leave Jem while he is so ill, and it is but a little thing to do."

"But you? Oh, no! Your father kept you so sheltered from the outside world; and you are reserved and shy to those who don't know you. No, it would not be right, and it would vex Jem."

"He need not know; and I shall go, Phillis. The great picture-buyer, ogre though he is, can't eat me. Ah! Phillis, how we struggling artists hate the class—our masters and our slave-drivers—and yet we live by them. They may be human, after all; I will see. There, write me down the address—I shall not stay to see your frowns; keep up your spirits, and expect me back before dark with the best news—the kindest message that a rich man could concoct. Goodbye."

And the girls kissed each other with something of the fervency of a great occasion, which indeed it was to Phillis Whately in the depth of her trouble; while it seemed almost that to her friend, in the sudden call made on her resolution and courage.

CHAPTER II.

AND Helen Pilgrim's temperament was not one that would be first of all described as resolute and courageous. She was perhaps not entirely without those qualities, but they were hidden in a complex nature whose many feelings checked and held one another in a control that appeared outwardly—in spite of the delicate sensibility of her looks—like quiescence. She had not realised, when she made the offer, how much it would cost her; she could not know how greatly it was to tax her powers of endurance. London born and bred as she was, it had seemed quite easy, though it took time and exertion, to make her way to Beckwith Square; and when told there that Mr. Bosanquet had left yesterday for his country house, Caxfield Manor, it was a spontaneous thought, in her disappointment, that she could follow him. She knew Caxfield, or she remembered passing the station on the Great Northern line, and it had seemed but a little way out of town. But what looks like a short distance at the beginning of a long journey, often appears the reverse when undertaken on the spur of the moment, when noon is passed, and a good deal of energy spent. The first train she could get from King's Cross was a stopping one, and she began to wonder despondently, as she sat preoccupied and upright in the third-class carriage, how long it would be before she arrived at her destination. Certainly she would not get back to Phillis before dusk: nor would old Hannah, her only house-companion since her father's death, see her home for tea. Then, when at last she stepped hopefully on the platform at Caxfield, she was told that the Manor House was two miles away, and that a fly was not to be had. As she looked out on the dusky unknown country road that a friendly porter directed her by—it was a good road, and no mistaking it, he assured her, and there were the lights of the Manor already kindled on the rising ground, and would be before her all the way—when she looked up at the low clouds, whence a few snow-flakes were quietly dropping, and felt the bitter air, more biting now the December day was closing—something like consternation overcame her. Had she done, after all, an ill-judged thing in coming? But, courage! she had come: she must go on. In little more than half an hour she should be there, even if the snow thickened. And the deed once done——!

The lights that spurred her on through the gathering night were brightening the interior of a beautiful home. In Mrs. Bosanquet's room, where the invalid spent most of her time, she was sitting with her maid, looking forward to the brightest hour of her day, when tea would be brought, and Laurence would come in for a chat. Her son for the moment was in his study. He had been riding all the afternoon, and now, seated in his easy-chair out of the direct rays of the fire, and turning over some art publications that lay on a little table about the shaded lamp, he was enjoying the physical comforts of ease and warmth, after experiencing the bitter air outside. The lamplight was soft and local, but the chief points of the exquisite room in which he sat could be made out. The walls were panelled in oak; a dado of delicate modern carving ran round them rather high; and above were hung, in plain oak frames, rare old etchings, whose value only the connoisseur could know. Low bookshelves stood below; and behind their locked metal gratings great cases of scarlet morocco gleamed, on which—with ampler light—the names of Marc Antonio, Dürer, Lucas van Leyden, Rembrandt, and others, might be read, and their precious contents guessed at. There were stands, too, for locked portfolios, and a writing-table; but besides the few pieces of pottery on the high carved over-mantel, there was not an ornament in the room. The master of this apartment was perhaps as well worth looking at, in this Rembrandt-like light, as the rest of its contents. A wide brow, from which the once abundant hair had retreated a good way, gave distinction to the head; the full, prominent eyes were cold and critical in expression; while the well-formed lower face was just saved from the weakness of the Charles II. type by a firmer, hairless mouth. It was a fine head, though it might not attract; and its defects were all known to its possessor.

His manner, that matched his expression, was apparent when a servant announced, in a subdued utterance, that someone wished to see him.

XUM



"'Would you like to see the pictures?'"—*p.* 662.

"Who is it, Evans?" he asked, with a certain slow impatience.

"A—a young person, sir: a lady."

"Isn't it Mrs. Bosanquet she wants to see?"

"No, sir; she said you partic'lar; she wouldn't detain you more'n a few minutes."

"The drawing-room is not lighted? Well, show her in here, and see you let me hear her name."

So it was a loudly spoken "Miss Pilgrim" that Helen—feeling weary, relieved, and yet anxious—followed in person. She had arrived at last; the worst would soon be over. She had shaken the snow from her skirts, though the wet of it gleamed here and there about her; and now, dazed with the fire and lamplights after the darkness of the roads, she paused within the doorway, failing for a moment to see the occupant of the room in the shadow. The objects about struck her, artist's daughter as she was, with a sharp, distinct impression. How lovely it all was! the rich man's room; and ah! there was he, the rich man himself, the picture-fancier, the captious buyer, who passed by so many works of gifted struggling men because they did not altogether please his critical sense. Certainly he was worse, more chilling, more unapproachable, than she had feared.

He had risen, and waited till her eyes fell upon him. "Won't you come forward?" he asked then, in his ordinary manner.

She advanced within the circle of light, and grasped nervously the back of the chair he had motioned her to: she never thought, weary as she was, of seating herself. In spite of her pretty smile of salutation,

she looked across at him with an unconscious and proud condemnation.

"Thank you; I have a favour to ask," she said. "I have come on behalf of a friend—Mr. Whately."

"Mr. Whately?" he repeated absently. He was observing her curiously. It was long since he had seen a face so quiet, with so little about it to catch a common casual eye, that promised so much, that might mean so much. And she was going to ask a favour from him, was she? It did not appear so.

"Yes," she affirmed, while this went on in his mind. "You ordered a copy of the 'Vision of St. Helena' through Gibson the dealer, did you not? And he gave the commission to Jem Whately."

"Ah?"

"And now Gibson says you will not wait: that if Mr. Whately does not execute the order at once he must give it up."

She paused a little breathlessly; she had reached her point.

"Well? I did hear that the artist was shilly-shallying (you are his emissary, then?), and I suggested he should be pushed."

"Oh! but he is ill. He has begun, but the doctor says he may not work this week, at least. I have come to tell you that—to ask you to wait that time, perhaps a little longer, until he should be better—to give the order nowhere else."

"Is Mr. Whately particularly anxious to retain it, then?"

This was not the direct, the final answer she was hoping for. "Particularly? yes," she said, with rising colour, and a clear, lofty utterance. (Oh! why was poverty bitter to acknowledge?) "He is poor; he needs the money." But beneath this difficult statement her distress was not altogether hidden. He met it strangely.

"I wish," he said, with polite authority, "you would sit down. We could discuss the matter more comfortably then."

She could only obey; and, singularly, when her eyes were no longer on a level with his, her strange defiance yielded.

"I'm afraid I should not have said that," she said more meekly; "yet it is true. My father always said there was genius in Jem Whately, but he has never got his chance yet to let the world know it. It will come, if he lives. If—if it could only come now! You, who love good art, should see his sketches."

"Perhaps I may, some day. Then, was your father an authority?"

"My father?" she looked up quickly. "My father was John Pilgrim."

"Ah! I might have thought of it. I have two of his pictures, which I am very proud to possess."

A light of happy memories spread over her face. "You have?" she exclaimed, meeting his eyes at once with a glance of sympathy. "I remember; he sold his 'Hereward in the Forest'—how it all comes back to me!—to a Mr. Bosanquet, who came to his studio sometimes. He talked of you; but that is a good while ago."

"Would you like to see the pictures?"

She was looking at him eagerly, and had said, "Ah, so much!" before she knew. Then she checked herself. "Not now; no. There is Jem Whately. I must not forget; and I want to go. If you will kindly tell me—you can help him just by waiting!"

But again he did not answer her unfinished appeal.

"If Mr. Whately was in a difficulty with Gibson," he asked deliberately, "why didn't he communicate with me at once?"

"Perhaps he did not like; he is proud."

"He sent you instead?"

It was not a pleasant inference; a sudden red spread over her face. "No, oh no! You must not think that. He does not know I have come. Perhaps it was a mistake; his sister and I planned it."

"A woman's scheme!" he remarked, with a laugh. "Then you came because—because—you are seemingly very much interested in Mr. Whately."

It was the look and tone, perhaps, more than the words, that brought the red again to Helen's cheeks, and made it difficult for her to acquiesce. But she looked at him frankly after a minute. "Yes, he is my friend; almost as much my friend as his sister is, and both have been my companions for years." She rose. "I hope my coming is not a mistake. Mr. Bosanquet, you——" But the pause she left was not filled. "You will let me take good news back to them? You will let me tell them that you will wait for the picture a little while, till there is a chance of Jem's recovery?"

Her tone was pleading, her glance dewy. She began to fear this answer, so long delayed. But he was smiling; there was a kindling animation in his looks. He had gained time, and now he knew his mind—on a minor point, at least. There was no need to lose sight of this beautiful suggestive creature, even if he gave her the answer.

"You may tell them that—yes. I want no one's work in the 'St. Helena' but Mr. Whately's; and Gibson knew it, for it was simply the excellence of his little Raphael that caused me to order it; copies as a rule I avoid. I hope to visit Mr. Whately's studio when he is better. You may tell them all that——"

But she interrupted him. A glad relief shone in her face; she had been unjust; it was good to feel compunction.

"Oh! thank you," she said, with fervency. "You are kind and good. I did not know." She was looking already towards the door; she moved as if to go.

"You may tell them that," he repeated, in a tone that arrested her attention, "when you see them. To-night I hope you will remain with us."

"No, I must go at once," she exclaimed, disturbed and eager. But already, with a quiet "Excuse me," he had left the room; and in a few minutes more he led her to his mother. And then a beautiful old lady smiled upon the weary, startled girl, and took her hand. She had heard, she said, of Miss Pilgrim's generous errand, and she could not be permitted to go back through the snow. She must be good, and stay with her, and Laurence would telegraph to her friends. And Helen stayed.

XUM

CHAPTER III.

The winter had ended, and spring was melting into summer, before the "Vision of St. Helena" was finished. It had been manfully worked at, in spite of ill-health, and now it stood in the artist's studio, receiving a last touch from his brush. He was a very young man, with a face thin and worn, and in his luminous deep-set eyes there was a look that, once seen, was not lightly forgotten. His sister moved about the room with the air of a fidgety person trying to keep quiet, and then the silence was broken by the entrance of Helen Pilgrim. After cheery greeting, Jem Whately turned to his canvas again.

"One sees little of you now, Helen," he said; "your time is so taken up with your grand friends."

"Oh, Jem, that is not fair," she answered, though the reproach had brought the colour to her face. "I stay with Mrs. Bosanquet: she is so patient and good. And see, I have come the first morning I am back. I could not help it; I wanted to come."

She looked rather radiantly at him.

"Don't mind him," Phillis advised; "he only says it to hear your contradiction."

"I don't," Jem interposed quietly. "I said what I thought."

"Then that was unkind of you," Helen said. She had come up behind him, and was looking at the picture. Yet she hardly seemed to see the vivid presentment of the seated woman by the window, with cheek resting on hand, and spirit visibly escaped to dreamland. Or she saw it in a dream of her own; it seemed mixed up with her life, and led her thoughts to other things. She recalled herself with an effort.

"So it is finished. And how good! What does Mr. Bosanquet say to it?"

"Mr. Bosanquet? Oh, he has expressed his lordly approval; and I am given to understand that it is highly honoured in receiving a place in his collection." There was irritation in his tones, and he did not see the pained look that crossed Helen's face. He was still working, as he went on in a lower voice, "That reminds me, Helen: I can't forgive myself for what Phillis let you do about the picture, though I knew nothing of it at the time. Mr. Bosanquet is generous: I hope I do him justice; but I would rather have starved than that you should have gone to him with a favour to beg. I hate to think of it!"

A flaming red showed on the listener's face. "Don't say that," she cried. "I never regretted it—except perhaps for the first ten minutes after I saw him, when I did not know him. You must be glad; for it has brought me—what I came to tell you of—a great happiness. I——" There was a pause, and she said, with a dropped voice, "I am going to marry Mr. Bosanquet."

The brush fell from the artist's hand, and as he stooped to pick it up, there seemed a sudden stillness in the room. Helen had turned to Phillis, looking perhaps for sympathy, but she met a startled gaze that looked more like sorrow than gladness. Then her friend hastened to atone.

"This is most surprising, Helen. Oh! sit down and tell us all about it. 'Tis like a thunder-clap to hear that you're going to marry a rich man, a picture-buyer!"

"That's the way we have always talked; as if there were any real difference between picture-buyers and picture-makers. If you only knew him!"

She was feeling sore and hurt, and fighting against a conviction that she was alone in her joy. But now Jem Whately came to her with his hand stretched out, and he clasped hers tenderly, and looked at her with his luminous smile.

"Forgive me; but it seemed sudden enough to take one's breath away. Helen, I won't wish you happiness, for you say you have got it. If that is so, you know—you know without me saying it, how glad it makes us." He dropped her hand, and went back to his easel.

But when she had gone he left his work, and sat down wearily by the fire. He did not notice Phillis, who was watching him from behind, till she put her hand on his shoulder and spoke.

"Oh! Jem, Jem. It was I who let her go. It has brought all this about."

"Phillis, don't!" he said gently. "She says it has brought her happiness; then how can we regret it? Let us learn to be glad too, for her sake. Renunciation is sometimes the only proof required of us that our love is worthy."

"The Vision of St. Helena" was his last piece of work. When the picture was hung in its place, the hand of the artist was still and cold; his face, his wonderful smile, had vanished from the earth, or lingered only like a vision, as beautiful as that of the dreaming saint, in the memory of those who loved him. Helen wept out some of her tears on her husband's shoulder. "Oh, it is hard! Sorrow and death for him, while we love and are happy. Why should such things be?"

"I cannot tell, Helen. Perhaps death will teach us what life does not."

THE REJECTED PLANKS.

BY THE REV. A. J. BAMFORD, B.A., AUTHOR OF "TURBANS AND TAILS; OR, THE UNROMANTIC EAST," ETC.

"Base ingratitude! Base ingratitude! Is this the way in which to treat an old and faithful servant?"

Some Chinamen were mending a junk on the seashore. They had just taken out a plank from the top of the square bow because it was rotten, and were fitting in a newer and stronger one. It was the old plank lying on the sand who was muttering to himself—

"Did ever anyone hear of such conduct before? To discard me, and to put such a plank in my place! Why! the tree I was part of was well grown and

mature before that from which he was cut was more than a sapling!"

There was another old plank lying near, which also had been taken out of the junk and cast on one side. "We are alike in our fate," said this other, "but I am not sure that we agree in our opinion."

"Not sure that we agree in our opinion!" responded the first plank; "why, what difference can there be? what other opinion can anyone hold in regard to the treatment to which we have been subjected? Here am I, cast on the sand as of no value, and yet for years I have been the topmost plank of that junk's bow, riding highest over all the waves, firmly fixed in the very place of honour, so that wherever the junk went, I was the leading timber in its course!"

"But is it not true, as the junkmen seem to have judged, that, after all these years of service and honour, you are not quite so strong as you were? For myself, I have not been quite so long on the junk as you, yet I am bound to admit that it would be no exaggeration if anyone should say that I was rotten."

"Well, yes, I am a little decayed, I suppose; but then, think of the years of past service; and, besides, if I am getting a trifle feeble, is not that a claim for increased consideration? I have ever had in mind the honour of the junk of which I formed the foremost plank. I have served my fellow-planks well, and, considering my honourable past, I can only say that these men have not only acted in a way that is ungrateful to me, but that is also contrary to their own interest as owners of the junk in discarding so tried and trusty a servant. Where is the plank that can boast a more efficient or distinguished service, I should like to know?"

"It seems to me that you are somewhat mixing in your mind two things that differ. That you have been a trustworthy plank in that junk has been proved on many a voyage down the coast, and more than once in typhoons, in which not a few junks sailing with us have gone down. But I do not quite see that because you were a trustworthy and sound plank before you were decayed, you are therefore sound and trustworthy now, when, as you yourself confess, you are—well, at least a trifle decayed. The fact that you have rendered good service in the past by no means proves you capable of rendering good service now—does it?"

"Well, but to think of the dishonour of being deliberately rejected, and seeing another put into my place—another that I can safely say has never been a river-trip—let alone a sea-voyage—in his life!"

"Now, brother Plank, you are on another subject. May I ask you a straight question?"

"Yes, of course."

"You promise not to be offended?"

"What do you think of me? Of course not."

"Well then, tell me: Are you more anxious to help in the junk, to do your share in keeping her afloat with all her crew and cargo, to be of service to the owners, or, to have the honour of being the most prominent plank in her? In other words, do you complain of your having been taken out of the junk because thereby you suppose she has been weakened, or because thereby you suppose that you have been disgraced? Is it the junk's seaworthiness that you are anxious to maintain, or your own personal honour?"

Notwithstanding his promise, the complaining plank was dreadfully angry. He so thoroughly shook with indignation that, being more rotten than he suspected, he almost shook to pieces. "Do you suspect me of such vanity as that?" asked he, his voice quivering with excitement. "Has it not been as a member of the junk that I have crossed the waves? How can you suppose it possible for me to have any thoughts about myself apart from her? Of course"—this with increased emphasis—"of course it is the junk that I am thinking about, and not myself."

"I beg your pardon, I am sure, if I have offended you," said the other.

"Well, you must admit that your question implied an unpleasant reflection on me which was not likely to be gratifying to my feelings."

"That is why I hesitated, as you know, in asking it. But you must admit that your present resenting of my question as not being gratifying to your feelings makes it possible that the same reason led to your resenting your rejection from the junk's bow. However, we will forget that. You say that you are thinking exclusively of what is best for the junk, not of what is most pleasing to you. Now, if that be so—and I am bound to accept your statement—may it not possibly be that you, getting a trifle feeble, as you acknowledge, may serve the junk best by making way for another plank—one that is perfectly strong? Remember"—the plank hurried on, as his aggrieved companion seemed inclined to reply before he was finished—"you say you have no thoughts about yourself in this matter, but only about what is best for the junk. Now, would not she be weaker if even one board were a trifle unsound than if all her planks were strong, and not a single one beginning to decay?"

The answer with which the other had a moment before tried to interrupt his questioner never came. He was silent. He had not seen the matter in just that way before, though it was so natural a way for others to see it in.

The other went on: "I, too, have been rejected, and it is not without a good deal of pain that I break up all my old friendships, and face the fact that once having been removed from the junk I shall never return to her. You were away up in the air, riding proudly, as you say, at the very front, and did not see much of us who formed the flat bottom; but we were a jolly set, very much attached to each other, and having a good deal of fun amongst ourselves; and though, whether in the water or on the beach, we were out of sight, we had a feeling, not altogether unjust, I believe, that there were no planks in the whole junk that had more to do than we had in securing her strength and safety."

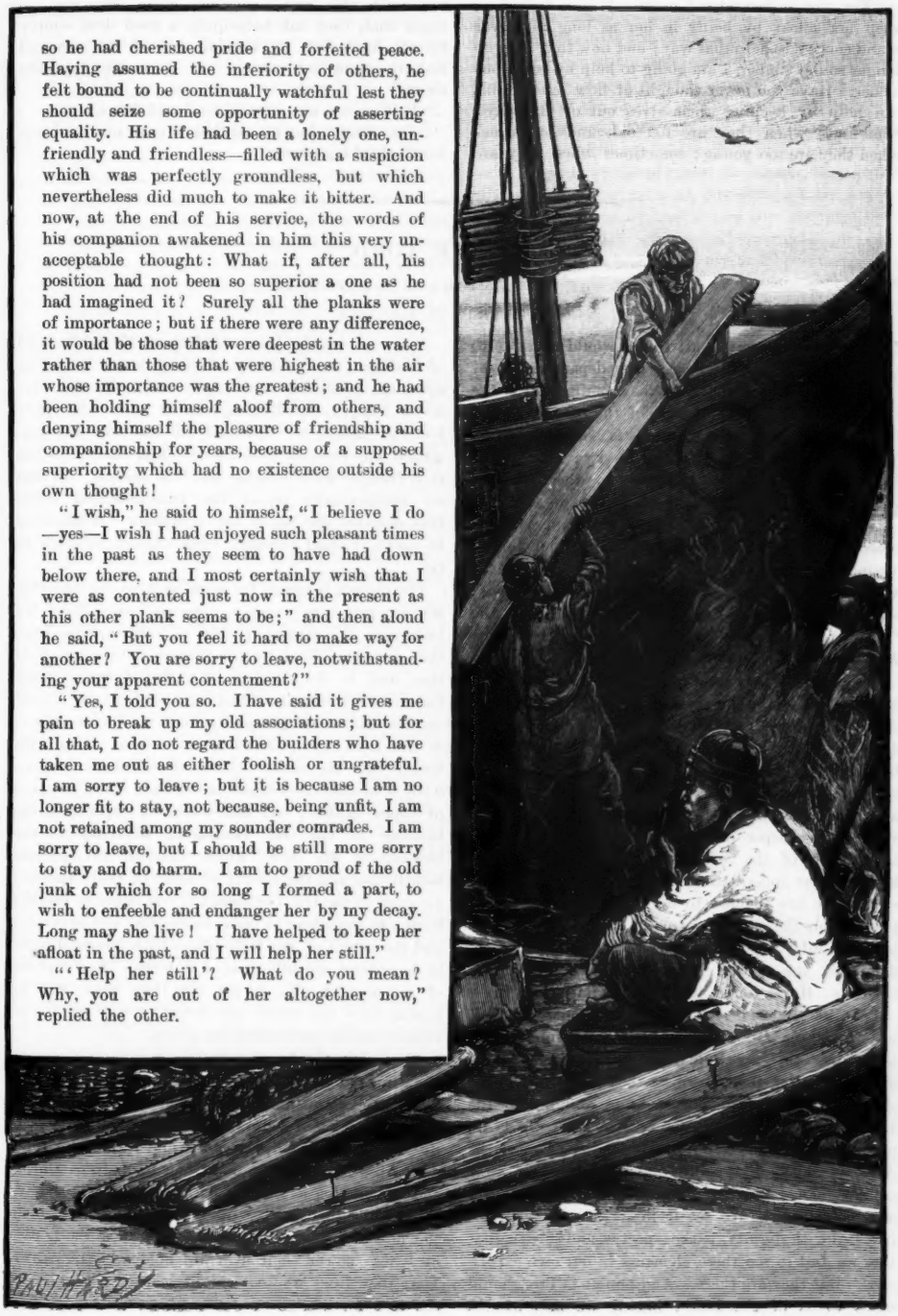
The other sighed. These words gave him a glimpse into a scene of happiness such as he had never enjoyed. He remembered that not only had he known nothing of the planks at the bottom, but that he had known little of those whose place was next his own. His elevated position had led him to consider himself altogether too great a plank to associate with others.

so he had cherished pride and forfeited peace. Having assumed the inferiority of others, he felt bound to be continually watchful lest they should seize some opportunity of asserting equality. His life had been a lonely one, unfriendly and friendless—filled with a suspicion which was perfectly groundless, but which nevertheless did much to make it bitter. And now, at the end of his service, the words of his companion awakened in him this very unacceptable thought: What if, after all, his position had not been so superior a one as he had imagined it? Surely all the planks were of importance; but if there were any difference, it would be those that were deepest in the water rather than those that were highest in the air whose importance was the greatest; and he had been holding himself aloof from others, and denying himself the pleasure of friendship and companionship for years, because of a supposed superiority which had no existence outside his own thought!

"I wish," he said to himself, "I believe I do —yes—I wish I had enjoyed such pleasant times in the past as they seem to have had down below there, and I most certainly wish that I were as contented just now in the present as this other plank seems to be;" and then aloud he said, "But you feel it hard to make way for another? You are sorry to leave, notwithstanding your apparent contentment?"

"Yes, I told you so. I have said it gives me pain to break up my old associations; but for all that, I do not regard the builders who have taken me out as either foolish or ungrateful. I am sorry to leave; but it is because I am no longer fit to stay, not because, being unfit, I am not retained among my sounder comrades. I am sorry to leave, but I should be still more sorry to stay and do harm. I am too proud of the old junk of which for so long I formed a part, to wish to enfeeble and endanger her by my decay. Long may she live! I have helped to keep her afloat in the past, and I will help her still."

"'Help her still'? What do you mean? Why, you are out of her altogether now," replied the other.



"Yes, that is just what I mean. I have helped to keep her afloat by being in her as long as I was sound enough to help that way; and now that I am no longer sound timber, I am going to help by being out of her. Have you never thought of how much folks can help by keeping themselves out of the way? Sometimes when they are too old, and sometimes when they are too young; sometimes when they are too much this, and sometimes when they are too much that, they can help quite a good deal simply by not hindering, by keeping out of the way and making room for others. It is worth thinking about."

"It is quite a new idea to me," said the other.

"Very likely; but for all that, it is an idea, as I say, worth thinking about."

"IT IS THE LORD."

BY THE REV. MICHAEL EASTWOOD.

"It is the Lord."—ST. JOHN xxi. 7.



O all things would conspire to say. The departing night and the coming day; the ripple of the sacred sea and the mystic shadows of the morning sky; the birds awaking to their matins, and the cattle on the hills around; city and village; peaceful life and tragic history; Galilee and Jordan distinctly marked through the sea; prosperity in the adjacent towns and failure in the returning boat; all these details cluster round the figure on the "shining shore," and seem to whisper with the Apostle John, "It is the Lord."

Like St. Peter, we need some such reminder. And we have it. St. John's whisper comes to us after eighteen hundred years, falling upon our heart more distinctly than upon St. Peter's ear. And in that brief whisper he sums up the story told in the last chapter of his Gospel. And as we read the story, and gaze upon the picture, we have more than the suggestive whisper of St. John—we have the still small voice of the Spirit quickening our faculties, kindling our imagination, and convincing our soul; so that we are enabled to say not only of the sacred presence on the shore, but of all things besides, "It is the Lord." We learn to see the Lord in every detail of the picture. He stands within all its shadows; He is found in all its radiance. Thus—

1. DARK GLOOMY FAILURE should sometimes tell us, "*It is the Lord.*" The shadows of night still hang over this apostolic picture, throwing a sable distinctness on the returning boat, deepening the gloom on seven disappointed faces, and hiding the Lord Himself, or so disguising Him that He is no more than some would-be purchaser whom the Apostles must disappoint, and whose money they cannot take. Vulgar, prosy, common failure and disappointment! We see it in its diviner bearings, invested with dignity, pathos, poetry, and spirituality. But we fail to see these elements in our own experience. But they are there. And honest failure should speak to us of the Lord; indeed, we may ascribe it to Him.

When we see the Lord standing on the white sand of Galilee (the "shining shore"), tenderly gazing upon the returning boat empty of all freight save seven hungry, tired, disappointed men who have honestly failed, we feel that He has not only permitted but induced that failure; and that, after all, it is fraught with blessing and true success. So that we involuntarily repeat the time-honoured words that describe the lot of the righteous, "Whatsoever he doeth it shall prosper," even though it seem to fail.

The picture is meant for us as well as the Apostles. We are prone to worship "success," so-called. We look with a compassion akin to contempt on lives that are symbolised by the picture before us—lives that may be described as a night of long, weary failure. We see the hand of the Lord in visible success and outer prosperity; but we forget that it is the Lord who withholds as well as gives. We forget that He stands within the shadows looking with tenderness and appreciation upon every instance of honest failure; and that while "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer evidence of God's favour; yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon."* We forget, too, that what was to human view the shame and defeat of Calvary, is the victory which overcometh the world.

Altogether, the Apostles present a pitiable instance of failure. For some three years they had been the friends and companions of the Lord Himself, but in spite of kind and reiterated teaching from His own lips, and from the lips of Moses and Elijah, the foremost Apostle did not know as much of Jesus Christ and His mission as many a little child knows to-day. Now, while this may be justly ascribed to their own slowness of heart, yet we can see that "it is the Lord" by whose power their eyes are holden. And why? That they (and we too) might learn the lesson that the true knowledge of Jesus Christ is due to the

* Francis Bacon.

ministration of the Holy Spirit, and not to our sagacity, patience, or fidelity. Three years' teaching from the lips of Christ, corroborated by the ghostly voices of Moses and Elijah, failed to show even Peter that his Master was the Saviour. But one whisper of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, and he saw and felt "the truth." Thus we may ascribe the night of Apostolic ignorance to the Lord, who withheld the full gift of the Spirit until the right moment had come.

And how forlorn is the condition of the Apostles as they come before us on the present occasion! Three years' following of the Lord seems to have ended in utter failure. And we can imagine the tones of Peter all the more sad because of his usual heartiness, as he says: "I go a-fishing," and the melancholy response, "We also go with thee." And even then, the honest and laborious endeavour at brotherhood and livelihood has no such reward as they craved and deserved. "That night they caught nothing."

How painful, too, at such a time, to be questioned as to how we are getting on! The stranger on the shore, though his question be ever so kindly, but aggravates the sense of failure.

We can see that these men, however mistaken as to their conception of Christ, were honest and sincere. They deserved success, but it was withheld from them for a time.

Let the Christian of to-day, who has committed himself unreservedly and simply to Christ, as did these Galileans, but who is mysteriously suffering all the sickening agonies of prolonged failure (so-called) either in the Church, or in the world, or both, let him take heart as the Holy Spirit whispers (more tenderly than John to Peter): "*It is the Lord.*"

2. VISIBLE SUCCESS, BRIGHT AND CHEERING, should also repeat the same truth, "*It is the Lord.*" The night is long, but the morning cometh. Our Lord appears, whether we recognise Him or not. His personality does not depend on our recognition. It is He, whether we recognise Him or not.

Then comes the cheery command, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

When such a change as this comes, we are in danger of forgetting the Lord. The lessons of the night and the discipline of failure are lost upon us sometimes. We are elated, carried away, forgetful of the Lord, forgetful that the incident is a kindly repetition.* We think of our energy. We congratulate ourselves upon our skill. We irreverently speak of a "lucky chance." Even Peter, so full of faith and love, sees nothing Divine in the incident; and we too in our exhilaration forget the meaning and significance of the present moment with its blessings and successes and memories, until we are recalled to our better self by some Divine whisper, "*It is the Lord.*"

Without Him (with all reverence be it said) we never caught a single fish or achieved a single success.

* See St. Luke v.

Like Peter, may we be seized with a more reverential spirit when we are reminded that it is the Lord; like St. Peter and his associates, let us join together in bringing the tokens of our success, and laying them at the feet of the Lord, reverently and thankfully.

3. THE HOMELY DETAILS OF LIFE should repeat the same ascription—"*It is the Lord.*" When the seven Apostles gathered round the Master, they found no mysterious environment, but although He was in His resurrection glory, they found Him occupied with common every-day affairs, and interested in such homely details as bread, fish, fire, and breakfast.

Common things become sacramental when He touches them, or if we touch thankfully and as in His presence. And such things may be invested with dignity and poetry.

We are accustomed to associate religion with stately edifices; with ponderous volumes; with phraseology that is sonorous, antiquated, and inflexible; with officials who are more decorous than natural and accessible; with rows of people adjusted to stiff-backed seats; and with rite, ceremony, and usage pertaining to Sunday rather than to Monday—to say nothing of an array of doctrines at which the very angels look with awe. And all these things have their place, not forgetting the officials whose imperfection is but equalled by the perfection of their message.

But we must not forget the homely, simple, every-day element. We must not forget that one of the last acts of our Lord was to provide a fish breakfast for His hungry "boys," as He called the Apostles. And it was holy ground, sacred as when He stood within the burning bush.

So, common objects—the loaf on our table, the fire on our hearth, the homely group on the sea-shore, are each associated with our blessed Lord. They speak of Him. To every responsive soul they whisper, "*It is the Lord.*"

And the lowliest duties and engagements of life are sanctified by the example of our Lord and by their association with His person.

4. CHRISTIAN COMPANIONSHIP repeats the same truth. "*It is the Lord*" who gives us our friends. We do not "make" friends, as we sometimes vainly say: they are sent to us by the Lord.

The seven Apostles come before us as associates, comrades and friends, toiling and waiting side by side. They group themselves on the shore, friend with friend. But the central figure is the Lord. It is He who gives coherence to the group. It is He who has brought these men together. Take Him out of their life—and out of our life—and all true companionship is lost. The nearer we are to Him, the nearer we are to one another; the further we are from Him, the further from one another.

Peter, be thankful for John. John, be thankful for Peter. You are God's gift to each other. And Peter—energetic, impulsive, chief spokesman, foremost of the apostolic band—do not be too great a man to listen to John when he whispers, "*It is the*

Lord." You might have missed this opportunity. Your superabundant energy may dull your perception. John can see further than you can. You are looking everywhere but where the Lord is; and when you look where He is you do not recognise Him.

And, John, you will not forget your mission. It is the Lord who bids you tell what you see; as He afterwards bids you "write" what you hear. Love, and you will see; love, and you will tell. Your quiet whisper to Peter is a sacred obligation. And Peter's dramatic energy will tell the whole company.

How we live for one another! It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous. How we are each greater than the other!—in some respect. Truly each may esteem the other better than himself. It is so. And "it is the Lord" who has made us so.

5. REBUKE AND ENCOURAGEMENT likewise repeat the same truth. "*It is the Lord*" who means to administer a rebuke—and an encouragement—to St. Peter that the Apostle will never forget. Having ministered to his bodily necessities, satisfying his mouth with good things and comforting his tired limbs with the warmth of a fire, the Lord favours His disciple with edification. "Breakfast" is followed by the means of grace.

First comes rebuke, and a very pointed rebuke. With a searching question, and with the honoured name of "Peter" suppressed, the Lord strikes home to the pride and cowardice of His servant. The Apostle feels it. And in answer to the probing question, "Dost thou honour Me with a supreme regard?" he falteringly says, "I love Thee."

Then comes restoration—for the Lord never means irritation when He reproves—"Feed My little lambs." This is the sentence passed on the man who denied his Master. "*It is the Lord*," and He alone who could have done it.

Again the searching question is asked. The same answer is given. The sentence is enlarged: "Shepherd My sheep." Yea, a *third* time the question is asked; but this time the Lord uses Peter's own words, and says, "Dost thou love Me? Hast thou any poor, weak affection for Me?" Peter, "grieved," but doubtless with a godly sorrow, says, "Thou canst see that I love Thee."—"Feed My sheep," replies the Lord. And the disciple who denied and fled is restored and commissioned afresh. We should have urged his excommunication. "*It is the Lord*" who rebukes and restores him.

6. THE SHADOW OF DEATH repeats St. John's whisper, "*It is the Lord.*" That shadow rests upon the group. In the very moment of uplifting and exhilaration, when Peter is restored and commissioned afresh, comes the thought of death. It is the Lord who suggests it. And to this very day pensive thoughts of death at once take possession of us in our moments of joy, transfiguration, and uplifting. "*It is the Lord.*"

"This spake He signifying by what death He should glorify God." Our death is not an accident. It is not a disaster. It is the Lord who graciously removes us for His glory. Whether we breathe our life out quietly on our own couch, or die what is deemed a grievous death, "*It is the Lord*" who calls us to Himself.

Let us not personify death: "*It is the Lord.*" That dark figure standing on the shining shore, and whom Apostles fail to recognise, is not Death: it is the Lord.

Indeed, we have a lovely picture of death in the earlier incident, when Peter plunges into the waves to rush to his Lord. So shall we. Some loved companion—some sweet-voiced John; perhaps an angel; perhaps some dear departed child of our own, will whisper, just at the darkest moment, "*It is the Lord;*" and our face will beam with the light of recognition you have seen upon the dying, and we shall plunge into the cold, dark stream of death to find ourselves dying at the feet of the Lord; yea, rather, rising into the life of God.

So the night will end. No more sea. Toil and disappointment over. All the life that follows, with its mingled rest and service and communion, shall be summed up in St. John's thrilling, prophetic whisper, "IT IS THE LORD."

Meanwhile—

> "Thrice blest is he to whom is given
> The instinct that can tell
> That God is in the field when He
> Is most invisible."

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

NATURE still points with lifted hand
To God, and fain would teach
What simple hearts may understand
And lips of wisdom preach.

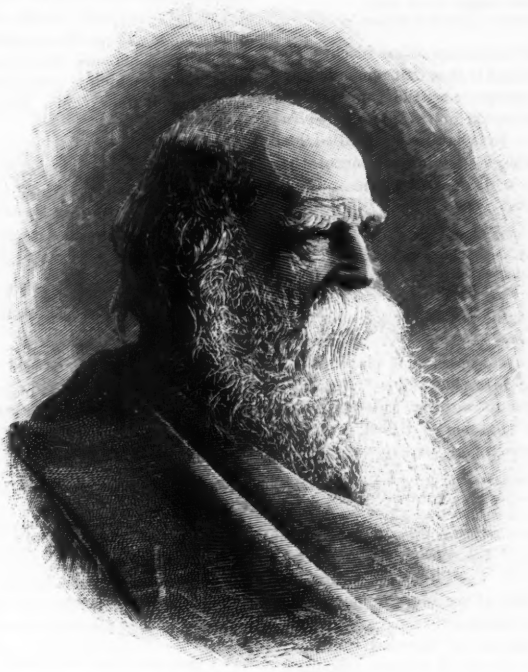
On branching boughs, the blooms that climb
From height to sunny height,
Through all the golden summer-time,
Aspire to gain the light.

Their fragrance, filling all the air,
Their glory of attire,
Their lovely colours, sweet and fair,
Are born of this desire!

Thus, striving upward to the light
That comes from God, we know
How gracious, beautiful, and bright
Our lives will surely grow!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

BRYANT'S RELIGIOUS POETRY.



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.
(From a Photograph by Sarony, New York.)

IN his "Fable for Critics," Mr. Russell Lowell classified Bryant's verse as quiet, cool, and dignified, and compared it to a "smooth, silent iceberg." Lowell doubted the accuracy of the comparison that had so often been made of Bryant and Wordsworth, and he suggested Thomson or Cowper as poets to whom the great American author bore resemblance; but whatever the doubt as to the exact parallel with English authors, there is none as to the high position that Bryant occupied on the American Parnassus.

William Cullen Bryant, born at Cummington, in the State of Massachusetts, on November 3rd, 1794, had a long, a laborious, and a happy life; and after his death, on June 12th, 1878, a leading American magazine described him as one who had, "by reason of his venerable age, his unquestioned genius, his pure and lofty character, his noble achievements in letters" become "the principal citizen of the great Republic."

His life was one of action as well as of thought. According to Emerson, he has written "some of the very best" American poetry. As early as when he was ten years old only, a school exercise of his was printed in a newspaper in his native State. His writing was continued while he was working as school-boy, as collegian—his college career cut short through the circumstances of his father; as lawyer—who engrossed as well as penned stanzas; then as a journalist of eminence, who had for half a century the responsibility of the conduct of a great daily newspaper. He bore as a journalist the brunt of conflicts as to protection, currency, and slavery; and had his share in the long warfare of above a dozen fiercely fought presidential elections. In the midst of this work his poems were written. As one of his friends has said, he was a journalist to the end of his days, but he never ceased to be a poet.

But it is with the religious poetry of Bryant that we have now to do. And whilst it may be added that throughout his poetry a healthy Christian spirit is generally breathed, yet there are also verses distinctly devotional in aim and character. That early and remarkable poem, "Thanatopsis," put into words much of the old teaching of the Puritans its author was descended from. Its moral is in its latest lines:—

> "So live, that when thy summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan, which moves
> To that mysterious realm where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of death,

Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

From that poem down to the latest, his teaching is clear and unmistakable; and it is worth remembering that one of his latest poems was the Ode written for the birthday of Washington in 1878, published in a Sunday-school paper. In what may be called his general poetry, Bryant places his appreciation of the revealed truth. In his well-known poem, "To a Waterfowl," he urges that

"There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone wandering, but not lost."

And this is much the same teaching as in his last long poem, "The Flood of Years." He traces the effect of years on many peoples and classes, and shows how beyond "The Life that is," is "The Life to Come," and he shows how into immortality enter the good and sweet lives that here are lost to sight. Then he concludes by pointing out that in the place—

"Of this grief-shadowed Present there shall be
A Present in whose reign no grief shall gnaw
The heart, and never shall a tender tie
Be broken, in whose reign the eternal change
That waits on growth and action shall proceed
With everlasting concord hand-in-hand."

We shall not err much if we class amongst his religious verse that didactic poem "The Ages," which Bryant wrote for the students of Harvard College—"serious and thoughtful survey of history, tracing a general love of progress," as G. W. Curtis calls it. The stately Spenserian stanza declares that "Eternal Love doth keep in His complacent arms the earth, the air, the deep." And to the question whether the Merciful One who stamped our race with His own image—now that the swarming nations have spread far away—will forget His latest offspring? the poet replies—

"Oh, no! A thousand cheerful omens give
Hope of yet happier days, whose dawn is nigh;
He who has tamed the elements shall not live
The slave of his own passions; he whose eye
Unwinds the eternal dances of the sky,
And in the abyss of the brightness dares to span
The sun's broad circle rising yet more high,
In God's magnificent works his works shall span,
And love and peace shall make their paradise with man."

Again in "A Forest Hymn" this is the moral. Having struck the keynote that "the groves were God's first temples," the solemnity of the forest is traced, and the hand of the Father is shown in the rearing of the "venerable columns," which are yet a fit shrine for the "humble worshipper to hold communion with his Maker." There is continual worship here, where man beside the mighty oak seems "almost annihilated;" and written on the mighty works, the worshipper reads "The lesson of Thy own eternity." And thus—

"Be it ours to meditate
In these calm shades Thy milder majesty,
And to the beautiful order of Thy works
Learn to conform the order of our lives."

It may, however, best illustrate the religious poetry of Bryant if we quote in full one of his hymns—one comparatively little known in England. The "Hymn of the City" is well worth quotation, but there are others that will perhaps appeal to more universal sympathy. There are two that attract—two hymns of trust, one of which is "The Cloud on the Way," and the other "*Mors Janua Vitæ*," and we quote the latter:—

"Beside a massive gateway, built up in years gone by,
Upon whose top the clouds in eternal shadow lie;
While streams the evening sunshine on quiet wood and lea,
I stand and calmly wait till the hinges turn for me.

The tree-tops faintly rustle beneath the breeze's flight—
A soft and soothing sound, yet it whispers of the night;
I hear the wood-thrush piping one mellow descant more,
And scent the flowers that blow when the heat of day is o'er.

Behold the portals open, and o'er the threshold now
There steps a weary one with a pale and furrowed brow;
His count of years is full, his allotted task is wrought,
He passes to his rest from a place that knows him not.

In sadness then I ponder how quickly fleets the hour
Of human strength and action, man's courage and his power;
I muse while still the wood-thrush sings down the golden day,
And as I look and listen the sadness wears away.

Again the hinges turn, and a youth, departing, throws
A look of longing backward, and sorrowfully goes;
A blooming maid unbinding the roses from her hair,
Moves mournfully away from amongst the young and fair.

Oh, glory of our race, that so suddenly decays!
Oh, crimson flush of morning, that darkens as we gaze!
Oh, breath of summer blossoms, that on the restless air
Scatters a moment's sweetness, and flies we know not where!

I grieve for life's bright promise, just shown and then withdrawn;
But still the sun shines round me, the evening bird sings on;
And I again am soothed, and beside the ancient gate
In this soft evening twilight I calmly stand and wait.

Once more the gates are opened; an infant group go out,
The sweet smile quenched for ever, and stilled the sprightly shout.
Oh, frail, frail Tree of Life! that upon the greensward strews
Its fair young buds unopened, with every wind that blows.

So come from every region, so enter, side by side,
The strong and faint of spirit, the meek and men of pride;
Steps of earth's great and mighty, between those pillars gray,
And prints of little feet mark the dust upon the way.

And some approach the threshold whose looks are blank with fear,
And some whose temples brighten with joy in drawing near,
As if they saw dear faces, and caught the gracious eye
Of Him, the Sinless Teacher, who came for us to die.

I mark the joy, the terror; yet these, within my heart,
Can neither wake the dread nor the longing to depart;
And in the sunshine streaming on quiet wood and lea
I stand and calmly wait till the hinges turn for me."

The central idea in this poem is not very new nor very profound, but the verses are musical, the words are very choice, and the sentiment will commend it to most. The other hymn we have named—"The Cloud on the Way," has similar merit; "a mist upon the ground" blots the way for ever; we enter into the dark cloud, and are gathered to the past. But beneath the "sullen skirts" the rosy morning glimmers through, and

"One whose feet the thorns have wounded passed that barrier and came back,
With a glory on His footsteps lighting yet the dreary track.
Boldly enter where He entered; all that seems but darkness here,
When thou hast passed beyond it, haply shall be crystal clear."

And there is much more of teaching such as this—that there is a serener realm beyond earth's conflicts, and that to it the Light of the World illumines the "dreary track." In his "Centennial Hymn" Bryant does not attain the height of that contemporary American poet's beginning—

> "Our fathers' God, from out whose hand,
> The centuries fall like dropping sand;"

but the verses he wrote for the Philadelphia Exposition have vigour and yet repose, their chief thought being the truly national one of thanks to the guardian Power, "who kept our sacred league of States entire."

Another hymn merits quotation, the "Hymn of the Sea"—that mighty sea the restless billows of which are swayed by a Mightier. The Creator "moves o'er it evermore"; His friendly breeze bears the ships; His tempests wake the fury of the sea, and the fierce tornado descends on an armed fleet that carries war to smite some city, and the "vast hulks are whirled like chaff upon the waves." Again, the Creator is shown teaching the "coral-worm to lay his mighty reefs. So the valleys of creation praise their Creator in silent beauty, and the woods, "swept by the murmuring winds of ocean, join the murmuring shores in a perpetual hymn."

Bryant translated also some beautiful verses, one of which is called "The Life of the Blessed," and is from the "Spanish of Luis Ponce de Leon," and its companions have become favourites of some Spanish scholars. The first verse of the translation named may be quoted—

> "Region of life and light!
> Land of the good whose earthly toils are o'er;
> Nor frost nor heat may blight
> Thy vernal beauty, fertile shore,
> Yielding thy blessed fruits for evermore."

These, then, are examples of the religious poetry of William Cullen Bryant. In some respects his poems have been overshadowed by those of Longfellow, and in others by Whittier's productions. Bryant has not attached to his verse either the personal interest or the pathos that there are to be found in some of Longfellow's poems—as, for instance, in the lines written for the ordination of his brother; and that verse has not the spiritual depth of Whittier shown by the latter in poems such as "My Soul and I." But in the religious poetry of Bryant there is a calmness and a quiet meditativeness, and a lesson of trust that must make it acceptable to many minds. There is a lack of enthusiasm, it is true; there is less of beauty in detail, but the proportions are grand, and the main idea is not only well developed, but is insisted on again and again. The versification is good, the imagery chaste, but the method of treatment will more attract the cultivated than captivate the many. The poet attained early a high rank amongst the singers in his own country, and his latter efforts preserved the fame. It may be said somewhat similarly of his religious verse—that he has presented in melodious strains one or two phases of truth, rather than aimed at illustrating many, and hence there are some of the American poets whose efforts are perhaps less meritorious than Bryant's, who are yet better known in this country.

THE CATHEDRAL LESSON.

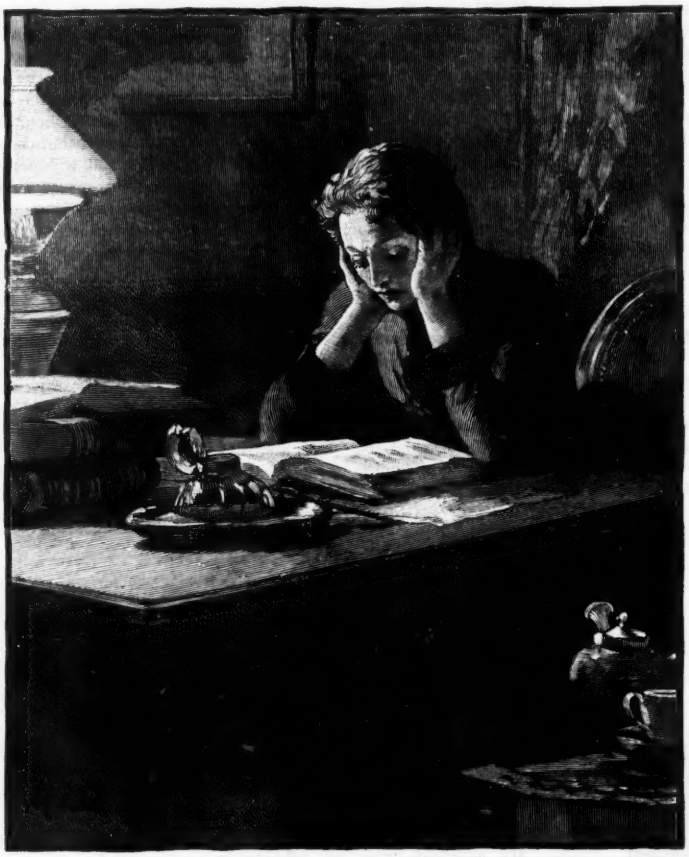
A SERMON STORY.

BY THE REV. JOHN M. BAMFORD, AUTHOR OF "MY JEALOUSY."

I HAD just completed a term of close study for "The Higher Local," and was making my final preparations on the eve of the exam. My ambition was to obtain a first-class in "The Women's Cambridge." Night and day I had studied hard. The morning light had frequently surprised me in the midst of some abstruse problem. "To-morrow," I ejaculated, "will come the trial of my strength." At that moment the wick of the lamp began to sputter, and the brightness of the flame to fade. The old clock on the stairs gave warning for one. "Dear me! is it so late? Why, to-morrow is here already; it is to-day before I knew it." I hastily put aside my papers, and shading the light with my hand, stole noiselessly to bed, but not to sleep. The strain of the work was beginning to tell upon my nervous system. For some time I had been conscious of a sensitiveness and irritability which I had not felt before. Little things vexed me. Sudden noises made me start. My temper was less patient, and my brain more imaginative. For all this, I esteemed the prize of scholarship as a grand compensation. After a restless night I appeared at the breakfast-table with a tint of redness round the eyes, and a flush of feverishness on the cheeks, which I could not hide from my loving mother. The fact is, mother and I were not quite agreed concerning my studies. She was a woman of practical mind, with force and energy of character. Her income was more than equal to our needs, and her daily care was so to use it that she might be the Christian helper of others She certainly remembered the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Whatever she did receive was precious to her as a means of increasing her power to give. She did not actually oppose my studies. The question on which we differed was in the use of woman's influence. I

contended for an intellectual view of life. Labour which was not distinguished by mental strength and culture had no charm for me. I despised feebleness —at least, I did not think it worth my while to hold fellowship with persons of commonplace gifts. If I could not command a kind of intellectual ascendency or discern the same in others, I stood aloof. My intellect was so strong in me, that I flattered myself on my superior understanding of scholastic training as a modern accomplishment.

As she lovingly saluted me on the morning of my examination, she noticed, with motherly anxiety, my excited look. "Honor, my dear," said mother, "I see Nature is putting in a plea for rest."



"I was making my final preparations."—*p.* 671.

mother's view of woman's work was very different from this, but as her methods would have interrupted my studies by placing me in personal contact with the weak and weary, I did not care to consider them. I was great on the theory of education, but upon its *applied influence* my ideas were very dim. My mother valued the improvement of the mind as a means to an end: the more directly she could keep the two things in touch, the better she was satisfied. In her own way she was always learning and teaching, but not after my fashion. I studied and stored —she studied and dispensed. But the pride of

"She shall have it," I replied, "when I am well through this exam.; but not before."

"You know," continued mother, "that I rejoice in your success. Honour to you is honour to me; but prudence will estimate the prize partly by the cost."

I retorted somewhat pettishly, "Surely, mother, you would not have me let go the prize when it is so near my grasp? What if I do sacrifice a little bodily strength: shall I not be repaid in the discipline of the mind?"

My mother kissed me, and said, "Yes, dear, if it minister to the discipline of the heart."

The remark did not please me. I put on my bonnet and hastened to the college, ruffled in spirit; but fiercely determined to succeed. Day after day, with aching head, I toiled through the examination. The last day proved almost too much for my endurance, and when I handed my final papers to the examiner, I was too nervous to look him in the face.

I think he noticed this, for he spoke to me so kindly that I ventured to look up. He was not an old man, yet life had wrought on him grave lines, which gave him the aspect of premature age. His countenance contained such a strange blending of work and rest, that it imprinted itself upon my memory. On my way home, I paused before the first shop mirror, and contrasted my own excited face with the calm expression of the examiner.

The shop stood in the shadow of the Cathedral, and the bells were ringing for evening service.

I sauntered mechanically into the Cathedral Close, not with any intention to enter, but to refresh my interest in architectural studies by tracing the lines of the beautiful fabric, and recalling the historic periods which it illustrated. The setting sun was shining full on the great western window, kindling its painted figures into life, and brightening its Gothic tracery with warm orange light.

As the last thin cloud passed from the sun's disc, the massive façade of the Cathedral rose before me like a grand illuminated picture of mediæval times.

Service had now commenced. The chanting of the choristers fell so sweetly on my ears, that it came like healing to my disordered nerves. The invitation to enter was too strong to be resisted. I passed the verger at the door, glided along the echoing nave, and sought refuge in a stall where the light was not too strong for me.

I was thoroughly tired out, fagged with brain-work and loss of sleep. If any stranger had spoken to me then, or cast a searching eye upon me, it would have disturbed my self-possession. I was haunted with a fear that I had done badly in the examination. Mathematical problems flitted through my mind like ghosts. Even my shaky figures mocked me, until I was ready for a good cry. The singing soothed me. I felt the nervous strain ease under the influence of worship. With the awe of the building upon my senses, and the harmonies of praise and prayer upon my spirit, I yielded to a rapt tranquillity of mind, and fell asleep. My busy brain, however, reproduced the Cathedral service, and cunningly contrived to mingle with it sundry events of the day, which caused my slumber to be anything but refreshing. The congregation resolved itself into a company of fellow-students poring over examination papers. I could see their brows contract in deep thought, and hear their pens working in solemn stillness, as if dealing with subjects of life and death. My papers lay untouched before me. I was painfully conscious how rapidly time was passing, yet something held me back. By a tremendous effort I got to work, but to my dismay the questions were of a class I had not anticipated. I could not answer them without making searching inquiry into my own inner life. I worked hard, but when, after intense application, I had left so many blanks, the task seemed to me utterly hopeless. What was I to do? I was desperate. I rolled up the papers, rose from my seat, and, preceded by a verger, walked down the choir to the Examiner who occupied the bishop's throne. So resolute was I that the sound of my own footfall did not frighten me. The Examiner received me with the same earnest, sympathetic look which had previously impressed me. "My Lord," I said, "there is a mistake here. I have studied languages—I am advanced in mathematics—I am well up in English subjects—but these questions are wide of the mark; I cannot succeed with them at all."

"*Wide of thy mark*, perhaps thou meanest," said the Examiner. He rose: "Sit here, my child."

I sank back under the canopy of the throne, and watched him as he ascended the pulpit, unrolled my papers, and read out my work aloud; but the contrast between the depth of the questions and the shallowness of my replies, was so remarkable, that in the humiliation of a great failure I covered my face. There was not a sound. I could have heard a pin drop. Oh! if the organ had pealed forth at that moment, what a relief! I dared to raise my head, and caught the kindly eye of the Examiner, as he broke the awful silence with the words:—"I propose to keep open this examination, that your fellow-student may try again. If she work these questions with her heart and intellect, she may yet obtain an honourable pass!" The suspense to me was so exciting, that under the strain of it I awoke.

I must have slept some time, for the bishop, who was the preacher for the evening, had already reached the application of his subject.

His closing sentences impressed me as the class of thoughts I might have expected from the examiner in my dream. "If," said he, "the great realm of the human heart be left out of the scheme of culture, the moral nature will not possess dignity. Intellectual power may be attained without intellectual refinement. Intellectual power may even minister to intellectual impurity. The cleverness of scholarship may promote the subtlety of sin. The only teaching to save the empire of intellect from becoming an empire of self and pride, is the teaching of the Divine Will. The only guarantee of a clean heart is the grace of God. The true interest of life, the real harmony of being, the satisfaction which is superior to outward circumstances, the influence which abides in the memories of men, is that which derives its teaching daily from the will of God. The lesson may come in the works of nature or in the lives of men. It may come in the discipline of Providence, or in the written Word, or in the direct voice of the Divine Spirit: or it may come in the appeal I now make to you; but until God gives the lesson, and we obey it, our education is incomplete."

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

July 20. Taking up the Cross.

To read—St. Luke xiv. 25–33. *Golden Text—ver.* 27.

I. THE OCCASION. (Ver. 25.) Christ, now well known throughout all the land of Palestine, had preached in Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee.

What else had He done? Remind of wonderful miracles of feeding, healing, and casting out devils. No wonder great crowds followed Him wherever He went. Of whom did the crowd consist?

Poor and hungry who had been fed.

Tender women who had been healed.

Little children who had been blessed.

Strong men, leaving farm, or shop, or fishing-boats to listen to this wonderful preacher.

All these crowded round Him, wanting to become disciples.

II. THE TEACHING. (26—33.) What strange words! What are they told?

To give up dearest relations—to lay down life itself—to take up a daily cross—to forsake all (ver. 33) if they would be truly Christ's disciples.

What *did* Christ mean?

Notice—not now speaking of *sin*. Had already in Sermon on Mount shown that His religion reached to the very thoughts of the heart as well as outward actions. (See St. Matt. v. 22—34, etc.)

Christ speaking here of blessings God has given to us—the good things of life—these He claims as His, to be given up at His call. For example—

Money—renounced by Matthew the publican (St. Matt. ix. 9).

Health—Job afflicted with sickness (Job ii. 7).

Friends—Sons of Zebedee gave up father and all (St. Matt. iv. 22).

Life—St. Stephen stoned to death (Acts vii. 58).

Children—Abraham offered up Isaac (Gen. xxii. 2).

But besides *giving up* good things, what have disciples to *do?* Bear the cross. What is this?

(*a*) *Doing* disagreeable duties—*e.g.*, Jonah sent to Nineveh (Jonah i. 3). Moses told to speak to the rock (Num. xx. 10).

(*b*) *Suffering* hardships in doing Christ's work—*e.g.*, St. Paul. (See 2 Cor. xi. 25, 26.)

(*c*) *Bearing* persecutions—*e.g.*, St. Peter imprisoned (Acts xii. 2).

What must children give up?

Anything that comes between their soul and God—*e.g.*, a game which makes them out of temper—a friend whose influence is hurtful—books which unduly excite. Why must they be given up? Because Christ must be first in the heart—can have no rival—therefore must be ready to give up even things lawful for His sake. So Christ bids—"Count the cost."

Can a king run risk of being defeated by a larger army?—or a builder of making himself a laughing-stock by being unable to finish his house?

What shall we have instead? Present peace, joy, happiness; and future glory, honour, and immortality.

Are we willing to deny ourselves for Christ?

July 27. Lost and Found.

To read—St. Luke xv. 1—10. *Golden Text—ver.* 10.

I. THE OCCASION. Very different hearers from those in last lesson.

Those were friends of Christ—these are enemies.

Publicans—collectors of taxes, noted for their extortions (iii. 13).

Sinners—deep laden with sins, like the woman who washed His feet; others were there also who objected to His mixing with such as these (vii. 39).

Pharisees—who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. (xviii. 9.)

Scribes—copiers and expounders of the Law.

To all these Christ spake three parables, teaching of sinners lost, searched for, brought back to God.

II. THE LOST SHEEP. (4—7.) A picture of a lost sinner.

How is a sinner like a sheep?

(*a*) In his folly—choosing to leave the fold for what he thinks better pasture.

(*b*) In his proneness to wander—*i.e.*, depart from God (Ps. cxix. 176).

But the sheep is not left to himself. The shepherd misses it, searches for it, leaves the ninety-nine to seek for this one, goes himself to find it, does not leave the search till it is found.

Remind of some who wandered thus and were brought back.

David, who committed murder and other sins, restored through Nathan the prophet.

Peter, who denied Christ, restored by Christ's look of love (xxii. 61).

What have sinners lost who wander from God?

Peace—for there is none to the wicked (Is. lvii. 61).

Hope—for they are without God in the world (Eph. ii. 12).

Heaven—into which no sin can enter (Rev. xxi. 27).

But what joy is there when the lost is found? Whose joy is it?

Christ's, for He sees the fruit of His labours.

The angels', who share in Christ's joy and glory.

The saints', who welcome a brother back to their communion.

LESSONS. 1. We must feel ourselves lost before we can be found.

2. Shall Christ's search for us be in vain?

III. THE LOST COIN. The sheep was lost by its own folly; the coin by its owner's carelessness.

What is a coin? A piece of metal—of some value—bearing the image of the reigning king. If lost, does no good. Thus man was made in the image of God (Gen. i. 26). But sometimes this image is so defaced by dirt of sin as to be scarcely recognised. Sometimes altogether lost—not fulfilling its end at all. Whose fault is this?

Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?

If we do, the fault is *ours*. What, then, can we do?

Light the candle of God's Word (Ps. cxix. 105).

Search diligently for lost souls.

Rejoice with the angels over one soul brought back to God.

LESSONS. 1. What are we doing to search for others?

2. Is God's image being daily renewed in us?

AUGUST 3. THE PRODIGAL SON.

To read—St. Luke xv. 11—24. *Golden Text—ver.* 18.

I. THE SON AT HOME. (11, 12.) Remind what a parable is—a story with a meaning or lesson. First have a scene of home-life. Two sons living with father: have all they want—good food, clothing, servants to wait on them, father's care, a good home. One becomes discontented—wants his own way—to go out into the world. The father lets him go, giving him his portion of goods.

Picture here of person brought up in a Christian land. Has God for his Father—all religious privileges, etc., but neither values nor loves them. Of his own free will turns aside from all.

II. THE SON A WANDERER. (13—19.) Picture the son leaving home—the farewells, the excitement. Must have felt some pangs. What did he do?

Gathered together all he could get.

Went as far from home as possible.

Became riotous in his life and conduct.

Rightly called "prodigal," or "wasteful." What did he waste?

(*a*) *His time*—might have been spent for his own profit and for God's glory.

(*b*) *His money*—of which he was only a steward.

(*c*) *His education*—all thrown away.

(*d*) *His opportunities*—of usefulness.

A change soon came. Money spent—famine in the land. Who would care for a stranger? Has to endure much suffering. At last begins to *think*. What has he done? Behaved

Foolishly—servants well fed while the son starves.

Ungratefully—to a kind and loving father.

Sinfully—to God in heaven.

Let children see here a picture of themselves when they turn away from God. Notice—

1. The pleasures of sin are fleeting.

2. Sinful life brings misery. (Illustrate by a drunkard's home.)

3. The ingratitude of departing from God.

III. THE SON RETURNED. (20—24.) Came back without delay.

The father, looking out for him, sees far off, recognises, runs to meet, kisses, and forgives.

The son begins his confession—he *must* pour out his heart.

The father listens, accepts, stops him before he speaks of being a servant, gives him welcome and a feast, calls on all to rejoice with him.

See in the son picture of sinners returning to God.

Notice these points in his repentance—

Conversion, or turning away from sin to God.

Contrition, or godly sorrow for sin.

Confession of sin against God and man.

Change—the beginning of a new life.

While on the part of God, the Father, notice His—*Watching him* all the while.

Meeting him half way—seeking to bring him to repentance.

Forgiving the moment he sought forgiveness.

Giving the good things of His grace to the repentant sinner.

How is it with us?

AUGUST 10. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

To read—St. Luke xvi. 19—31. *Golden Text—St. Mark x.* 24.

INTRODUCTION. Christ tried teaching men their duty. Parables in last Lesson specially for publicans and sinners. This one specially for the rich. Wanted to show two things—

(*a*) Money a stewardship for which must give account.

(*b*) Men cannot serve God and Mammon together.

The Pharisees—mostly rich men—derided this idea. Hence this parable.

I. THE TWO IN TIME. (19—22.) 1. *The rich man.* Notice about him—

Was well fed, dressed, and housed. No harm in all this.

Lived according to his position in life.

God gave riches to Abraham and Solomon as rewards.

What was wrong? Was living without God.

Used time, money, comforts, for himself alone.

Cared not for poor beggar at his very door.

Thought not of God, his neighbour, or eternity.

2. *The beggar*—laid daily at rich man's gate.

Wounds unwashed, save for the licking of dogs.

But evidently put trust in God—was rich in faith (James ii. 5).

Cried to God, and was heard (Ps. xxxiv. 6).

Time passed on—both alike died.

The rich man's riches could not keep off death. Buried with pomp in tomb of his fathers.

The beggar with angels near to carry his soul to Paradise (Ps. xxxiv. 7).

XUM

II. THE TWO IN ETERNITY. (23—31.) 1. *The rich man.* His state. What was it?

Bodily suffering, likened to burning fire.

Mental anguish for his brothers left behind.

What does he want Abraham to do? Why impossible?

Sin unforgiven a barrier between man and God.

Why cannot messenger be sent to warn brothers?

Because if will not hear God's Word, will not hear God's messenger.

One did rise from the dead, but men did not repent (Acts xvii. 32).

2. *The beggar.* What is his state?

Bodily and mental happiness for ever.

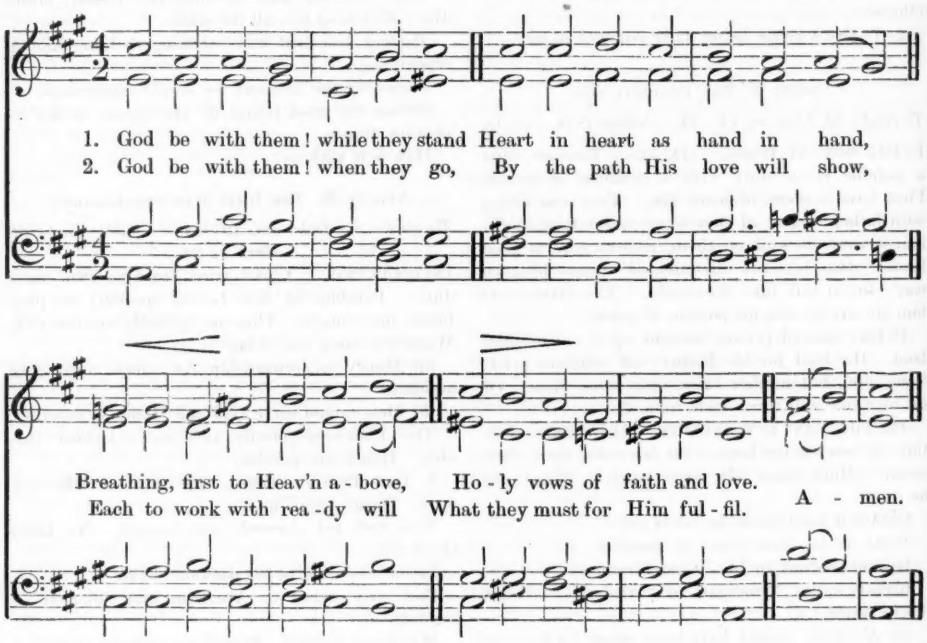
III. LESSONS. 1. Now is the time to serve God. Delay dangerous. May be fatal.

2. Riches without religion a great snare. (Golden text.)

3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God."

Marriage Hymn.

Words by the REV. L. TUTTIETT, M.A. *Music by* W. B. ALCOCK, Mus.B., Oxon.



3.

God be with them! while they share
All He gives of toil and care;
Making glad whate'er they do,
With affection kind and true.

4.

God be with them! while they sing,
'Mid the blessings time may bring;
Rising then, on wings of praise,
To the Light of all their days.

5.

God be with them! while they pray
Through a dark and troubled day,
Learning then, in pain and loss,
How to share their Master's cross.

6.

God be with them! when at last
Earthly joy for them is past;
Looking then for deathless love,
In a better home above. Amen.

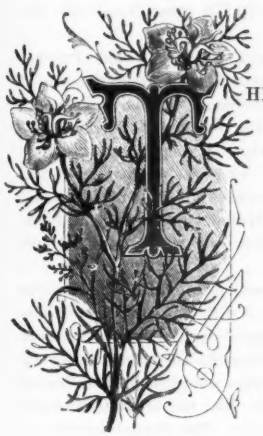
ZECHARIAH'S GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

A SERMON PREACHED IN BEHALF OF THE CITY MISSION. BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

"And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

"And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

"And two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof," etc., etc.—ZECHARIAH iv.



THE Prophet Zechariah lived at the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity. He was specially raised up to be the comforter of his people during this great national crisis. A series of striking and significant visions were communicated to him in order to animate the zeal and quicken the hopes of the restored exiles. In the preceding chapter Joshua, the High Priest, personating the Jewish Church, is represented as standing before "the angel of the Lord" (the Angel—*The Lord*)—the angel of the Covenant; while Satan, the great adversary, is at his right hand to resist him, urging Jehovah to disregard the pleading of His chosen servant. God silences the accuser of the brethren. Joshua is stripped of his filthy garments, and clothed in fair raiment. A mitre is set upon his head; and the vision closes with a promise regarding the Man whose name is *the Branch* (the Branch from the decayed root of David's House), and a prediction of the vast honours and privileges awaiting the Church of God alike in earth and heaven.

After this magnificent revelation, the prophet, overpowered and overwhelmed, has sunk into a stupor or temporary bewilderment. The glory of it had been too much for him. The Lord awakes him (ver. 1). "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." Then follows the beautiful vision, of which I purpose now, with God's blessing, to offer a simple exposition.

The subject naturally divides itself into two parts—the *vision*, and the *design* for which it was given.

I. First, *we have the Vision*. Let us take it clause by clause.

Verse 2: "The angel said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick." The candlestick, as it is familiarly known, is used to hold that which gives light in darkness, and as such, is a significant emblem of the Church of God. There was a time, preceding the Fall, when the world needed the intervention of no such means to obtain light. God's presence was enough. And of heaven, where the darkness of sin is never felt or feared, it is sublimely said, "They need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light." Astronomy tells us that the planets nearest the sun need no moons or satellites. They are bathed in the glory of the great central luminary. It is only the more distant ones which require this borrowed radiance. So it is in the spiritual world. It is only the Church on earth which requires these lesser lights to rule its night of ignorance and sin. The stars pale before the full-orbed glories of Deity. The Divine Sun of Righteousness, in the brightness of His heavenly rising, will quench the dim candles and tiny lamps which light up the earthly temple.

But the candlestick suggests, farther, the idea of the Church as a *Dispenser of Light*. It is set, not for ornament nor to retain its light for itself, but to diffuse it all around. A beautiful emblem we have here, also, of every true Church. It cannot appropriate or absorb its light. It is the illuminator of a dark world. Every Church, if it be a true light, must be also a *Light-giver*. As well speak of the sun, which brightens heaven with his radiance, imprisoning his beams, as the true Church of God selfishly appropriating her spiritual blessings, without an effort to share them with others. She is, or ought to be, the central beacon of hope and safety in the world's midnight sea, warning off the rocks of destruction, and pointing the way to the haven of peace.

But, farther (ver. 2), the Prophet beheld "a candlestick of gold." Gold is the most precious of metals. What can be comparable in preciousness to the Church purchased with the blood of Christ? Think how that emblematic candlestick was fashioned! The candlestick of the Temple of old was made of *wrought* gold. The clothing of the king's daughter (the Church of Christ) is a *wrought* tissue (Psalm xlv. 13). It was wrought in toil, and pain, and anguish. The sun which lights the material world (the glorious lamp in nature's temple) was kindled by an omnific *word*. "God said, Let light be," and the vault of heaven blazed with ten thousand altar-fires. But when the candlestick of the spiritual temple was moulded and fabricated, it required that its adorable High Priest should Himself become "perfect through suffering." "Oh, how great is

Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast *wrought* for them that trust in Thee, before the sons of men" (Psalm xxxi. 19).

Farther still: not only did the Prophet behold a candlestick of *gold*, but "*all of gold*." It was without alloy, consistent, of a piece throughout: no mixture or adulteration of any baser metal.

Brethren, how many there are content to be *of gold*, but not "*all of gold!*" The Church collectively, and believers individually, are too often content with meagre attainments. They are satisfied to act up to some conventional standard of spirituality, and there to stop. The old complaint of the Apostle can be preferred at this day: "They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." True it is that the purest Church and the loftiest type of believer can never, in one sense, be "*all of gold*." In this imperfect state they must rather be like the image of Nebuchadnezzar: partly of clay, and partly of iron. ONE only of the human race was *all of gold*. One pure and guiltless Being alone could make the challenge—"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" But though the holiest Church and holiest saint must come infinitely short of the peerless original, it is our duty to strive after the loftiest ideal—to aim, at least, at perfection. The young artist is well aware, despite of all care and scrupulous fidelity, how inferior his copy must be to the work of the great master—how far the glowing colour or the breathing marble before him transcends the highest efforts of his unpractised brush or chisel. But he aspires after as near an approach as possible to the originals: tint by tint, line by line, touch by touch, feature by feature, are lovingly translated. At best it will be but an approximation; but he strains every effort, assured that success will be in exact proportion to the earnest and conscientious labour bestowed. It was so with Paul in a nobler study. "I," says he, "am a *follower*" (an imitator) "of Christ." Again—"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended"—I count not myself to be "all of gold"—"The good that I would, I do not: the evil that I would not, that do I." "Less than the least of all saints." "Not worthy to be called an Apostle." Yet this self-accusing, self-depreciating pessimist will be content with no meaner quest, no lowlier standard, than to be "*all* of gold"—"I follow after"; "This *one* thing I do"; "To me to live is Christ!"

My friends, is this our lofty aspiration? not content to be merely counterfeits—figures of the true. The grand end of the life of faith in the soul is that we be "conformed to the image of God's Son." Heaven itself consists in this: "We shall be like Him." Nor is it for us to doubt or question the wisdom and faithfulness of God in the way by which He sees meet at times to mould and fashion His candlesticks for the spiritual temple. Gold, to be purged of its dross and alloy, must be brought through furnace-heat. But the Heavenly Refiner is seated by, tempering the fury of the flames; and so soon as the refining process is complete the furnace-fires are quenched. "I have chosen thee," says He, "in the furnace of affliction." In His own good time He brings forth such, as vessels of grace and mercy to glorify His great Name—candlesticks "*all of gold!*"

To return to the Vision (verse 2). The Prophet saw this candlestick "with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon." The bowl (margin: "reservoir") represents the treasury of Divine Grace, containing all the doctrines, precepts, and promises which feed the Church; while the seven lamps symbolise the different branches, the different denominations, of the Church Universal, varying in form, separate from one another, yet all connected with the *one Golden Stem*.

God Himself, you perceive, in this Divine vision recognises the existence of different Churches. There are those in our days who, from the best of motives, long and sigh after a complete amalgamation of all the Churches of Christ, who would have them beaten and welded together; or, like the separate globules of mercury, to run into one. The Divine method, we believe, is not this. It is expressed figuratively in these seven lamps of the vision: *unity*, but not *uniformity* or *identity*. There is an important distinction between unity and union. It would appear to be after the former, not the latter, we are, as Churches and individuals, exhorted to aspire. It is not "till we all come in the *union* of the faith," but "in the unity of the faith." Unity, but not absorption; co-operation, certainly, but not necessarily incorporation. We see this law impressed on all God's other works: unity in diversity, and diversity in unity. Though the branches and leaves of a tree are connected with the same stem, no two branches nor two leaves are precisely of the same form. The seas which encircle our world, though parts of a great whole, are endlessly diversified. The stones in a building assume varied shapes; uniformity would mar the symmetry and beauty of the structure. The human voice is one, but its tones and languages are manifold. No two human countenances are precisely identical. There is the same diversity in mental and intellectual characteristics; and it is this very diversity which has contributed more than anything to enlarge the domains of science, and give to the earth its wisdom. If each man had been an intellectual copy of his neighbour, the world would have stood still.

So it would seem to be God's will in His Church: one in Christ, united to the one Golden Candlestick, yet different branches; or, as the Apostle expresses it, "diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." It humbly appears to me, therefore, to be the mind of God in this passage, for the direction of His people, not to attempt the impossibility of melting down the varied golden lamps and uniting them into one (this would cross

and destroy the Divine ideal of a Church); not enforcing a uniformity, in non-essentials, of worship, or vestment, or rubric, or government, but to keep in mind that we are "all one in Christ Jesus"—members of His body; our only ambition and rivalry how to shine most brightly for Him. Various flocks, one Fold; various stones, one Temple; various members, one Head; various regiments, one Commander; various lamps, one Golden Candlestick.

Observe, farther, in Zechariah's vision (verse 2): "He beheld, and there were seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof." These pipes, or conductors, by a homely figure, represent to us the instrumentalities through which Divine Grace flows to the Church and to every believing member of it. God could have fed His Temple-lamps miraculously, without the aid or intervention of means. He could have nourished these with the needed oil by some occult process. Souls could have been saved and the world converted without any human instrumentality. But He has wisely ordered it otherwise. Sundays, preaching, prayer, communion seasons, are the pipes affixed to every lamp, and conveying to these the precious oil of grace and salvation. Not that the pipes are to be unduly prized and exalted; not that the feeding of the lamp, the salvation of a Church or the salvation of a soul, is dependent on preacher, or sacrament, or sanctuary. These are but the *channels* (mediums of conveyance). Paul may plant, Apollos may water. These pipes may be of the purest gold or of the commonest metal. They may be jewelled with precious stones or be of the merest earthen mould. It is "God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

This leads—we dare not omit it from this cursory exposition—to the next part of the Prophet's vision (verse 3): "And two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." These two trees are represented as distilling oil and feeding the reservoir (verse 4). "So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?" He repeats the question at verse 13; and the answer is given in the closing words of the chapter: "Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

May we not take this new and significant emblem to denote the co-equal, co-eternal Son and Holy Spirit, standing with the Almighty Father—"the Lord of the whole earth": three in one, in covenant for the Church's salvation?

This is the glory and climax of the sublime vision. All is of God. Magnificent and splendid as are the materials of that symbolised Church: its golden candlestick, its lustrous lamps, its pipes without number, its vast reservoir: yet, what would it all be had there been no oil to fill the reservoir, and feed the pipes, and plenish the lamps? Again, what though bowl and pipe and lamp were full of oil, were there no fire to kindle the latter, and fulfil the great purpose of the Church as a light in the world? Take an illustration from the invisible gas under our streets—the wondrous network of pipes underlying our pavements, and climbing from floor to floor in our dwellings. Lamps and lustres of diverse size and form and beauty might be constructed; pipes might be laid; gasometers of every dimension might be feeding the pipes with the subtle fluid; but all would be vain unless the torch be applied. Or, look to those vast appliances of war, the gigantic pieces of artillery that are filling our arsenals or bristling in the sides of our ships, and by recent experiments giving an idea of destructive power never before known or imagined. The gun may be pointed with unerring precision. Its hollow tube is filled with the iron missile; its muzzle is unmasked; its touch-hole is primed. But what of all this pomp of circumstance and preparation? As it is, it is a dumb, inert, sluggish, harmless thing. The timid bird can fold its pinions upon it, or the weary soldier can make it his pillow and sink into dreams of peace and home. *But* the signal is given, one brave hand applies the fuse to the tiny aperture. The living thunder leaps forth in its volleyed mission of death. So it is with the Church of Christ. The Gospel may be preached, sacraments may be administered, sanctuaries without number may crowd our land; as soldiers of the Cross we may be provided with every appliance of the Christian warfare, that will be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. But all will be vain unless the Spirit from on high touch every Church and every heart with celestial fire. "He shall baptise you," said John, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire!" "Come, then, from the four winds, O Breath; breathe upon these slain that they may live. Come! O come with thy baptism of fire, thou Spirit of light and Spirit of burning!"

II. We can touch very briefly, under the second head of discourse, on the object or design of Zechariah's vision. He proceeds to state it in the latter portion of the chapter (ver. 6): "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Zerubbabel was the leader of the first colony of Jews who by the edict of Cyrus had returned to their own land. They had brought along with them the precious vessels of the Temple; and no sooner had they reached the dismantled city than he, with his handful of followers (assisted by Joshua), began to rebuild the ruined walls, and erect the altar of burnt offering in the desecrated sanctuary. They had much to discourage them. Zion had become a wilderness. The venerable, bearded exiles wept when they thought of their old Temple. How different was the building of this second one! No friendly Phœnician king to send them stones prepared, and Lebanon cedars carved and ready. They had to toil with unpromising materials. They fought their way in uprearing the walls with their trowel in the one hand and the sword in the other.

Add to all this the jealousies of the neighbouring tribes of Samaritans. These came pointing with the finger of scorn, dishonouring the work and disheartening the builders. "What!" was their language, "are these handful of Jews to dream of restoring that heap of ruins? Is their Temple again to crown the summits of Zion? Can they expect God to come as He did in days of old, and be their refuge and strength as He was their fathers'?" Need we wonder that the soul of the people was much discouraged? that their pious leader should sit amidst the dust and ashes of that desolation, and be tempted to abandon himself to despair?

And so may not we too, when we look around in the Church and in the world, and see confronting us so many gigantic discouragements? We build, but, alas! Christian is divided against Christian. The old Samaritan, in some modern guise, climbs up the wall with the finger of scorn, the taunt and innuendo; sect is divided against sect; and what we erect with one hand is cruelly mutilated and torn down by another. Sterner foes too are at times at hand to mock the work and lay it in ruins. Look at the distant parts of the earth, where our missionaries have been labouring: self-denying soldiers of the Cross, seeking to uprear on the ruins of heathendom those walls that are salvation, and those gates that are praise. Some sudden reverse overtakes them, and the labour of years seems to melt like the frost before the rising sun. Or, look at home—for it is this which claims our attention now, and which has led to the selection of this subject to-night in connection with that great City Mission work, which enlists the sympathy and co-operation of all denominations: a happy union in spirit of the various Evangelical Churches for the rescue of the ignorant and the lost. Look around us: what see we in our densely crowded haunts of home-heathen? Drunkenness, lewdness, debauchery, Sabbath-breaking; God, and Heaven, and Hell, words only used to swear by: selfishness, love of the world, and love of money among the rich: degradation, discontent, and widespread infidelity among the poor: not the speculative, systematic infidelity of a former age, but the *no-creed* of the neglected and ignorant and lost castaways drifting to the rocks because there is no kindly hand to help them! Oh! when we gaze on this sum of human misery and sin, mountain piled on mountain, the mass daily accumulating, we are led at times to think restoration hopeless, our work a mockery: that the Church may fold her hands and let the world go to ruin!

Nay, nay! "This is the word unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying "Grace, grace unto it."

If the work were man's it would be hopeless; but "the Lord reigneth; let the earth be glad!" "Who," says the Prophet in the tenth verse of this chapter, "who hath despised the day of small things?" It is the day of small things which leads to the day of great things. It is the power of *littles*, agencies often in themselves lowly, unknown, unrecognised, working and content to work unheralded and unrecompensed, that will be found mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and in reclaiming the waste places of our city and our land. Yes, and let us take comfort in the thought that however adverse and apparently hopeless are human efforts, when too often it would seem as if the main work of Churches consisted in mounting and firing the signal-guns of party, with the result that hearts are saddened and friendships broken, and the Holy Spirit grieved—let us take comfort in the thought that, reverting to the emblems of the chapter, while the lights are fitful, and the metal of the pipes sadly human, the oil in the reservoir is Divine. The upbuilding of the sacred Temple of the Church is in other hands than ours. As we see the axes, and hammers, and tools of iron, the cumbrous scaffoldings and piles of rubbish encumbering the work, there may appear to be no prospect of progress or completion. But "the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house: His hands shall also finish it." Though undiscerned by us, that spiritual Sanctuary is gradually rising. Stone is adding to stone, rafter to rafter, and the cry of "Grace, grace!" will in due time resound over the consummated structure! Let us take as our closing motto and encouragement in the pleading of this cause: "The Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it." (Isaiah xiv. 2.)

LIGHTS FROM HEAVEN.

SUNLIGHT, moonlight, starlight—
Morn and night and even—
The near light and the far light,
All come down from heaven;
Shedding all about them
Glory everywhere—
What were life without them?—
Cheerless, dark and drear.

II.

There come lights from heaven,
Even than those more bright,
By God to man's soul given,
The God of Love and Light;
Cheering all our sadness,
Though deep that sadness be,
Turning grief to gladness—
FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.



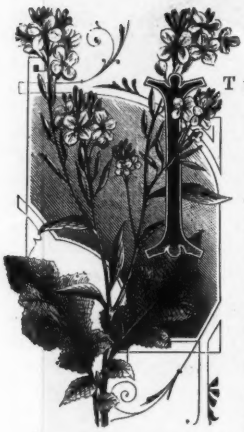
"Taking both Jack's soft hands in her own, she looked long and earnestly into his serious upturned face."

"*THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES.*"—*p.* 683.

XUM

THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST,"
"THE CHRIST-CHILD'S GIFT," ETC. ETC.



T was a dreary outlook, this dull Walworth street, with the utter absence of any summer freshness or summer beauty about it. There was the sunshine, it was true, but its almost savage intensity only served to bring out the more the naked ugliness of the place: its mean, squalid buildings, and the dirtiness of the half-clad children, who, too languid even for quarrelling, lolled dejectedly about the well-nigh deserted road. A coster's barrow, with its afternoon remnants of the morning's hawking, cast some yard or two of shadow upon the baking flags; an idiot lad, who was turned out of the house each day before his hard-working mother departed to her charing, lay cooing contentedly to himself in the grateful shade. From a window overhead an old woman's face peered wistfully through the green of some stunted geranium plants.

"It does one good to have a bit of green about the place," Anne Baker would say, when some officious but kindly neighbour insisted upon the trouble the tending of them must be to the rheumatic old fingers; and when her day's work was done (and it was neither very arduous nor very long, Anne being a solitary woman, with but few wants), she found an absolute pleasure in seating herself by the window-sill and feasting her eyes upon the rather sickly green of the leaves and the undoubtedly glorious red of the blossoms.

There she was this hot July day, a certain spruceness still in the arrangement of the clothes upon the bowed figure; certain little tricks, too, of manner and of speech which spoke emphatically of the having "seen better days" with which the neighbours credited her: a noticeable woman altogether, with a gentle, somewhat hopeless expression upon her wrinkled face, and a patient look in the quiet eyes which told the same story. It was an incomplete life; and wise and helpful as those around found her, resigned as she had grown to be to what, in her honest narrow old heart, she called "God's will" (and meant thereby the dreariness, sadness, and sin which she found in this world), it still ended in that. She was patient, but she was hopeless.

These plants in the window of which she was so fond, formed a link for her between the colourless present and the distant days of her youth. She was country-born and bred, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, and her winning ways and rosy cheeks had brought her many friendships in this far-away time,—friendships which in some cases had warmed into something more. She could recall it now as one does a dream which has passed very fleetly, but which is nevertheless very real and beautiful to think upon: the winding Kentish lanes; the sunlight glinting through the interlacing trees; the stalwart young fellow by her side, with his rough man's voice striving for softer tones as he offered her the "fairing" he had brought from the nearest town. Ah, well! it had passed soon enough, and died without leaving any hurt or sting behind; and when, a year or two after John Farnborough had gone off to make his fortune in "furrin parts," the news of his marriage travelled back to the quiet village, Anne heard the matter discussed as calmly as did his other friends. The only sign was an increased gentleness and wider sympathy; and yet, as I have said, as she grew older, with a certain dreariness of thought too, and a tired feeling of mind and body, which might have found vent in the old cry of "Cui bono?" had the solitary woman but known how to phrase it.

"Miss Baker, them there children is a cryin' agen in the next 'ouse. Don't yer think yer might go in to 'em to kinder see if yer can be of use?"

Anne's reminiscences were broken into by the abrupt entrance of the woman who lived on the lower floor. Her speech was shrill and voluble, her hands were wet from the wash-tub.

"Their father 's only buried a week come Monday. An' the parson he sez as 'ow it were downright good o' Eliza Smith to keep 'em a week or two longer out of the 'Ouse. Nice and 'good,' ain't it? to leave them mites of children to cry their 'earts out, and 'er out for the day!"

Anne's in-fallen, but still placid, lips parted in a smile.

"I don't suppose Eliza is worse than the rest of us," she answered. "You are too busy, and I have nowhere to go. But I thank you kindly for telling me. I 'll just step in to them, and see."

"An' yer tea? Yer hadn't had none yet," suggested her visitor. Anne's prompt acquiescence rendered her dimly conscious that she might just as well have gone next door herself.

"The tea can bide," said Anne cheerfully. She put on her bonnet, tied the strings in a methodical old-fashioned bow, and set out on her errand.

Two small children, a girl and a boy, were crouching in the corner of a dirty, ill-furnished room, when a brisk tap at the rickety door momentarily stopped the flow of tears from the two pairs of piteous blue eyes.

"It 's that nas'y woman! Let 's pretend we don't hear her," whispered the elder child. But the younger gave a joyous shout, and up he scrambled hastily.

"It is papa!" he cried, the little flying feet stumbling somewhat in his frantic haste to get to the door. "He knowed we wanted him. It is papa come back again! Papa! papa!"

Anne caught the excited words, and, in sheer

nervousness, stood fumbling for the moment with the knob of the door. It is so pitiably hard to break a child's faith. Why was it not she, whom nobody wanted, who had died, instead of anyone who could bring such rapture into a baby voice? Ah! why, indeed? "The one shall be taken, and the other left."

She walked in, stiff, ill at ease; but the beauty of little children is their God-given instinct to touch straight at what is best in the medley of their surroundings; and even in the midst of the weary sobbing into which he broke afresh at the renewed disappointment, the four-year-old boy saw the kindliness and good intentions which underlay the worn, lined face.

"Did papa—did our father send 'oo?" he asked, suddenly finding his tongue; and Anne Baker caught gladly at his words.

"Yes, our Father sent me," she said reverently. "He knew you wanted me."

I suppose it was those words which took away all constraint from Anne, and sense of strangeness from the children. At all events, it was but a very few minutes after that that the tears were dried, and that the proposal had been agreed to that they should all return to Anne's own room for tea.

"But we must come back here to say our prayers at good-night time, mustn't we?" chattered the little girl, while Anne's unaccustomed fingers slowly fastened the shabby coats. "The bed is just as broad as I am long, so Jack an' me can measure just where we used to kneel down for 'Jesus, tender.' Papa liked us close, like that. We must come back, mustn't we?"

"Yes, dearie, yes," promised Anne, bewildered somewhat at the thought to which she held no clue; but days afterwards, when she had heard from Eliza Smith all she had to tell of her late lodger, his little daughter's words were made clearer to her. The dying man's bed had stood in that corner from which, as Daisy had tried to explain, they had been able to measure to the exact spot on which they had knelt down, and it was with the feeling of still being near "Papa" that she had begged to return in time for her evening prayer.

But, for all that, she and Jack did not go back that night, or indeed ever again, though Anne had had no thought of keeping them when first she took them into her home. For after the cheery meal she had promised them was over, news came that Eliza Smith had had another fall in the street, and had been carried to the "station;" and as it was no unaccustomed thing for her to finish a holiday in that fashion, Anne yielded to the inevitable, and kept her visitors for the night.

Next day Jack refused to leave her.

"I sink 'oo must be my granny, and I 'se 'oo 'ickle boy. An' 'oo mustn't send 'oo 'ickle boy away," he said to her, with that odd mixture of coaxing and defiance which made him irresistible. "Don't 'oo love Jack?"

It was early morning, and he was still in his little shift and sitting upon the bed, a sturdy, well-grown child with white rounded limbs, where one still seemed to trace his dead father's kisses in the form of dimples, and with truthful blue eyes which would have witched the love out of a harder heart than Anne's.

"Of course I love you when you are good," she answered in her staid way.

She stooped to kiss the pleading lips, and her glance fell upon the name which had been carefully traced on the hem of the tiny garment—J-o-h-n F-a-r-n-b-o-r-o-u-g-h. She straightened her bent back, and taking both Jack's soft hands in her own, she looked long and earnestly into his serious upturned face. John Farnborough? Another John? Her slow wits puzzled it out bit by bit. John—her John—he had been a lad of twenty when she saw him last, and the boyish image which had so faded from her memory woke into sudden life at the thought: he had married, he had one son, he had died. This much she knew. If this man, whose funeral had taken place the other day, had been this child, it followed that the silvery baby voice which had just called her "grannie" was owned by his grandson.

Anne snatched up the astonished child, and holding him closely in her arms, she broke into feeble weeping. She could have told no one why; but she was too old for sudden surprises or sudden joys, and perhaps both heart and brain had ground too deeply into certain grooves for any shock to be thoroughly realised all at once. So she just sat crying quietly to herself until the tears ceased to come, and then, having dressed Jack, she took up an old Bible in which to read her daily verses. Her favourite reading had been hitherto amongst the sterner of the prophets, but this morning she turned to St. John, and read instead the comforting promises of the Apostle of Love.

It was only instinct which had led to the conclusion that in the little waifs she was housing Anne had stumbled upon the grandchildren of the lover of her youth, but facts soon proved the instinct to be a true one. The dead man had left a few letters and trinkets (amongst them was the old-fashioned silver watch which she recognised as his father's), and from them the children's identity was fully proved. But that was all there was to be learned. There was no one to be found who had any relationship to the children. But what cared Anne? There are few of us who would pull a rose to pieces to fathom the secret of its perfume, and Anne was too content with the gift which had fallen to her to leave room for idle wonderment. It was enough for her to feel that these two dear mites had been sent to her as her very own: that the room would never again look scantily furnished while the delicious litter and homeliness, which are attendant upon a child's presence, would lurk in its every corner: that the oppressive silence which had driven her to her plants for sympathy had vanished for ever before the chatter of soft voices, and the delicate uneven trending of tiny footsteps. Most people would, I think, have prophesied a certain amount of jars between this oddly assorted trio—at all events, at the commencement. The incessant call upon her attention, the necessity of increasing her daily toil, the difference in hours and food which the lusty young life about her demanded—all this would have fretted the old woman, according to these theorists, and broken ruthlessly into the small, methodical selfishnesses which had grown into a second nature. But there is just one thing which upsets all theories

which are merely human, because its own essence is divine—and that thing is Love. The nights may have been more disturbed when a smooth confiding arm would come slipping round her withered neck, and sleepy Daisy would cuddle yet closer; and the cherished geraniums may have lost some of their freshness when inquisitive Jack experimented upon them; but still, her sleep had never proved more restful, nor the red flowers brought her happier thoughts. For her life was complete at last, and in the completion the angles of her nature were rounded off. She had those to love who loved her, and she grew daily more and more hopeful and content by viewing both this world and the next through a child's eyes.

Daisy and Jack fairly revelled in the sunshine, moral and physical, which now flooded their baby lives, and learned to love the Christ through His gifts. Anne, through loving Him more, came to find more fully the beauty of His earth. And so from opposite standpoints they came close together, as the very young and the very old are apt to do. And if there be any moral to be gained from what the neighbours looked on as an ordinary commonplace household, it might perhaps lie in a certain text which an earnest young preacher took for his sermon after the working of his parish had brought him into contact first with the children and then with their "grannie." It was this: "*Of such are the Kingdom of Heaven.*"

M. E. W.

A DARK VALLEY LIGHTED UP.

BY THE REV. E. J. HARDY, M.A., CHAPLAIN TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES.

WHEN Louis the Fourteenth lay a dying—"Why weep ye?" he asked those who surrounded his death-bed. "Did you think I should live for ever?" Then, after a pause, "I thought dying had been harder." Dr. Hunter was another who was agreeably surprised by his experience of dying. His last words were, "If I had strength to hold a pen, I would write down how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die." Dr. Solander was so delighted with the sensation of perishing by extreme cold in the snow, that he always resented his rescue. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, as his "agony" befell, quietly remarked, "It is really nothing much, after all."

Hundreds of other last or nearly last sayings of dying persons might be cited to prove the truth of Pliny's remark—"Ipse discessus animæ plerumque fit sine dolore, nonnunquam etiam cum ipsa voluptate." (The departure of the soul frequently takes place without pain, sometimes even with pleasure.)

> "Every moment dies a man;
> Every moment one is born."

The first operation, at least in the case of death by old age, is as natural as the second; why should we think that it must necessarily be more painful? Certainly, if some men died and others did not, death would indeed be a most mortifying evil; but being universal, it cannot be evil.

I never visited a dentist without feeling sorry on leaving his operating room that I had not gone to it sooner. Either the tooth which I feared would have to be extracted was found not too bad for stopping, or if it were taken out, the operation was so short and the relief from toothache so delightful that I wondered why I had been shy and timid of him who proved such a good friend. To compare great things with small, may not the same sort of agreeable surprise be in store for us when we come to die?—may we not find that dying is not as hard as we had anticipated?

> "He who hath bent him o'er the dead
> Ere the first day of death is fled,
> The first dark day of nothingness,
> The last of danger and distress,
> Before Decay's effacing fingers
> Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,



SOCRATES AND HIS JUDGES.—*p.* 685.



THE NEW ZEALAND CHIEF.

And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that 's there"

—he who hath done this can hardly fail to see evidence that in the case of the majority of people (most dead persons, even those who perish by violence, as, for instance, in battle, have this expression of rest and peace) death is not painful, or at least not as painful as it is generally supposed to be. Perhaps, as there is said to be a sort of numbness which takes hold of an animal (Livingstone felt it when in the grip of a lion) falling into the clutches of a beast of prey, so, by the arrangement of a merciful Providence, the swoop of the last enemy may have a narcotic effect upon its victim. I am myself much of the opinion of the ancient thinker who said that "death, of all estimated evils, is the only one whose presence never incommoded anybody, and which only causes concern during its absence." It is worse to apprehend than to suffer. It is "the end of all, the remedy of many, the wish of divers men, deserving better of no men than of those to whom it came before it was called."

"Weep not for death!
'T is but a fever stilled,
A pain suppressed—a fear at rest,
A solemn hope fulfilled.
The moonshine on the slumbering deep
Is scarcely calmer. Wherefore weep?

Weep not for death!
The fount of tears is sealed.
Who knows how bright the inward light
To those closed eyes revealed?
Who knows what holy love may fill
The heart that seems so cold and still?"

Surely we who profess and call ourselves Christians ought not to be more afraid of death than was Socrates, who lived before the coming of Him who brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel. When his judges pronounced sentence of death upon him, he told them that they should be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man, whether he lives or dies.

A clever medical man once said to me, "You parsons do much harm by making people afraid to die. You should rather teach them to look upon death as their best friend." Of course I told him that it is not clergymen, but their own consciences, that make people afraid to die, and that it is our business to point to Him who came to deliver "them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." I happen to know from his medical attendants that this gentleman, who when in health talked so bravely about death being man's best friend, was himself in abject terror of it during a recent illness. This fact reminds me of a statement I read in a book about the Arabs, to the effect that although they are strict fatalists, yet when the plague visited Medina, many of the townspeople fled to the desert, alleging as an excuse that although the distemper was a messenger from Heaven sent to call them to a better world, yet being conscious of their own unworthiness, and that they did not merit this special mark of grace, they thought it more advisable to decline it for the present, and make their escape from the town with all expedition.

"Think not I dread to see my spirit fly
Through the dark gates of fell mortality;
Death has no terrors where the life is true;
'T is living ill that makes us fear to die."

"'T is living ill," and not parsons, that makes people fear to die.

"Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death—
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns—puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

The sting of death is sin. "What is it to die?" "How shall we die?" "When shall we die?" These are questions which we cannot answer. All we know is that through the grave and gate of death every one of us must sooner or later pass. And through that door each one must go alone. Yes, even the weakest, who could not be trusted out of sight for a moment, must leave this world of warm life and go over to the majority without any assistance from earthly friends. Well for those who can say as they enter the valley of the shadow of death—

"In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me.
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me."

The little child running back in alarm from the entrance of a dark room, crying to its mother, "Dark! Dark!" illustrates how we grown-up children must shrink from the cold, relentless grasp of death, unless supported by a Heavenly Father's hand. I have seen a picture representing a churchyard through which ran a road. At one entrance of the road and churchyard a dying man is depicted leaning against the gate-post. He is looking on the tombstones, thinking of the hastily approaching time when he shall be numbered with the dead. A little girl approaches on her way through the churchyard. To relieve his thoughts, the melancholy invalid engages the child in conversation. "Do you not fear," he asks, "the churchyard path?"—"It is my way home," is the fearless answer. May not the same response be given by every Christian whose life has been spent in the realised presence of God? Such a one is not afraid of God. "Nearer, my God, to Thee," is his daily prayer, and if death comes to bring him home, the king is shorn of his terrors. To him death is nothing worse than "transition," this mortal putting on immortality. "For more than forty years," said Havelock, "I have so ruled my life that when death came I might face it without fear."

My readers, you and I will soon have to die, but it will not be a hard thing to do if we have faith like that of the old New Zealand chief, who, having been converted in middle life to the Christian religion, and having led a life of consistent goodness, thus acted when he found himself upon his death-bed. He gathered his friends and family round him—some Pagans, some Christians—and then he raised himself up, and began to sing one of the ancient songs of his country, which he had learned in his youth, before his conversion. It told of a maiden who had a lover—a faithful lover. She had not seen him for years; he had gone off into the distant seas, and now she was determined to seek him and join him. And so the New Zealand chief sang of her voyage, in words well known to those who stood around him, but with a meaning far deeper than they had ever put on the words, for they saw that under the figure of the forlorn maiden he meant his own soul going forth on its last long voyage, and under the figure of the lover he meant that blessed Saviour whom he hoped now to join in that unknown sea. He sang how the maiden in her frail canoe went down the dark river: how she dashed down the foaming rapids: how the steep rocks closed in on either side; how through the black pass the river opened into the wide sea: still she was not afraid, for she looked forward all the more to being with him whom she loved for ever. So singing, and so transfiguring the old Pagan song with the light of the Gospel, the Christian chieftain passed away.



SICK-ROOM COMFORTS.

BY A NURSE.



A CONVALESCENT.

TRIFLES are said to make the sum of earthly things, and as that is undeniably true in a general way, it is most assuredly still more so in times of sickness. Then, you have to remember that small things annoy the patient which in health he would perhaps not notice, and also very tiny acts of thoughtfulness and care about details may afford him a great amount of comfort.

It is worth while thinking how best you can avoid the one and do the other, for the sufferer has a right to expect our utmost consideration. Think, as you look at him, how very great a humiliation illness and suffering are. You cannot doubt that behind them is hidden a wise purpose known perhaps only to Him who permits them; but still though that thought may, as it should, console the sick person, and enable him to bend his will to the Supreme Will of God, it does not alter the fact that in his weakness, his pains, and his fears, he is feeling and suffering in many ways. Naturally strong and independent, he is perforce obliged to lie inactive and be waited upon in many little as well as big ways. He may be inclined to rule, and now he has to obey, and if of an active, restless nature, the enforced idleness is in itself a pain and grief.

So that one way in which you can in yourself add to his comfort is by letting him see that you are glad to be of service to him, and if you do things graciously and pleasantly you make it all the easier for your services to be welcome. Excepting in the case of ill-tempered and exacting people, who require to be otherwise managed, try and hide your weariness, and conceal that you find, as you often may, any duty unpleasant or trying.

But besides what you try to be in yourself—firm, watchful, patient, and kind—you must use your eyes and see what can be done to make everything easy for the patient and to alleviate his pain and assist him in his helplessness.

At night, it is a good thing to have a night-light burning; and be careful that you do not place this where it will exactly catch the patient's eye. You can obtain easily an arrangement which combines the light with the means of keeping food warm, and, especially in summer, this is most desirable, if the patient needs nourishment during the night.

Gas is always objectionable in a sick-room, as it exhausts the air, and in bedrooms generally it should not be used. Every person, by the very fact of breathing, gives out what makes the air impure, and a gas-burner spoils as much air as four persons, therefore it is obvious that little or no gas-light should be used in a sick-room.

Should you be sleeping in the sick-room, or an adjoining one, leave a small gong or bell close to him for the patient to touch, if his voice is weak and you are

afraid of not hearing his call. Another plan which answers if you are in the same room, is to tie one end of a long piece of tape to your own hand, and let the other end be fastened with a safety pin to the sheet near the patient, if not tied round his own finger. A slight touch then on his part will serve to awaken you.

The less drapery that there is in the patient's room the better, and in infectious cases it is better dispensed with altogether. But it often happens, from the fact that ventilation from window and fireplace is absolutely necessary, that the patient is in a draught. This need never be, and you should most carefully use all precautions to avoid it. Cheap folding screens are easily obtainable at the large shops, and if you are in the country, and find it not easy to obtain one in your nearest town or village, you can easily have one made. A few laths nailed together by a carpenter, or by your own hands if you understand the use of the hammer, will make a framework over which you can stretch some thick paper or material of any kind. There is the advantage, in having a screen, of being able to use it for many purposes besides keeping out a draught. It shelters round the patient when the room is being dusted or cleaned, and when he is sitting up it is nice placed round his chair.

A bed-table is a useful thing to have, and very much more comfortable than to place a tray on the bed itself. These can often be bought ready made, but should you wish to have one made, it is very simple, and within the power of any ordinary carpenter to turn out easily. It is simply a light piece of wood as wide as you require it, and as long as to go well across the patient, allowing him room to move and not holding him in a vice. The side nearest the patient should be concave, and if you like a rim running round it, it will prevent things slipping off. It should have four short legs, and can be stained with oak staining if desired.

Whether you use a tray, bed-table, or both, great care should be taken, in bringing the patient his food, to make it look as nice as it possibly can. This is within reach of all, poor and rich; for cleanliness, neatness, and beauty can always be obtained, though some people think they are only the luxuries of the rich.

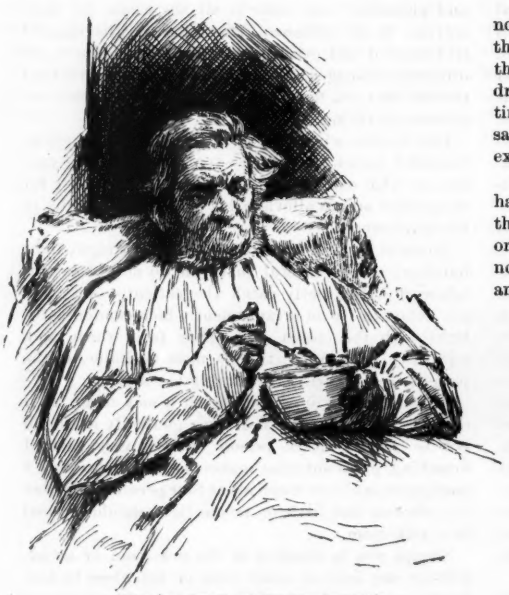
To begin with, the coarsest linen can be perfectly clean, and consequently look much nicer—fresh, and not creased—than a tumbled damask napkin, that has marks of coffee, or tea stains, and possibly wants mending.

Have everything perfectly clean—that is to say, let the glass be clear, and not blurred in any way, the china spotless, and the spoons and knives as brilliant as polishing can make them. *Apropos* of this, it may be well to say that, should you require to taste what is to be given to the patient, you should not do so before him, but do it outside the room, and do not use the spoon intended for him. If you can manage to put a few flowers on the tray, all the better; and let these be placed in a very small pot or vase—one unlikely to be easily sent over. All that goes upon the table should be as small as possible; it makes the tray or table less crowded, and it is more appetising to the patient. You can obtain very small salt-cellars for a few pence at any china-shop, and tiny muffineers, a small milk-jug, sugar-basin and slop-bowl are all much handier than large ones.

In giving the patient his food or drink, see that none of the latter is slopped into the saucer, as that is most objectionable, the result being that the liquid, whatever it is, drips over the night-dress or sheet, and is most uncomfortable. Sometimes the patient, to avoid this, carries up the saucer as well, and this, if he is weak, is a greater exertion than anyone in health can well imagine.

Do not ask a patient to choose what he will have, but bring him what is best for him, and then see if he will take it. This applies to an ordinary patient who, weak and suffering, does not care to be troubled; for in convalescence it is another matter, and with returning appetite is renewed interest in the meals which before were perhaps almost dreaded.

Have everything in the room as pretty as you can, for to leave a patient day after day in an ugly room, with nothing to look at but a blank wall or a paper on which he can count the recurring designs, is cruel. You must remember that he has nothing to vary the scene, and that to have beauty in his environment is a great matter. You can make a room look pretty at a very small cost if you hang pictures about, even unframed; some simply tacked on to the walls are more cheerful than the bare paper. If you do this, select bright and peaceful subjects;



"CAN'T ABEAR SPOON VICTUALS!"

and if you have sacred pictures, let them be as good as they can be; some sacred pictures are simply caricatures, and should be removed off the face of the earth. Pictures are the books of the unlearned, and because they are in good taste, it does not follow that they are necessarily expensive.

Flowers are always bright and cheering, but they should not always be left in a room at night, and care should be taken to change the water frequently, and not leave them there at all when faded.

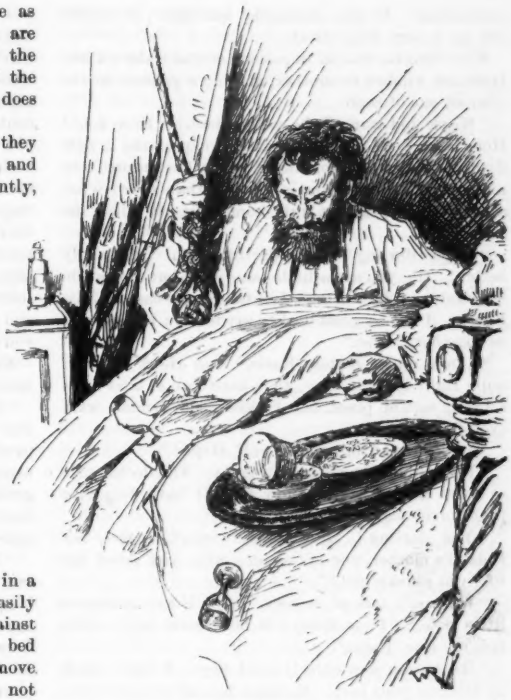
A comfort in a sick-room is a wooden bed-rest, which, when placed behind the pillows, enables the patient to sit up easily. Another contrivance which I have seen answer admirably is a very long net, the ends of which were fastened to the bed-posts, and, being passed behind the patient and containing the pillows, formed a secure means of resting him when sitting up.

To change a patient's pillows adds much to his comfort, and to have a couple with which to do so is a very desirable thing. In lung-diseases the pillows should always be warmed; and if the patient has been sitting up this should be done, to take the chill off, ere he returns to bed.

Always nurse your patient when practicable in a small bed, as you can reach him much more easily in it; and the bedstead should never be driven against a wall. You should be able to go round the bed easily. To have a second bed, into which to move the patient for a change, is a good plan, but not always practicable.

If the patient wishes you to read out to him, he will generally ask for it, but do not do it unless you are sure that he wishes it. Weights—any coppers, covered with any material, will do—are convenient to lay on the leaves of the book and keep it open in the desired place.

One of the greatest of comforts, in conclusion, in a sick-room is an unselfish, patient nurse: one who can put herself in the sufferer's place and feel for him, and, by imagination, with him, and who remembers that each tiny act of self-denial, all patient endurance of what may be trying to her, will, if done for Christ's sake, not lose its reward. Let her see her Lord in the sick person, and cheer herself by the remembrance that the willing, loving service will be accepted as if done unto Him.



AN IMPATIENT PATIENT.

IN THE SECOND PLACE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I," "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," "ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

"WHERE'S Hope Karron? Is she in? I want to see her at once."

The speaker was very eager; it was winter-time, and she was dressed in becoming furs.

"This isn't the visiting hour, Miss Douglas."

"What a nuisance! can't she come down-stairs to see me? She's much better, isn't she?"

"Yes, miss, she's a great deal better. I'll inquire if she can see you in the dining-room, miss. Will you walk this way?"

"Thank you, Nurse; you are very kind. Now make her come—carry her, if necessary. Nurse, are you proof against half a crown?"

"Oh, Miss Douglas, it's strictly against the rules. Well then, well then, if you must—I'll certainly do my best for you, miss; thank you, miss."

The nurse, a tall, comely looking maiden, disappeared, and Miss Douglas, loosening her furs, and removing her hat, looked round the apartment in which she was waiting. It was a large room, wainscoted

throughout. It was handsome but dull. It looked out on a very dull street.

Miss Douglas was an impatient mortal; she walked from one window to another, making a grimace as she glanced out of each.

"Worse and worse," she soliloquised. "How could Hope come here? Poor old girl! I expect she is half dead with *ennui*. No, though: she has entered the room; I behold her—she is brighter than ever; what a face—what a radiant light comes into it when she smiles!

"Hope darling—Hope darling, are you really better? Oh, you are a little lame still, but not much. —Thank you, kind Nurse, I'll take great care of Miss Karron. I have a great deal to say to her: please leave us together, Nurse."

"I am much better, Katie," said Hope. "I did quite right to come here; they have been so kind—it's a funny sort of place, but I have made friends with everybody."

"And is your foot getting well, Hope?"

"It is gradually getting all right. The doctor says in about a month from now I shall have forgotten that horrid accident."

"You darling! But Roland won't forget, nor Roland's mother, nor his sister; why, you saved his life, you plucky girl!"

"We won't talk of it now," said Hope, turning a little pale. "Poor Roley! is he a good boy? Give him my love, Katie."

"He's not a particularly good boy. I don't think he deserves your love. He has a horrid trick of blowing out paper bags and making them go bang off at the back of my head. He has done it ever since he discovered that the doctor considered my nerves a little weak. He's back at school now, that's a comfort. Well, Hope, how much longer are you to stay here?"

"I don't know. I really need not stay more than another week. I am allowed to walk a little again, and the pain is nearly gone."

"How delighted you'll be to get away!"

"Pretty well."

"Where are you going?"

"I suppose back to my lodgings in Bayswater."

"H'm, h'm! that's a lively prospect, particularly in this foggy weather."

"Don't discourage me, Katie; the lodgings are very well, and I'm not often in them."

"No, you dear industrious mortal. There are always little boys to coach, and you are always coaching them. Why, Roley would never have read decently if you had not taken him in hand; and then to save his life! Has your medal come yet from that society?"

"I believe so, but I have not looked at it. I don't like to think of that scene, Kate. I wish you would not refer to it."

'You darling, I won't. Give me a kiss. Now, Hope, for what reason do you think I inflicted myself on you to-day?"

"Kindness, I suppose," said Hope. "And perhaps because you are fond of me, Katie."

"Of course I am; but I came with news. Don't you suppose that mother and I felt awful when you had to go into this Home, and we could do nothing? Our little house is so wee, and our poor purses are wee-er still. Mother and I thought of you day and night, and Roland absolutely cried when he heard you could not come to us to be nursed. But now what do you think? I have had an invitation, and you are included. It's from the Chattertons, my rich cousins in Shropshire; they want us to go down on Monday; they are wild to see you. They always do have the very jolliest houseful of people. By the way, you know one of the guests who is staying there at the present moment: Cecil Grey—he is so handsome, and such a catch. We have been asked for a fortnight; and won't a fortnight set you up, darling, and won't you see real life at last!"

Katie was in keen excitement. Her rosy cheeks were flushed, and her honest eyes sparkling.

"I'll be very glad to go," said Hope. "I should like a change, and to see the country again. I'm particularly fond of the country in winter. Downton used to be so exquisite when the snow was on the ground. But one wants a lot of dress in a big country house, and I make it a rule to spend a very small amount in that quarter."

"I'll overhaul your wardrobe, and rig you up," said Katie. "I'm awfully skilful. Don't you see how I contrive for myself? This fur, which makes me look quite richly apparelled, has done duty for I can't tell how many years. Oh, I'll make you fit for any society. I promise I won't encroach on your modest income—you shall be charming without a heavy expenditure. No one with a face and figure like yours need spend much on outward adorning.—Is that you, Nurse? Yes, I'm going.—Good-bye, Hope. I'll call for you here on Monday, and we can go down to Shropshire together."

It was two years now since Hope and Jocelyn had said farewell. They had come up to London together on a certain snowy afternoon in February, and then the two girls had gone their several ways—Jocelyn to her life of luxury and enjoyment, Hope to her poverty.

The Seatons and Jocelyn had gone abroad almost immediately; and Lottie, finding Continental life more than enjoyable, now that she had a vigorous young companion to share it with, had positively refused to come back to dull, smoky London.

"Not even for the season," she declared. "No, we will go to Switzerland for the so-called season, and to America in the autumn."

Thus Hope and Jocelyn had not met for two years. They corresponded regularly, each telling the other the outward circumstances of their lives, neither touching upon experiences, feelings, desires, disappointments. They had drifted asunder in more than one sense; a much wider barrier than separation parted them.

Hope had fifty pounds a year. She was strong and brave, she had no idea of sitting down to subsist on this meagre portion. No, she would add to it, she would earn money for a rainy day, and have enough in her purse to indulge now and then in the luxury of helping other people.

XUM

Women have many vocations in these days. Perhaps Hope's was a somewhat singular one. She was clever, and for a country girl fairly well educated, but she was not up to the High School mark, and she had passed no certificate examinations. Like most inexperienced people, she first of all turned her attention to teaching as a profession. Here she found the doors of success almost entirely closed against her. A girl who had not gone in for the Cambridge examinations could scarcely expect to find an engagement in these days of higher progress. She might become a nursery governess, a lady who conducted an agency told her, but she was not even sure that so ignorant a young person would prove successful in this line.

It happened that on this very day the agent's little boy, a most refractory small personage, strayed, against his mother's permission, into the room where several candidates for employment were waiting to be interviewed. Hope called him to her side, talked to him, enchanted him, and before she went away taught him a short ballad.

The next day she went again to the agency office. The lady, a Mrs. Franklyn, greeted her with smiles.

"I don't know how to thank you," she said. "You have done me an inestimable service."

"How so?" asked Hope.

"You have taught his father to believe in Freddy."

"I am sorry I don't quite understand."

"His father has always declared that Freddy could never learn; he has harped on this string, and made my life a misery with it. Last night Freddy repeated 'The Miller of the Dee,' and said you taught him."

"Yes, he learnt it quickly enough—I don't think he is a stupid boy."

"How sweet of you to say so! Will you come to my house for an hour daily, and teach Freddy until I can get you something permanent to do?"

Hope complied, and Master Frederick Franklyn made gigantic strides under her tuition. Mrs. Franklyn in ecstasies proclaimed Hope's fame, and in this apparently trivial manner she obtained her vocation; she became coach to backward and stupid little boys. There are heaps of them in the world, and they are very often to be found in the houses of the wealthy.

Mrs. Franklyn counselled Hope to ask a fairly large figure for her services. It became rather the fashion in certain circles to get little boys coached up by Miss Karron for preparatory schools. She had an undoubted genius for making refractory boys good, for teaching stupid boys to read, and think, and inwardly digest. After a short time she found plenty of pupils, and the income she earned was more than sufficient for her modest wants.

She developed a good deal in person and character after the February day when she parted with Jocelyn. A great deal of purpose, of endurance, a strong look of courage, came into her face. These things brought to it gain, and in addition she never lost the expression of bright anticipation which she had worn from a child, and which made her name a sort of prophecy about her.

Most of her pupils were the sons of rich people, but one day when she was walking in Kensington Gardens, she was overtaken by a smart shower, and taking shelter under a large elm-tree, unwittingly heard a short conversation.

Two people, a small slender girl and a little boy, were also sheltering at the other side of the tree.

"You're a perfectly horrid little fellow," said the girl; "you're a disgrace to us."

"I'm not; I don't care."

"You'll break mother's heart; why won't you learn to read? There are nothing but complaints of you at school. Mother says her money is thrown away sending you there, and all your teachers have declared over and over that you can't make any real progress until you overcome your laziness about reading. Oh, I'm ashamed of you—eight years old, and to be such a dunce!"

"I like being a dunce. I don't ever mean to read—that is I won't unless I'm coached properly, like Fernie Fitzmaurice. He had a coach, and he can read first-rate. 'T was a girl, and she taught him by splendid stories of adventure. There were lions and four tigers in one, and fifty-eight wolves in another, and—and——"

Hope came forward from her side of the elm-tree. She looked swiftly at the pair in eager conversation. The girl's face was red; she was half crying. The boy had very bright eyes which danced with mischief. The girl's anxious face appealed to Hope.

"I overheard what you were saying," she said. "I am the girl who taught Ferdinand Fitzmaurice to read. If you like, if you don't mind, I will take this little boy—Roland you call him—for a pupil."

"How jolly of you!" said Roland, running up to her, hooking his arm comfortably within hers, and looking up into her face.

The small slight girl turned half away; her cheeks grew redder and redder.

"May I?" questioned Hope, squeezing the little boy's arm with a sense of comradeship.

"Oh, Roland!" said his sister.—"I'm so ashamed you should have heard us!" she continued. "Roland is a naughty boy—he won't take pains. I am so vexed you should have worried yourself about our small affairs."

"I can soon teach Roland to read."

"But you are—surely you must be Miss Karron? My mother has heard of you. Lady Fitzmaurice has told her how clever you were with Fernie."

"Yes, I am Miss Karron—Hope Karron is my name."

"Surely your terms are very high?"

Hope on the spot mentioned a sum so ridiculously small as the price she would expect for teaching Master Roland, that his sister almost gasped.

"You are not exorbitant," she remarked. "If you are not frightfully busy, will you come home with me to see mother? Oh, what a relief it would be to her to secure your services for Roland!"

In this way Hope did not secure a particularly lucrative pupil, but she made friends who were to bring a great deal of sunshine into her life, and indirectly to influence her whole future. Roland proved as docile as other boys when instructed in Hope's charming manner. "Hill Difficulties" vanished, the

toughest obstacles melted, and in an incredibly short space of time he mastered the technical trials of reading. Mrs. Douglas and Katie were never tired of thanking Hope, who in their opinion had worked miracles. The fact was, the young teacher's method was simple enough; she pursued a plan which aroused keen interest—she never permitted that interest to flag; this accomplished, all else was easy.

On a certain day in the autumn of the year in which she had first made the Douglases' acquaintance, Hope and Roland were walking together. Roland had a wild fit on—not even Hope could keep this exuberant child's spirits always in check. A man whose horse was not in full control was riding along the park. Roland ran in his path. The horse knocked the boy down, and might have killed him but for Hope, who rushed forward, caught hold of the bridle, and forced the horse back a step. He trod on her foot, trampling it badly, and Roland scrambled to his feet, his life saved by a hair's breadth. The rider, a sheepish, ill-tempered groom, muttered something, and was glad to hurry away. Hope limped to the nearest seat, and Roland flew off for assistance.

She spoke of the whole thing as a trifle, but the pain in her foot was so exquisite, that when Katie Douglas appeared panting on the scene, and tried to move her, she fainted.

A few days after, being still in great suffering, she was moved into a hospital for invalid gentlewomen in Harriet Street West. She was kindly treated there, and had the best surgical advice, for a small weekly sum.

Hope was not a girl to despond: she systematically looked on the bright side, and soon became a great favourite in the hospital. It was impossible to grumble in Hope's presence. She had a way of looking directly at you when you spoke in a murmuring or discontented spirit, and a quick wonder would fill her bright grey eyes which instantly gave the grumbler a certain sense of shame. On one occasion a lady said to her—

"Come and sit near me for a little, you happy-faced child; I cannot help feeling curious about you Yours must be a peculiarly blessed lot."

"I always am so thankful to be alive," said Hope. "I do think there's a lot of sunshine just in living."

"Ah, my dear, may you long continue to feel so! You doubtless have a very bright home, dear—loving friends—a mother who adores you."

"I have lodgings in Bayswater; my mother is dead."

"And you live there alone?"

"Yes."

"Are you poor then, my love?"

"No, I am not very poor. I have fifty pounds a year of my own, and I earn the rest. Why do you ask me so many questions? Is it wrong of me to be happy?"

"No, my dear, no—God bless you, my dear!"

The lady sat for some time after this short interview thoughtful and puzzled. She was the greatest grumbler in the establishment, and she had a home, friends, and six times Hope's income.

In especial the young girls in the hospital—and there were several young girls—became attached to Hope, and they one and all broke into lamentation when they heard the day was fixed for her to leave them.

CHAPTER X.

"Now at last we are off!" said Katie Douglas. "Isn't it delicious? Aren't you glad to be out of prison, Hope? and have you no curious question to ask me?"

"Well, I don't know," said Hope. "I'm pleased to be going into the country, of course, and delighted to be with you, Katie, but I'm sorry for one or two of the girls in Harriet Street."

"Oh, then you're not going to enjoy yourself. You will be wrapped up in all kinds of charitable, good, unselfish thoughts while we are at Beeches. Oh, how horrid of you—I wish we were not going."

"I don't know what you mean, Katie. I intend to be as happy as the day is long. I feel bubbling over this minute. You don't know what the country means to me. Oh, is that snow on the distant hills? Lovely, delicious!"

Hope flung open the carriage window, and bent half out. The girls had a compartment to themselves.

"What am I to be curious about, Katie?" she said, suddenly returning to her seat, and looking into Miss Douglas's eyes with her own dancing.

"Only about your clothes, you wretched being. You have not been out of that horrid Harriet Street, and I assure you we are going to a house full of people."

"You said," began Hope, "I mean I gave you directions about packing my things, didn't I? Have you forgotten?"

"Oh, have I forgotten? You wait until you open your portmanteau, and that dress-basket which you never noticed, although I hoped you would, when it was being put into the luggage van. You don't suppose Katie Douglas ever for a single instant of her life forgets things of such paramount importance as a girl's dress? You wait and see."

"Katie, you know I told you very little money was to be spent."

"*Have* I troubled you about the bills, dear? Have I mentioned them? Do I look, too, as if I had run up enormous debts in your name?"

"You couldn't, Katie, that's one comfort. The shops wouldn't trust a girl who only occupied two small rooms in Bayswater. Oh, I say, the sun is shining on that field covered with snow. Look, Katie, here—here—isn't it rosy?—aren't you joyous even to look at it?"

"Very pretty. Don't keep that window open, Hope; I'm perished. Now if you had your choice, your choice out of all the wide world, what dress would you wear at dinner this evening?"

Hope looked thoughtful.

"I'd wear black net, for choice," she said, "without any ornaments. I might have a flower, if it wasn't artificial, and if the colour happened to suit me. Jocelyn and I always wore black net dresses when we went out at Downton—that is, in the winter; in the summer we dressed in white."

Katie's eyes grew rounder and brighter.

"You are not hard to please," she said. "I was so awfully afraid you were going to say that new shade of electric green, with white frosted flowers. Hope, you are the greatest comfort to me. I do so adore that new green, but I couldn't get it for you without running in debt. Now you shall just wait and see."

Hope laughed.

The train sped along swiftly; the girls talked at intervals, read at intervals, scrutinised their fellow travellers, when, by-and-bye, their compartment filled up, and at last, in the dusk of a winter's evening, arrived at a small wayside station where a comfortable carriage awaited them.

A drive of two miles followed, and then they found themselves in a rambling country house, built very much like hundreds of others, with large reception-rooms, wide square halls, long corridors, innumerable conservatories, a billiard-room, a picture gallery—in short, all those accessories which people who are rich, and who live in the country, are supposed not to be able to do without.

Katie and Hope were ushered into a hall where several people were already assembled, chatting round a great fire composed of logs of oak and firs, and drinking tea supplied to them by two or three pretty girls who knew Katie, and who ran up to her with eager words of welcome. They were introduced to Hope as Bee, Alice, and Maud Chatterton, and soon the party of three became a party of five, the elder ladies and one or two old gentlemen being very glad to be served by the gay young folk.



"Hope rushed forward, caught hold of the bridle, and forced the horse back a step."—*p.* 692.

"You need not be alarmed," whispered Bee Chatterton to Hope. "We don't only represent the fairer sex at Beeches. You'll see some excellent specimens of mankind at dinner-time. They are all in the hunting field at present."

"And excellent sport they are having, no doubt," said Mr. Newbolt, one of the oldest of the old gentlemen, as he returned his empty cup into Hope's hands.

Then there was a little more chat, and Hope and Katie found themselves in their bedrooms. The rooms opened one into the other, and the girls flitted backwards and forwards as they dressed.

"Katie! why, this *is* my old black net, only it looks new, perfectly new! And how nice that satin slip is to wear under it. I don't know that I particularly care about dress, but I certainly wish to look nice to-night. It is so long since I have been in a house of this kind; it reminds me of Grey's Park, and of the Ashfords', and of the other places where Jocelyn and I used to visit when we lived at dear old Downton."

"Don't reminisce, dear," said Katie, who was looking busy and important; "get into your dress, for I am not sure if the train is properly arranged at the back. Ah, yes, that will do; very nice, very nice indeed. Hope, what a beautiful figure you have, and what an upright carriage! I like, too, the way you arrange that hair of yours—but there, you know what I 've always thought of you; others will agree with me here. You are quite certain—positive—to get a lover while you are here, Hope."

Hope laughed.

"You really do talk like a goose sometimes, Katie," she said. "Now what about your apparel—that blue? It looks wonderfully soft and cloudy."

"There 's a pink like it in the basket trunk for you," answered Katie. "I knew pink would make you look sublime, so I had the thing tossed together. The colour is perfect—like the lining of a sea-shell; the material fivepence a yard. You shall not wear that dress until the lover has begun to show his attentions. Now come, are you ready? I am, quite, at last. Oh no—my fan and gloves. Now then, now then! Did I tell you, Hope, that you would probably meet Roland down-stairs?"

"No. I am so glad! I thought he was settled at school."

"He has had a cough, and so secured two days' holiday. He came down here with Phil Chatterton. To tell the truth, I expect he 'll be an awful bore. He 's so *empressé*, and so destitute of shyness, and he 's quite certain to say the sort of things one doesn't want him to say. I beseech you, Hope, fasten him to your train without delay, for he quite works on my nerves—he really does."

The drawing-room was nearly full when Hope and Katie entered. They seated themselves near the door, and Hope presently observed a pair of bright dancing eyes fixed on her. The glance of recognition was followed by a loud and decidedly unconventional "Hurrah! I say—it is—it is!" and then there was a raid across the room, during which one or two people were recklessly pushed aside, a small table was overturned, a vase filled with flowers broken, and then a pair of eager arms were flung round Hope's neck.

"I say, Miss Karron, I 'm awfully glad to see you! Is your foot quite well again? The brute didn't quite trample it to pieces, did he? Let me see, do let me see!"

Katie beat a hasty retreat, and Hope held out the toe of a small satin shoe for inspection.

"My foot is quite well, Roley; we need not talk about it any more."

"I don't know about that at all; you 're my champion deliverer. I *was* so excited when I heard you were coming. I told Chatterton all about you—Phil, you know, my friend; I 'll introduce him presently. And, do you know, there 's a grown-up chap here, no end of a swell, who says he knows you! His name is Grey. I told Grey about you, too, Miss Karron, and he said what you did was heroic, and just what he expected. But what do you think? The fellow who owns the horse—Rossiter is the name of the horse—is here, too. The fellow 's name is Markham; he 's a great friend of Grey's, and Grey said he 'd go straight off and tell him. Mr. Grey said he expected Markham would be awfully put out, and so he should be. I said I 'd give him my opinion about that horse of his. Oh, I say! there 's Grey—Mr. Grey, I mean. Don't tell him I call him Grey behind his back—I 'll go and fetch him. Miss Karron! I say! your cheeks are quite red! Are you glad to see Mr. Grey? Is he a great friend of yours?"

"Yes, a great friend; and I 'm very glad to see him," said Hope.

At that moment she almost wished Roland at the bottom of the sea. It agitated her to meet Cecil; his face brought back such a rush of memories. And here was this dreadful boy misunderstanding everything.

"Here she is," said Roland. "Her foot 's all right; you 'll be glad to hear that. I say, have you told Markham yet? Is he awfully put out? His horse very nearly killed me, and a lady. I wonder if he could be tried for manslaughter if his horse killed two people. I think I 'll ask Phil. Phil knows a lot of the law."

"Yes, go and ask him—he 's in that distant window," said Cecil, giving the boy a little push. "Go and find him, and when you have found him stay with him. Do you hear?"

"I hear," said Roland.

He began to make a slow peregrination across the room, whispering softly under his breath—

"A lover and a loveress—won't I watch 'em!"

The moment he was out of sight, Cecil, turned a beaming face to Hope.

"I *am* glad to see you," he said. "I 've a thousand things to say to you. And Mrs. Chatterton is so good-natured, she says I may take you in to dinner."

CHAPTER XI.

"Do you see that queer-looking fellow just opposite to us?" whispered Cecil to his neighbour, as the soup was being removed. "Don't pretend to look at him, but just take a glance when you can, and give me your opinion."

"He has been looking at me," said Hope, "if it is the man you mean. He has a very quick way of looking, and you can scarcely find out that he has done so, but I have caught his eyes once or twice. He is dark and sallow—I don't much care for the shape of his moustache, and his eyes have nothing very special to distinguish them; still; he has a good head,

and a good forehead—there, he has looked at me again. Do let us talk of something else, Cecil."

"I will by-and-bye. I have not done with the present subject yet. That's Markham—that's the man who I once told you was in all the world alone worthy of Jocelyn."

"I don't think much of your taste," said Hope. "And I am sure Jocelyn would not be particularly obliged to you."

"Tell me about her, Hope. You know I have not in the least forgotten her."

"But you are not broken-hearted, Cecil."

"Of course not. I should not let any girl spoil my life to that extent. But I think I care just as much as ever for Jocelyn; so do tell me all you have heard."

The conversation then drifted into long accounts of the wanderings of the Seatons, of Jocelyn's opinion on this or that place of foreign interest. Hope spoke with animation, and her companion listened with unabated interest. They made a striking-looking couple, and more than one pair of eyes turned in their direction with an appreciative smile.

"Quite old friends," whispered Mrs. Chatterton to a neighbour. "That girl has such a bright face that she is absolutely handsome. Of course, as to Cecil, there are no two opinions on the point."

While they talked, Hope again noticed the quick sharp glance of her opposite neighbour. There are many ways in which a man may look at a girl. There is the admiring, the indifferent, the affectionate, the adoring glance. Markham's might have been interpreted as the puzzled gaze. He looked at Hope as if she both irritated him and gave him a sense of fascination.

"I wish it was allowable to turn one's back on people at dinner," she said at last to Grey. "I don't think your friend at all good-looking, Cecil; and he will go on favouring me with those queer flashes from his eyes."

"I can explain that," said Cecil; "it was Markham's horse Rossiter that trod on your foot. Markham is devoured with compunction terrible to witness."

"Oh dear! I hope he won't worry me on the subject. He was not in the least to blame. He cannot help his horse, and my foot is perfectly well."

He does not look upon the accident in that amiable light. He says it was his fault, for he should have had a more capable groom."

"Well, yes, the groom was awkward; but then, so was Roley. I do hope, Cecil, he won't worry me on the matter."

"Would you rather not be introduced to him?"

"Much rather. I need not know everybody at Beeches, need I?"

"Certainly not. Markham is sure to ask for an introduction, and I can tell him that you particularly wish to be excused. Then he'll be certain to stare more than ever. He's going to stay here all through your visit."

"Cecil, you quite tease me. Oh, introduce him, if you must, but give him a hint that I don't consider myself a heroine."

"Wisely spoken," said Cecil. "It won't be half so bad for you when he takes you in to dinner, and talks to you as he can talk. He won't have time to flash those glances then. Look here, Hope, I told you before what I thought of Markham. You say he is ugly now; but no woman can resist him. You hear him sing, for instance—I'm only glad Jocelyn is not in the house; that is, unless we were properly engaged and all that. Ah, there's the signal for your departure. What a pleasant chat we have had! I'll look you up again in the drawing-room."

Cecil had vastly improved in the two years which had intervened since Hope had last seen him. He was a handsome youth then—he was a striking-looking young man now. His features were good, his figure was very fine, and his expression most sweet and engaging. Such a youth, so endowed by nature, and so plentifully supplied by Dame Fortune with the good things of life, could not help being a universal favourite. Nobody guessed that Cecil had some time ago given his heart away, and wherever he went there were one or two anxious, if not designing, candidates for the lost treasure. Mothers were apt to be very polite to Cecil, and pretty girls smiled kindly upon him. His attentions, however, were so general, his affectionate speeches were so frank and above-board, so apt to be bestowed upon one pretty lass on a certain evening, and given to her sister to ponder over on the next, that Cecil could only be spoken of as the most harmless sort of flirt, as hearts did not break on his account.

Perhaps this, however, is scarcely true. One heart did certainly ache a little, and one pair of soft pretty eyes could have grown very bright and tender had Cecil given them the chance. The owner of these eyes was Bee Chatterton, who could not help looking enviously at Hope during dinner, and rather avoiding her afterwards. How horrid it was of Cecil to have old, old friends, girl-friends, too, with faces like Hope Karron's!

Notwithstanding this little cloud, however, which nobody noticed, as it was really only shadowy, the girls in the drawing-room made very merry, and Hope and Katie being fresh from London found themselves the centre of attraction. In the midst of an eager stream of talk, during which Maud had advanced to such intimacy with Hope that her hand lay affectionately on the black net dress, Cecil and Markham came up. The dreaded introduction was made, Cecil turned aside to chat with Bee and Maud Chatterton, and Markham, looking gravely at Hope, said—

"I understand that a certain subject is not to be touched on between us."

"My foot is quite well," replied Hope, turning crimson, and glancing angrily at Cecil.

"I am immensely relieved to hear it. Also that we need not dwell on the matter. I have dismissed the groom, and if you dislike seeing the horse about he shall be sold."

"Is he here?—what a beautiful face he had! I see his eyes, a little wild and——" Hope turned pale.

"I thought we were not to discuss the matter. Will you come and sit in this window? It is not so hot here. Is that seat comfortable? No; we won't talk of Rossiter. He was a fine creature, handled by a brute. Now I want to apologise to you, Miss Karron."



"'I like standing best,' she said."

"What for?" asked Hope.

"I stared at you unmercifully during dinner."

Hope coloured again. She glanced fully up at Cecil's friend, and made up her mind to dislike him. Then the expression of his face softened her, perhaps rather it subdued. Like a quick flash Cecil's words rushed through Hope's mind—"Markham can fascinate any girl he pleases." She resolved that she should not be a victim. She sprang to her feet.

"Won't you sit down?"

"I like standing best," she said. Then she coloured again, and was vexed with herself.

"Why can't we talk commonplaces?" she added. "I am not interested in the horse, nor in—in—what you did at dinner, Mr. Markham."

Markham's expression became intensely grave, even a little sad.

"I will fly to commonplaces as quickly as possible," he said. "I adore commonplaces. Still, I must just say a word in self-justification. I stared at you at dinner because—not because——"

"Oh, don't," said Hope.

"*Not* because I admired you."

"Of course not. What a lovely moonlight night this is."

"We'll go into the conservatory presently, and talk about the moon. I once made a sonnet about her. I'll repeat it to you. Nothing could be more commonplace. In the meantime I must tell you why I looked at you. You remind me of someone else. There is a face that haunts me, and you have a look of it. You are not very like, but you have a sufficient resemblance to give me a sense of unrest, of torment. I am sorry you came here."

"You are very polite," replied Hope angrily. "I won't at least trouble you with my presence. I knew from the first I should not like you."

"Thank you."

Markham made way a little, and Hope flew for refuge to an ottoman almost in the centre of the room. In this position she was under the full blaze of innumerable candles, her whole frame was quivering

with indignation, her eyes sparkled. The faint colour which strong excitement gave her mantled her cheeks.

What a rude, ungentlemanly man! and Cecil's friend! What could Cecil mean by calling him fascinating? *She* knew better than to yield to his charm. Had anyone ever spoken to her so rudely before? He had absolutely said he was sorry she was there. Well—let him be sorry. For a whole fortnight Beeches was to be her home, and no Mr. Markham that ever breathed should turn her away but she would take care not to speak to him again—oh, no!

"Miss Karron," whispered Roley's troublesome voice in her ear, "that's *him*, the man in the window—that's Markham."

"I'm not interested in the man in the window, Roley, and I think little boys like you ought to be in bed ages ago."

"Oh, I say, you *are* disagreeable! You might take a poor fellow's part. Phil and I have been dodging round for the last hour. We are so awfully afraid of Phil's father seeing us and ordering us off. May I sit at your feet on this footstool? I'll be quite safe here."

"Sit anywhere, but be quiet, Roley."

"How queer you look! Your cheeks are pink, as if they were painted. And your eyes—don't they sparkle! You look awfully pretty, though. If I were a big fellow, wouldn't I just—wouldn't I—— Oh, I say, Markham's going to sing. Let me hide low down at your feet, Miss Karron. I wouldn't miss his song for the world. I heard him last night, and I nearly choked."

"With laughter?" asked Hope.

"Laughter! You wait and hear. I tell you he makes you all teary in a minute, and as if you had a cold in your head. Laughter! I hope you've got a good big pocket-handkerchief in your pocket. Now then! I don't know how he does it—even Phil rushed out of the room to keep from blubbering last night. Now listen—won't you turn your head this way?"

"No, I can hear as I am. Hush!" she said then, in a moment, for the boy was rustling and fidgeting. "Hush!" she repeated, and she laid her hand on his shoulder, compelling him to be still.

The man was forgotten in the singer. Hope absolutely ceased to remember her recent encounter with Markham. Her short-lived anger melted away like the early dew. She forgot Roley, she forgot what she had said about her present position being the best. She stood up, she faced right round. As Markham sang, Hope looked full at him with two grey eyes into which tears were springing. His voice was a tenor, not too powerful, but sweet and infinitely pathetic. It was flexible, and so delicately swayed by the soul of the singer that the emotions felt by him were instantly communicated to his listeners. The touching ballad of "Lochaber no more" was rendered in such a manner that Hope for the first time understood Burns' words when he said it was a tune for a broken heart:—

> "Farewell to Lochaber, farewell to my Jean,
> Where heartsome with her I have mony days been;
> For Lochaber no more—Lochaber no more,
> I'll maybe return to Lochaber no more."

The whole scene rose before the girl's eyes—the exile's farewell, the wild scene, the wail of the often repeated "no more." Markham sang right through the ballad, then with scarcely a pause he struck into another key. As he did so he gave Hope, across half the length of the long drawing-room, another lightning glance. She saw it, resented it, and would have sat down, but the voice arrested her like a spell:—

> "My love is like a red, red rose
> That's newly sprung in June;
> My love is like a melody,
> That's sweetly sung in tune.
> Sae fair art thou, my bonny lass,
> Sae deep in love am I;
> And I will love thee still, my dear,
> Till all the streams run dry;
> Till all the streams run dry, my dear,
> And the rocks melt with the sun;
> And I will love thee still, my dear,
> Till all the world is done."

"Didn't I tell you?" whispered Roley—"why, you're crying yourself. Won't I talk to Phil about this! I thought it was t'other one—Grey I call him behind his back—that could make you laugh or cry. Oh, I say, isn't Mr. Grey, though, going on with Bee Chatterton! And, mercy me, if that isn't Mr. Markham coming back! Good-night, Miss Karron—aren't your cheeks red, though!"

CHAPTER XII.

Markham did saunter down the long drawing-room, he even paused near Hope's ottoman to exchange a few words with a pale-faced, limp-looking girl. In doing this he stood so close to Hope that her black net dress must have touched him, but he did not speak to her, nor turn in her direction. Presently he strolled into the conservatory with the pale girl "to recite that odious sonnet of his about the moon," whispered Hope to herself. She felt decidedly cross, and she went to bed in a bad temper.

Katie could not make out what had happened to her friend. Katie's evening had been one long delight. Roley had most mercifully kept out of her path, and the possible lover seemed already to loom in the distance, in the person of Gus Chatterton, who was good-looking, empty-headed, but fairly amiable and fairly well off.

Katie dreamt golden dreams while Hope tossed from side to side of her pillow. What *did* that man mean? Why did his face worry her? Why did his stupid rude words stick in her brain? Never in the whole course of her life before had any man made even the most transient impression on her. She was accustomed to attentive ways and pretty speeches from the youths of Downton. Since she went to London she had been decidedly removed from the sphere of agreeable and chivalrous youth. Now she had returned to it. For a brief fortnight she was back in the old life, and she expected matters to go on as they had always done: the youths still to be chivalrous and agreeable, she receiving their attentions as a matter of course but always with well-bred indifference.

On the threshold, however, of her life at Beeches, a totally new experience came to her. An ugly man

was specially commended to her notice. She was told that he was fascinating, that no woman could resist him. He began by being rude to her; he was rude in action, he was even ruder in speech. How could anybody tolerate him? And yet, how his voice thrilled, sending a sense of pain, while it angered her, as he spoke of the face that haunted him. She had not been nice about that face. A good deal of his talk was doubtless banter, but he was in earnest when he spoke of the face which hers resembled. He did not admire her, of course—who wanted him to admire her?—but she irritated him because of a resemblance.

Hope was not in the least vain. She was unaffected, unconscious of any personal charms; hers was a sweet, healthy, generous nature. Never before in her whole life had she been oppressed with this sense of irritation, which now almost increased to a morbid curiosity. She rose softly from her midnight couch, closed the door which had been standing open between her room and Katie's, lit the wax candles on the dressing-table, and gazed anxiously at her own pale reflection in the glass.

She was very pale now, and her light hair was dishevelled. Her eyes had dark shadows under them, her lips at the moment were more fretful than arched with expectancy and delight. The small face did not please its owner. She got into bed feeling crosser than ever.

"I'll think no more of that intolerable personage with his whims and hauntings," she said to herself. "Why, I really don't know myself—to lie awake over such a trifle. Am I Hope Karron, or another?"

At last she did fall asleep, but Markham's song, "Lochaber no more," came into her dreams. She was present at that passionate farewell; she was crying to the singer to stop, to rend her heart no more; and as she spoke to him and cried to him, and entreated him, he turned and looked at her, and his ugly face grew beautiful, and his voice melted away into the tenderest love-song—

> "And I will love thee still, my dear,
> Till all the streams run dry;
> Till all the streams run dry, my dear,
> And the rocks melt with the sun;
> And I will love thee still, my dear,
> Till all the world is done."

She awoke with a headache; her dream discomposed her even more than the sore indignant thoughts which preceded it.

The next day it was arranged that the ladies of the party should ride to a certain glen about ten miles away to meet the sportsmen and take them lunch.

The Chattertons all rode well, and Hope in her Downton days had learnt to ride on a shaggy pony, and had many times had a mount from her richer friends.

She was scarcely a practised, but she was a very intrepid horsewoman. Katie declared that she would not even mount a donkey; one or two other girls of the party were equally timid; they were accordingly distributed among the matrons, who drove off to the rendezvous in a couple of landaus, and Hope, Maud and Bee Chatterton were quickly mounted and prepared to follow.

"You are sure you are not afraid, Miss Karron?" said Maud. "For if you are," she added, "I don't in the least mind exchanging horses with you. Stately is such a gentle darling, that even a girl who was not much accustomed to horses might feel quite comfortable on his back."

"I'm quite comfortable as I am," replied Hope, laughing. Then seeing that the two girls smiled and exchanged glances—"What's the matter?" she added. "Is this horse particularly vicious, or do I sit him in such a manner that you conclude beforehand that I'm an arrant coward?"

"Not a bit of it," said Maud. "Anyone can see that you know how to ride, Miss Karron. But the fact is you are on Rossiter's back. He half-killed you once already.—I did not know," she added, turning to Bee, "that Rossiter was to be brought out to-day. He is not quite certain, particularly for a lady."

"I am not afraid," said Hope, colouring. "Not that I wish to ride the animal."

"Then do change, dear—do. Stately is a delicious horse, and I can ride anything. I'm half my time on horseback."

Hope was half inclined to comply; not that she was afraid, but she did not want to put herself under any compliment to Markham.

"We can exchange in a minute," said Maud.

But Bee, who since the night before had never felt thoroughly cordial with Hope, called out now in a somewhat spiteful voice—

"I think you are over-cautious, Maudie; Miss Karron looks perfectly comfortable on Rossiter, and I don't suppose, all things considered, she'd like to own she was afraid of him. Anyhow, we have no time to change now. The carriages are out of sight as it is."

"I'm all right," said Hope. She whipped up her splendid bay, and immediately found herself in the position of leader of the little party.

It was true she was not afraid, but she knew enough about horsemanship quickly to perceive that Rossiter was her master—that he would not absolutely respond to her touch, nor obey her light, firm curb. This knowledge was not reassuring; she was not frightened, but she was annoyed. The horse was cantering along gaily, a little too fast, for Hope began to grow breathless. Her companions called out to her to wait for them, but she knew she could not. The longer she rode on Rossiter's back, the more certain horse and rider were that the key of the position remained in the horse's keeping.

There was no particular danger, however. Hope had a good seat, and unless Rossiter was frightened or startled in any way, a catastrophe was scarcely to be feared.

(To be continued.)

A SERMON TO FIREMEN.

PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH, 1889, BEFORE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH FIRE BRIGADES.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S.

"He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."—DANIEL iii. 25.

THE events recorded in this chapter occurred, in all probability, in the eighteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. By that time the predictions of the prophet had been fulfilled, and the son of Nabopolassar had become indeed a king of kings. No foe, however powerful, had been found able to stand before him as he swept like a whirlwind over the face of the earth. And now, after a military progress through the countries between India and Ethiopia, he has just returned to his own capital, bringing with him in triumph the spoil of subjugated nations and captives without number. At this juncture Nebuchadnezzar seems inclined to make a pause. The work of conquest is over, and before him lies the task of consolidating the mighty empire which has been entrusted to him. The time has come, he thinks, for the inauguration of a new era; an era in which the arts of war shall give place to the arts of peace, and the resources of the kingdom shall be developed, and the happiness and prosperity of the multitudinous races shall be, as far as is possible, secured. First, however, he must make certain of the allegiance of these races. The foundation must be firmly laid before he proceeds to erect the superstructure upon it.

With such thoughts in his mind, the monarch decided upon a ceremonial which should take place on the vast plain of Dura, situated in the province of Babylon, at no great distance from the walls of the city itself. To this are to be summoned representatives of all the subject nations—satraps and generals, priests and laymen, the ministers of justice and the administrators of finance—all are to be there, and all are to render homage, in some way that shall be indicated, to their sovereign lord the king. Now, if the ceremonial had been of a simply political character, and the saluting the image of gold, of which we have heard so much, had been nothing more than an act of respect to Nebuchadnezzar—an expression of fealty—it is conceivable that there could have been little in the whole affair to startle the conscience of even the most scrupulous of scrupulous Jews. The occasion, however, had its religious as well as its political aspect. The golden figure on the lofty pedestal, which made it visible from all parts of the plain, was, indeed, we suppose, a likeness of the king himself; and not exactly what we should call an idol. But Nebuchadnezzar was known to be a devout man in his way; indeed, he was an enthusiastic worshipper of his god Merodach; to Merodach he attributed his successes; to Merodach he invariably addressed his prayer for the protection of his throne; and he meant it to be understood—and it was understood—by all who gathered together on the plains of Dura, that the king and the god were to be so coupled together that to bow down before the image of the one would be to offer to the other the adoration due to a being who was unquestionably divine.

I have said all this for the purpose of reminding you that the ceremony in the plain of Dura was no mere idle pageant prompted by the love of display and the vanity of a successful soldier, but a grave and earnest proceeding, resolved upon after careful deliberation, and for the purpose of introducing a new state of things for the empire; that it was regarded by Nebuchadnezzar, not only as a necessary part of his State policy, but also as an act of gratitude, due to the deity to whom he believed himself to owe his victories and his throne.

It is well to bear this in mind if we would enter into the real difficulties of both the monarch and his recalcitrant Jewish subjects, and if we would comprehend how it was that the line of conduct which the three Jews felt themselves compelled to take would be naturally looked upon by Nebuchadnezzar as open rebellion, and as an insult both to himself and his god.

But let us pursue the line of the narrative a little further. The carrying out of the imperial edict, involving, as it did, the summoning of officials from very great distances, must have occupied a period of several months, and during that time the three "children," as they are sometimes called—the three young men, who were really statesmen set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—had ample opportunity of considering the situation in which they were placed. It was a sufficiently formidable one. They would hardly expect to escape the observation of Nebuchadnezzar, for they had, as they knew, enemies in the court who would be sure, if they even seemed to fail in their duty, to report the matter at headquarters. And so soon as their resistance to royal authority came to be known, their destruction, under the circumstances, was of course absolutely certain. They had, then, a most painful and distressing alternative before them—either to act in opposition to their own deepest convictions and to dishonour the Lord their God, by worshipping an idol, or else to submit to a horrible death, by being cast into a

furnace of fire. We can easily imagine how those anxious months were passed. There would be no slight mental struggle when the men were alone. There would be occasional conferences such as their very busy lives permitted them to hold. There would be encouragement of one another, and consultations with their friend Daniel; and above all there would be fervent and persistent prayer, that their courage might be sustained, and their faith kept from failing when the supreme day of trial came.

At length that day dawned upon them. Early in the morning, the crowd of dignitaries and high officials, each in his robes of state—and each bearing about him some token of his nationality—stream towards the plain, and group themselves in their appointed places, round the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. That object naturally attracts all eyes. But not less interest is excited by the ominous furnace standing not so very far off from the statue, and belching out ever and anon red and lurid flames from its circular summit. What does it mean, that furnace? Was it the customary accompaniment of such a scene as this? It may be so; but more probably, the monarch expected on this occasion some outbreak—or at least, some hesitation—on the part of the lately subjugated tribes, and took this method of overawing them and enforcing their submission. Anyhow, the grim engine of despotic authority, the terrible evidence of what Nebuchadnezzar could do if his wrath were provoked, is there, and all men draw their breath more thickly as they gaze upon it. Presently the king arrives, attended by his body-guard, and then, when the vast multitude has settled down into stillness, the voice of a herald is heard in the clear Oriental atmosphere proclaiming to all the assembled "peoples, and nations, and languages," what is the royal will and pleasure. A moment or two later (as we suppose) the beams of the rising sun strike on the bright metal of the statue, the blare of trumpets and horns is heard, and every head lies prostrate in the dust before the feet of the glittering idol!

I said "every head;" but there were, as you know, exceptions. The three young Jewish men stand upright in the midst of the general prostration, refusing to bow the knee in an act of such worship as that. Their attitude is of course noticed. Certain Chaldeans hurry at once to the king, and tell him what has happened; and by his command the men are brought and placed before him. Bending upon them from his seat one of his blackest scowls, Nebuchadnezzar calls them by name, and asks them what has induced them to act in such a way. Have they done this thing of set purpose? "Have you three deliberately made up your minds to defy my authority—to insult me in the presence of my subjects—and thus to set an example of insubordination in the kingdom? You, who have received such benefits at my hands, and who know so well (for you must know) how important this ceremonial is, and what grave issues are dependent upon it? Is this possible? But I am aware," continues the king, "that you will urge in self-defence some plea about your religion. You will speak of the Jehovah of Israel. Let me tell you that this Jehovah of yours, in whom you trust, is simply incompetent to help you. Have not I beaten down the walls of his city? Have not I—I myself—overthrown his Temple, and desolated his shrine, and carried his people off by thousands and tens of thousands into captivity in this very place? How, then, shall *he* deliver you out of my hands, when everything round you proclaims him to be a captive and a powerless God? Be wise, then, in time. Think over it. I will give you another chance. Once more the trumpets shall sound, and if, when ye hear them, ye prostrate yourselves before that image of your Sovereign it shall be well. If not, there is the furnace of fire, and into that you go, and perish in a moment."

It is no wonder, perhaps, that the monarch was infuriated. To be bearded by his own officials at such a moment, in presence of such a multitude, would have tried the patience of more patient men than he was. And Nebuchadnezzar had a passionate temper naturally, and long years of success, in which everything and everybody had been compelled to bow before him, had made him peculiarly intolerant of even the semblance of opposition to his will. But this was not all, as we have seen. His devotion to his God, and his sense of the extreme importance of the occasion, his belief that the measures he was taking were essential to the future well-being of his empire, added fuel to the flame, and the man was "full of fury," almost beside himself with rage.

We turn from the maddened monarch to the three young men, who stand quietly and respectfully, but yet firmly, before him. "It is not for us to bandy arguments with our Sovereign; we will not attempt it; but this we feel ourselves bound in conscience to say—that we are persuaded of the power of our God to deliver us. And we know He will deliver us, if not by saving us from the fire—about that we are not assured—at least by enabling us to encounter and to bear it; and then we say, O king, that whether we are delivered from the fire or not, our resolution is fixed not to serve thy gods, nor to worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Nothing on earth will induce us to do such a thing."

This is enough. Nebuchadnezzar immediately gives directions to his attendants, and they get the furnace ready by heating it seven times more than it is wont to be heated. What! is it not already hot enough to destroy three human beings, and to shrivel them up in a moment like a piece of parchment laid on the coals? Yes; but the king feels now that he is committed to a struggle with this God of the Hebrews, that he is contending not merely with these disobedient subjects of his, but with the Jehovah whom they represent, and he will see to it that Jehovah has no chance against him. When the orders about the heating of the furnace are carried

out, some of the strongest and bravest soldiers in the Chaldean army take up the three young men, and prepare to cast them into the fire. This is a perilous task—most perilous—one that the soldiers (courageous as they are) shrink from; for the flames are now surging over the platform that runs round the top of the furnace, and are threatening to destroy everything within their reach. But the thing must be done. The king's command—he cares nothing for human life, not he; human life is cheap in Babylon—is urgent, and so, we suppose, the band of soldiers, grimly bending themselves to their deadly work, and taking advantage of an opportunity when the billows of flame have receded for a moment from the edge of the fiery volcano, fling their victims down, whilst an irrepressible sob, a deep hollow groan bursts from that vast assembly round them.

What has happened? We see, as soon as we can gaze steadily on the scene, that the flames have suddenly rushed back and licked up those executioners as the ox licketh up the grass of the field, and there they lie, charred and blackened corpses on the edge of the platform, bearing witness to the destructive fury of the fire; whilst the three young men are walking with a mysterious companion—one like unto the Son of God—by their side, walking calmly on the red-hot floor through that white core of flame, absolutely untouched and unharmed. The presence of the mysterious companion has encompassed and saved them.

I must drop my description here, for I have little time enough left for the few simple remarks which the subject suggests to me, and which I wish to be allowed to offer to you before I close it.

I. Our first thought shall be for the three young men. We are inclined, no doubt, to praise their indomitable resolution. But if we wish really to understand their history aright, we must go behind the resolution to find the source of it, which was trust in the unseen Jehovah and in the promises of His word. This it was that made them manly, and enabled them to play the part which we have been watching with so intense an interest this morning. By faith (says the sacred writer) they quenched the violence of the fire. And it may be well for us to remember too that this faith of theirs was not by any means a sudden or extemporised affair. We have perhaps read or heard of a certain villain who "leant his arm against the chimney-piece in his drawing room," and in that easy position "repented of all the sins of his past life." But such things do not occur outside the covers of a novel; we find no instances of them in our actual experience. Spiritual graces are subject, like other things, to the laws of growth and increase; and although it is perfectly true that God gives faith, and that God by His Holy Spirit sustains in us the faith which He has graciously imparted, yet it is equally true that there must be a development of this confidence in the unseen God if we expect it to do great things for us. In other words, faith must be habitual, continuous, growing. And we cannot but suppose that it was through many a conflict and many a doubt; through many a bitter struggle with the suggestions of weak flesh and blood; through many temptations just to concede a little; that it was by earnest and continued prayer, by laying hold of God's strength, and by long wrestling for a blessing—that the three Jewish young men found their way into a spiritual position which enabled them to endure the wrath of the king, because they could see a greater although an invisible King behind him.

II. Our next thought shall be for the Church of God. This third chapter of the Book of Daniel contains the story of what perhaps we may venture to call a duel between the world-power and the Lord God Himself. We have in it the Church of God almost at its very lowest ebb—in captivity, shorn of its glory, cast down, very nearly destroyed. And on the other side we have the world in all the plenitude of its power, and in all the insolence of its authority, coming in like a flood, to overthrow and overwhelm it; and then we have the triumph ultimately resting with the right, God interposing to defend His servants and to crush His foes. Can we over-estimate the value of such a testimony as this to the faithfulness of God? Can we not imagine what an inspiration this narrative has been to all those who throughout the long past ages have contended for the truth against overwhelming odds—against the combined force of riches, and learning, and influence, and intellect, and power, but who have held fast throughout to the belief that God would never desert His cause, and the gates of Hell should not ultimately be found to prevail against it? Take away this story of the three children from the Bible, and how infinitely great would have been the Church's loss!

III. Our last thought shall be for ourselves. In some shape or other, we may all of us have to pass through the fire. The young man is terribly tempted, sometimes by the seductions of his senses, by the flattering solicitations of pleasure; the older man by the many snares of business life. Any one of us may be tried by bitter loss and disappointment, or by the keen edge of long-protracted bodily agony. Let us see to it that we have with us, as we may have, the presence of the personal Christ, of Jesus the great High Priest, the Angel of the Covenant. Then we shall pass through the flame and it will not gather upon nor burn us. Ay, and more than this. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked through the streets of Babylon, the bystanders cried out after them, "These are the men whom we saw with our own eyes cast into the furnace of fire! what a wonderful God is the God of the Hebrews! how He can save the people who put their trust in Him!"

And so shall you and I in our small way bring glory to God, and impart strength to other people, if we are known to have passed through the furnace of some fiery trial unscorched and unharmed by it because we have trusted in the name of the Lord our God.

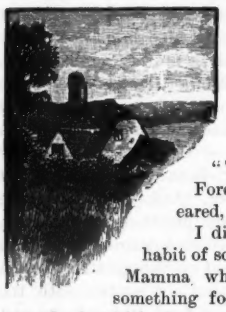
"POOR DEAR MAMMA."

THE CONFESSIONS OF A DISCONTENTED GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE AWAKENING OF MARY FENWICK," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"*Expect nothing and you will not be disappointed.*"



I REMEMBER reading that axiom—or apothegm, or aphorism, I do not know which to call it—at the beginning of one of mamma's books. The book was a copy of "The Children of the New Forest," which was much dog-eared, and, indeed, read to pieces. I dislike that untidy and silly habit of scribbling remarks in books. Mamma, when she was a girl, wrote something foolish upon the fly-leaf of every book which she possessed.

Once upon a time I *did* write a few words upon the title-page of mamma's birthday-book. I wrote this line—

"With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart."

Mamma must have seen it, for she studies that book every day of her life, but she has not mentioned it in any way. I expect her conscience smote her, and she was ashamed to find that Tennyson himself knows what mothers are!

"*Expect nothing and you will not be disappointed.*" Expect nothing! What a sentiment and what advice! Luckily no one thinks of taking advice—except when it is their *own* advice—so the advice does not signify much one way or the other. Expect nothing! How about Pandora's gift, our best friend Hope?

However, my sister Flo, who is married, and rather morbid, says that Hope is no blessing, but an eternal old *nuisance*. She speaks feelingly, for she is for ever expecting to reap (and for ever disappointed of reaping) a fortune from her husband's gamblings on the Stock Exchange: he is an inveterate but unfortunate speculator.

But it is not my morbid sister about whom I intend to write. She married three years ago, before I left school, and lives in London, while we vegetate in the country among cows and cabbages.

My mother married a country clergyman. I suppose I ought not to blame her for that, because she is very fond of him, and had she married anyone else (papa's ill-tempered cousin, the judge, for instance), I do not think she would have been happy.

No; I do not blame her for marrying a country clergyman; but I do think her conduct culpable in allowing him to stagnate during his whole life in a country rectory. [To be sure, poor papa's abilities are not anything *very* particular, for his sermons are dull, prosy, and full of repetition. Neither does he care for any of those pretty things and pretty ways that make the services at some churches pass quite quickly.] She may love her garden. I suppose, as a matter of fact, she *does* love it, for she freckles her face in the summer and reddens her hands in the winter with messing among the flowers. I feel sure that if she once made up her mind to have nothing more to do with gardening she would be far happier, for her flowers are an endless anxiety to her.

My black poodle, Mepho, is not at all a greedy dog, but he is thrifty: so if I give him a bone which he does not want, he buries it.

I know it is most unfortunate that he chooses the carnation bed for his cupboard; but who can blame him? The soil is light and easy to dig, and how is he to understand that carnation plants are brittle?

No wonder that I lost my temper when mamma, with the shears in her hand, ran after Mepho, calling him all sorts of names. I must allow that she did not catch him, for she was soon exhausted with the chase, and sadly out of breath.

Mepho is not her only enemy. The mice eat her bulbs, the slugs eat the seedlings, the caterpillars eat the roses, the aphids spoil everything, and then (terrible catastrophe!) the gardener overheats the flues in the conservatory and kills every plant there.

Mamma may love her garden, but, I assert, she would be happier without it. We are happier without things we like when those things give us cause for anxiety. If she had some nice little window-boxes, filled with white Marguerite daisies, scarlet geraniums, and blue lobelias (in a street, or terrace, or circus, or crescent, where there was someone to admire them besides herself), I am sure she ought to be satisfied. She could garden quite luxuriously then; neither breaking her back nor burning her face. Really, under those circumstances, I should not mind helping her occasionally myself.

You have no idea how short mamma was with me when I first suggested this excellent plan. I feel I am right when I say that to live in the country all the year round if you have a pretty daughter, who would adorn society, is the most selfish thing imaginable. To be sure, we have some neighbours, but they are old frumps, who do not know the latest from Paris from a home-made scientific—that will show you the sort of people they are. But mamma likes them; they satisfy her taste.

Of course I have read lovely poems and exquisite bits of prose all upon the subject of "mothers," or, rather, abstract motherhood. It seems a pity to exaggerate things so much, for I adore *truth*, and my eyes are *wide* open; it is not easy to deceive me. I say this without conceit; I am merely stating a fact. I have discovered, and the discovery cost me much pain (for those poems and bits of prose were very beautiful) that mothers are not perfect. My mother, although she is twenty-five years older than I, is not perfect. I have known her dogmatic and dictatorial. I have heard her exaggerate. I have seen her lose her temper

XUM

during a discussion on some uninteresting political question with our Whig Squire. She is a redhot Tory, and, I believe, argues on subjects which she does not understand.

The name of our Whig Squire is Yorke. He has an only daughter, Puss, who is my bosom friend. We tell each other everything—all our troubles; so I know that she, too, has a great deal to put up with at home.

Mrs. Yorke is indolent and apathetic. She is content (as is mamma) with a country life. Pussy is full of energy and spirit, and when she tries to kindle an answering desire for life and gaiety in Mrs. Yorke, she yawns and goes out of the room.

The race of mothers has declined. Their reputed devotion, their self-sacrifice, live but in tradition. To be brief, they are self-opinionated. They may listen to what their daughters have to say upon different subjects—they may listen, I say, and they may hear, but they do not heed. They preserve their old-world notions, and the most convincing argument does not induce them to alter the daily routine of their life. I suppose it may not be altogether their fault; it is a misfortune to be narrow-minded and bigoted. I try to be tolerant, but mamma is very trying; she treats some of my most cherished ideas with a smiling superiority.

There are many, many girls who prefer to face the horrors of a hospital, or the disciplined life of a sister of charity, rather than endure the vexations of an unsympathetic home-life with a poor faulty parent. *I* should never do that. I would suffer *anything* rather than live with miserable sick persons, or wear a hideous nun's dress and no fringe; but I wish to marry: that must be happiness. A house of my own, my very own, where I may *cover* the walls with fans, or plates, or drapery; where I may sit all day long over the fire reading novels (if I wish to do so), with no one to send me out for a walk; where, in fact, I am sole mistress; and where I may do just what I like, just in my own way.

Mamma talks in the most calculating and worldly minded manner about marriage. She says that girls marry for the sake of change and a wedding-ring. We disagree sadly on this subject, but she is obstinate. You might as well argue with a certain quadruped (which must be nameless), once coerced by stratagem into journeying to Cork. On one occasion, I talked to her without a break from lunch till tea-time, and, although she never contradicted me at the time, yet, when I had finished speaking, I found that she was still unconvinced.

"You do not know when you are well off, Poppy," she said, looking up from her knitting; "you will never be so happy again as you are now. You have no responsibilities—no anxieties. Believe me that married life is not all trousseau and wedding presents."

"Surely, mamma, you do not wish me to be an old maid?"

"I do not wish you to marry the first young man you meet merely for the sake of being married. Florry says that 'old maid' is a nickname for a wise woman."

"Mamma," severely, "you are married."

"Exactly,' with a funny little laugh; "so I know where the shoe pinches. Do not look horrified, Poppy dear. Yes, yes, yes, I wish you to be married, but for the sake of love, not change. I want you to marry something nice—someone whom your father and I approve."

That was what she said to me some time ago, but I remember it, for I know she spoke with a motive.

In our village lives Miss Matthews; an ugly, uninteresting person—at least, she would be uninteresting did she not possess a nephew. Of course, if old ladies have male relations they cannot be *totally* uninteresting. Ernest is the name of Miss Matthews' nephew—Ernest Wilson. I have known him a long while—a very long while; nearly a year. He comes down from Oxford to spend his vacations with Miss Matthews. In the summer our neighbourhood indulges itself in constant garden parties, to all of which he went; so did we. I play tennis; so does he. We met frequently, and became attached.

I am very much attached to Ernest, though he has no money and no chin. When you are very much attached to a person, and there is no immediate prospect of marriage, want of money does not much interfere with the fun. Presents may be a pleasantish part of an engagement, but a ring is the one thing really requisite. I do not mind the *no money* half so much as I mind the *no chin*. Ernest and I walk to and fro the Dove Walk in the twilight side by side, and whenever I turn to look at him I miss something from his profile. There is a want of something; he seems all mouth and collar. It is Pussy's fault (of course I'd like to be married before Pussy; it is a triumph to beat your neighbour at any game, and the game of marry is no exception to the rule). She is spiteful about my engagement, and whenever I see her she always begins to talk of chins, of beautiful Grecian chins, of heavily moulded chins, of clean-cut jaws and determined physiognomy. She alludes to poor Ernest's chin as though I had lopped off that unfortunate feature with my own hands.

None of Pussy's lovers are the least atom desperate, and a desperate lover with no chin is better than the sort of lover who prefers a cricket-match to you. Bobby Brown, Pussy's third cousin, pretends to love her, but he plays cricket (whenever he gets the chance of doing so) in preference to spending the day with Pussy under the cedars at the Hall. Ernest told me this in confidence. He said he could not understand Bobby. I can, for Pussy is exceedingly stupid if you see much of her.

Cricket is a dangerous game. I am glad Ernest has such bad sight that it prevents him from attempting to play; but I am sorry that he is obliged to wear spectacles. Ernest plays nothing, and goes nowhere, now. He says he cannot tear himself from my side.

Ernest declared himself at our garden party, in the kitchen garden. We were eating green gooseberries together. I am extremely fond of gooseberries. He seemed so very, very nervous, that I was obliged to help him a little. He was hot and red, and his eyes were blinking away behind his glasses.

"Have you pricked yourself, Mr. Wilson?" I asked anxiously. I thought he looked miserable.

"No, I have not pricked myself," he stammered; "not myself. It is you—you have pricked me."

"Nonsense!" I said tartly, for I thought it was silly to make such a fuss over a prickle. "It is impossible."

"You misunderstand me," he cried. "You have not pricked my finger with a thorn; you have gone far deeper—you have pricked my heart with your adorable fascinations."

Wasn't that poetical? I was conquered, but mamma was not. She received my confession that evening with a horror which I feel sure was assumed merely to annoy me.

"Are you joking, Poppy? if so, it does not amuse me."

"It is no joke, mamma, to love Ernest."

"Oh, Poppy, Poppy! you are mad!"

Mamma was wringing her hands. She never kissed me, nor wished me joy. Are not mothers supposed to be sympathetic? and was that sympathetic? No, it was barbarously cruel. No wonder that I grew angry, and cried hotly, "Why shouldn't I love Ernest? You loved papa—you married him. I have loved Ernest for w-e-e-k-s and w-e-e-k-s."

That sounded well: I repeated it louder. Mamma is small and upright; she looks rather as though she had swallowed a poker—years ago, so that it has had ample time to get digested and permeate the system. I am *hardly* at all afraid of her. I am sorry for her if she loses her temper, for I can generally manage to keep mine in hand.

"My dear Poppy, I certainly both loved and married your papa; but your papa was a manly, agreeable, well-looking, intellectual man, in a position to maintain a wife in comfort. Mr. Wilson has no money, no brains, no prospects, and no—no——"

"*Chin!*" I broke in violently; "no chin! I know what you were going to say. But Ernest does not want to marry *you*; and *I* marry a *man*, not a *chin*. You are cruel! Yes, I am your daughter—I have the misfortune to be your daughter—but I am Ernest's promised wife. You have no right to stop my happiness. If I wish to be poor, let me be poor. I do not ask *you* to be poor."

"Poppy," said mamma, taking my hand in hers, "you are over-excited. Come, come, be reasonable."

"I am not excited—I am reasonable. Nothing shall separate me from Ernest. I shall marry him as soon—as soon—as soon as he has taken his degree."

"He will *never* take his degree," said mamma solemnly; "never, Poppy. Dear, dear, dear! don't you know a goose when you see one? I blame myself—I ought to have been on the look-out; but I should as soon have expected danger from a hairdresser's block as from that poor fellow."

"I will not stay here if you call my future husband such dreadful names!" I sobbed.

"Your future husband!" mamma groaned. "Oh! Poppy, you have seen so few people; you know so little; you will not be guided; you must learn by experience, because you are so wilful a child. Learning by experience is a painful process, I warn you."

"Don't talk like that, mamma. I would rather die than jilt Ernest. I value true affection from whatever source it proceeds."

Mamma bowed her head upon her hands.

"Heaven help you, you foolish child!" she said.

CHAPTER II.

ERNEST and I are engaged. We have been engaged a year. For some weeks my parents opposed our engagement, but eventually they gave way. I was firm—very firm. I thought it my duty to be firm. I am not naturally pliable, and in this case Ernest's happiness was at stake. Papa is weak—sadly weak. Mamma rules him (influences him, she calls it) on all subjects; so he, too, argued with me, and tried to convince me that he knew more about my feelings than I knew myself. But if papa is weak, I am not weak; and though parents are parents, they must bow to Love—Ernest always spells it with a capital L—and my engagement is now a recognised fact.

I think the University of Oxford is very badly managed: the young men's holidays are too long. How can they pass their examinations if they are always at home? Ernest seems to be staying with his aunt all the year round.

He came to stay with us in the winter for a week. It was the longest week I ever spent. It was a dreadful week, for Ernest is afraid of mamma. She makes him feel nervous; so, when he does speak, he says silly, inane things; or, if he cannot think of anything to say, he laughs: he laughs incessantly. I think mamma might have shown some consideration for me. She should have helped me to amuse Ernest, instead of going out every day and all day long.

I had a cold—a violent cold, in my head; so I had to stay indoors. Ernest sat with me in the drawing-room. He likes playing "*draughts*." I don't; I hate it. However, we did play, and when I beat him he said that he had allowed me to do so because he thought I should like to be conqueror. That was preposterous, so I refused to play again; and when mamma came in she said I was asleep. I was not asleep at all; I had only shut my eyes for a moment. She always jumps to conclusions.

When Ernest is away we write to each other every day. I forget to write sometimes, and when this occurs I send him a telegram. It costs more, but then it saves me a great deal of trouble. I have no imagination, and I find letter-writing a tax on the intellect.

Poor Ernest! he has missed his *Smalls* again: so unfortunate! I believe the examiners are prejudiced against men who wear spectacles; so Ernest tells me, and of course I believe him. Although Ernest has no faculty for spelling, and hard work makes him feel ill, yet, with so much practice, surely he *ought* to get through.

Pussy Yorke and I have quarrelled. We just speak to one another when we meet, but no more. She was rude to Ernest. He did not notice it; but I did, and it offended me. She is going to marry Bobby Brown almost immediately, and because Bobby is clever, and handsome, and rich, she thinks she may give herself airs. I wonder why she is so pleased at the thought of being married. When Ernest mentions such a thing, I shudder; for, as mamma says, it is a leap in the dark. Of course Ernest is quite sweet—as sweet as

possible; but I do not care for "*draughts;*" and sometimes I think old maids look happy. Flo's husband has given up speculating, and has been working hard instead, and made a little money; so they have taken a house at Brighton for six weeks. I wrote to Flo last week this letter:—

"Darling Flo,—Do ask me to come and stay with you *immediately;* I don't feel very well, and I think a sea-blow would do me good. I have not told mamma I am writing this, so please ask me as though it was your own idea.—Your own "Poppy."

I have just received the answer. I am delighted.

"Darling Poppy,—Can you come and stay with me for a little while? Tom runs up to London every day on business, so I am rather lonely, and should love to have you. We have a good many friends here, and some gaiety in prospect. Fond love to mamma.—Your own "Flo."

When I took my invitation down-stairs and showed it to mamma, she said at once—

"But Ernest comes down to Miss Matthews for the long vacation next week, Poppy."



"'You do not know when you are well off, Poppy.'"—*p.* 703.

I blushed up to my eyes, and then said apologetically, "But it *is such* a *long* vacation, mammy dear!"

Mamma looked at me for a long moment.

"Ernest will be disappointed, Poppy."

"I don't think *he* will mind very much," I said positively. "One cannot keep it up for years."

"Keep it up?" repeated mamma in questioning astonishment; "keep *what* up?"

"Such devotion," I explained, unabashed. "A long engagement and a long vacation are two good things overdone."

"Poppy, you are talking recklessly."

"I am reckless. Why will you remind me I am engaged? You are always talking of Ernest. You never allow me to forget him for a day. You were the very person who first pointed out the disadvantage of my situation, and now you are for ever forcing my situation down my throat. May I not go to Brighton and *enjoy* myself—just for a month? When—when—when I am married I shall never enjoy myself again. Don't look so shocked. I don't believe you are shocked. I don't believe you are surprised. I believe you knew it from the first. How am I to marry somebody whom you despise?"

Mamma walked over to the window, and stood there staring out into the garden. Mepho was upon the lawn burying a marrow-bone in the carnation bed, but she did not see him.

"My dear Poppy! but you are—surely you are—dear me, how you puzzle me!"

"Ernest does not care for me, mamma; he really does not. We quarrel dreadfully, and now he does not even take the trouble to make it up. Let me go to Brighton. It will be a change—a pleasant change—for both of us. Perhaps, if you would be so very kind, you could play draughts with him a little sometimes."

"Poppy," said mamma sternly, "this will not do; you are treating a serious subject lightly. I cannot allow you to talk in this extraordinary way without demanding an explanation of your meaning."

"I don't know what I mean, mamma; but I wish I was dead."

"My dear Poppy, that is your favourite expression when anything goes in the least contrary to your wishes. You are so dreadfully impulsive."

"You are cruel, mamma. You have no pity for me, and, had it not been for you, I should never have done it. And now, when I want to go to Brighton, you tell me to stay at home for three *long, long* months with Ernest. It is *dreadful* to be engaged—*dreadful*. I could bear it better if—if—if he was in India."

Then I burst into tears, and mamma kissed me. She was quite kind, and she did not ask me any more questions, but she wrote a letter to Ernest. I did not know that she had done so until she brought me the answer, which Ernest had written her, to read:—

"MY DEAR MRS. PARROT,—Your letter was a surprise to me. I knew Poppy had been quiet and morose last time I saw her, but she said nothing more unkind than she had done once or twice previously. Our engagement was rot, of course; but at first she liked it. Aunt Tottie threw us together. However, 'all 's well that ends well;' so please give her my kind love, and say I shall go to Bath this vac., and I hope she will find some poor fellow with a *perfect* temper next time—for she 'll want it.—Yours sincerely,

"ERNEST WILSON."

For the composition of a goose, that was a nasty letter, and, when I had it, I threw my arms round mamma's neck. I was so grateful to her for what she had done.

I sent Ernest back his ring. Luckily I found it in my writing-table drawer under some old papers. It was a carbuncle ring. I had never worn it, because it burst my gloves and bruised my fingers. His letters I tore up and put into the paper-sack; and we made five shillings of them for the Orphanage.

Miss Matthews was very angry with us all. She withdrew her subscriptions from the village charities, and gave up coming to church for three months. However, you cannot keep up a grudge against a vacuum; so in time she attended the services once more, though she never renewed her subscriptions.

Pussy and I have made it up. She came to see me, and told me all about her annoyances. Bobby will not listen to her account of Mrs. Yorke's peculiarities; so she requires a *confidante*. Men do not understand things, nor interest themselves particularly in clothes. The trousseau is for Pussy; why should Mrs. Yorke have the choosing of it? Her antiquated mind cannot be expected to be alive to the latest fashion.

I did not mention any of my own affairs to Pussy; she was so engrossed in her gowns and squabbles that she listened to nothing I introduced upon other subjects.

When I met Mrs. Yorke, *she* was very, very kind and sympathetic. I daresay Pussy is tiresome sometimes. I have known her quite odious. Perhaps Mrs. Yorke (should she ever take to confiding her secrets to me) could find some extenuating circumstances to plead on her side. I fancy my mind enlarges as I grow older.

Neither papa nor mamma ever talks to me on the subject of Ernest. For this forbearance on their part I am grateful. I hope I may never see him again as long as I live, for I had grown so tired of him—of his face; of his voice; of his company; of his name. I did not know one could grow so tired of any young man.

Mr. Philip Manners has been staying at the Hall. I wonder if he plays "*draughts?*" I wonder if I should get tired of him if I saw too much of him? It is difficult to answer this last question, for, so far, I have never seen *half* enough of him. He is going away to-morrow, but he is coming again for Pussy's wedding, at which I am to act as bridesmaid. The dresses are white and yellow, with daffodil bouquets. I wish Pussy could have thought of something new.

* * * * * *

I have been Mrs. Philip Manners for two years, and I have changed my mind on a variety of topics. I am happy—certainly happy—but I look back at my girlhood with regret. I won't tell you why: that is my secret. I still have my little secrets; and now the only ear to which I whisper them is the ear of my baby daughter, Nora. She is asleep in the cradle at my feet, and I feel relieved to think she was too young to hear the little difference of opinion Philip and I have just had about our trip to the sea-side. Philip and I love one another, but we are *not* perfect. What will Nora think of us some day? I wish—I wish—that I could tell mamma what I think of her, what I know of her, from the height of fuller knowledge and wider experience to which I have attained; but she died more than a year ago, and so it is too late

MUSIC IN THE WIND.

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.

THE east wind owns a bad name, and is held responsible for many an ill to which flesh is heir; it has become typical of adversity, sweeping aside many radiant flowers, and leaving dreariness in their stead. But stormy winds, fulfilling His word, come not without mercy and blessing. "When we hear the stormy wind howling," says a scientist, "let us think of it as one of Nature's most efficient sanitary agents, by which she renovates the air and destroys the seeds of pestilence."

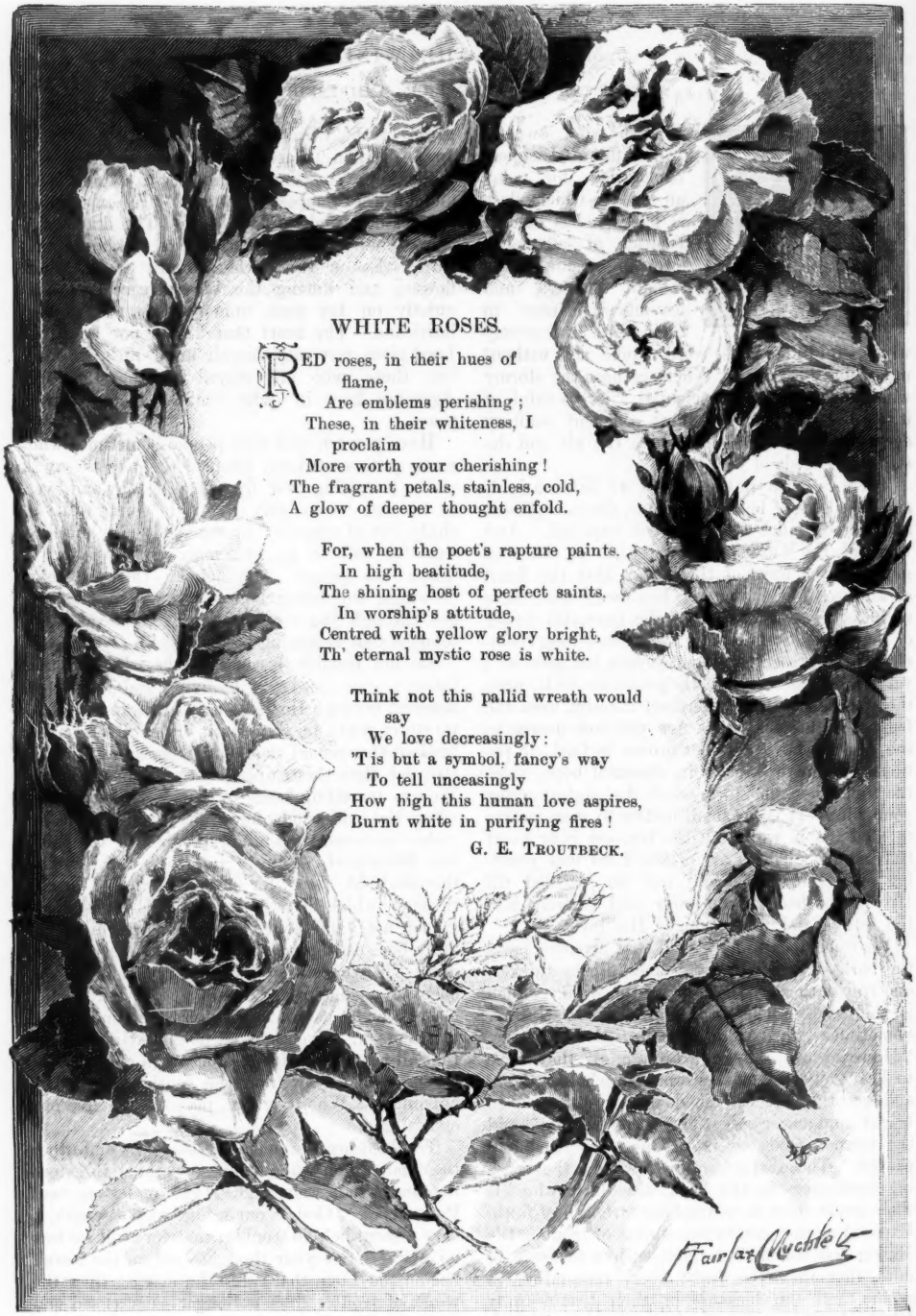
There is music in the blast if we listen aright, and it tells us of benefits to come, disease relieved and cured, much that is evil expelled. And what of the "uses of adversity?" Is there no music in the heart of the sorrow that the Lord of all love has chosen for His own? Are there no blessings left behind as the immortal dower of the winds of affliction? "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet *afterward* it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness." Are you not nearer to the Master, have you not grown in faith, in patience, in prayerfulness, in thankful hope, since the time when the storm-winds first sighed across your life? It is no small matter to grow nearer to God; it is worth all the tempest your heart has known. The heart of the Lord was yearning over you, and could not be satisfied till His winds had driven your soul entirely into the refuge and protection of His love.

We remember to have read that in some parts the bark of much-exposed trees grows thicker, and resists thereby the force of the wind. Such is the wise provision of the God of Nature. Sometimes we say of much-tried Christians, "However *can* they go through all they have to bear? Storm after storm overwhelms them, and yet they are sustained, unmurmuring, even bright and cheery!" The secret is that amid the tempest God's sweet promises are tried and proved. Those who humbly bow, like the bending forest-trees in the blast, are those who lift their heads anew in triumphant strength of faith. Exposed as they are to the storms of trouble, the Master has vouchsafed them such a measure of faith that they can resist every temptation to repine, and the measure of their trouble only faintly betokens the glorious measure of God-given grace. A beautiful illustration has been given of the Christian's calm amid the storm. In an Italian palace two pictures are seen together, one showing a lurid sky, a raging sea, and in the tempest a human face expressing hopelessness and wild despair. The other picture shows a similar storm-scene, but amid the waves rises a rock, whereon are grasses and flowers, and among the blossoms a dove sits quietly on her nest, unmoved by the raging hurricane. The heart that knows not how the Lord gives rest may despair amid life's storms; but those who are stayed on the Rock of Ages are kept in quiet confidence, in trustful peace.

Have you not met with people sometimes who seem quite cast down because the papers say a storm is coming over from America by-and-bye, or because "somebody says it is going to be a chilly sort of summer," or somebody else prophesies "it will be an extremely bitter winter?" There are people who ignore their present blessings, wondering however they can possibly get through the trouble they see ahead—the tempest that is coming by-and-bye.

Do not tremble because of the winds of the future; your Lord will be living and loving to-morrow, even as He lives and loves to-day, and no storm waits in your path but shall leave behind another record that your Heavenly Father is stronger than the tempest, nearer than the grief. We are travelling home to that beauteous shore where the chill winds never sweep, the hurricane makes no moan; yet, amid the rest of the painless Homeland, shall we not love the Lord a thousandfold more for every storm of earth through which He drew near to us, saying, "Fear not," and held us by the hand, and tenderly bore us through the hour that seemed the darkest? We shall glorify Him then that He has been to us again and again a covert from the blast; but let us not *wait* to glorify Him till the blast is over. Even now let us give Him thanks that all the winds of life—the rough ones as well as those that blow from the south—are of His appointing, Whose every purpose is for our eternal gain.

Troubled heart! remember the words of Luther to Melanchthon when tempests seemed threatening and winds were high: "Philip, let us read Psalm xlvi.: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we fear no evil.'" Set your thoughts not on the storm, but on the Love that rules the storm; then the winds of trouble shall no longer seem as sad and restless voices, but as an Æolian harp attuned to peace, to hope, to everlasting victory. M. S. H.



WHITE ROSES.

RED roses, in their hues of flame,
Are emblems perishing;
These, in their whiteness, I proclaim
More worth your cherishing!
The fragrant petals, stainless, cold,
A glow of deeper thought enfold.

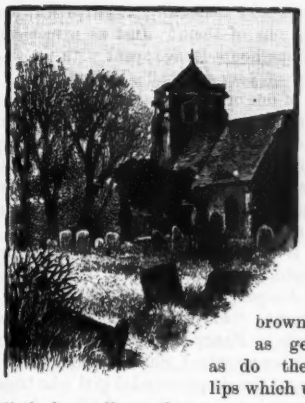
For, when the poet's rapture paints
In high beatitude,
The shining host of perfect saints
In worship's attitude,
Centred with yellow glory bright,
Th' eternal mystic rose is white.

Think not this pallid wreath would say
We love decreasingly:
'Tis but a symbol, fancy's way
To tell unceasingly
How high this human love aspires,
Burnt white in purifying fires!

G. E. TROUTBECK.

"FAITHFUL IN THE LEAST."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TUNE, 'ST. ELWYN'S.'"



"GOOD-BYE, dear Nancy! I do hope you will be happy and get on well."

Miss Dayrell's daintily gloved hand clasps the country girl's rough red fingers in hearty leave-taking, and her clear brown eyes smile with as genuine cordiality as do the sweet curving lips which utter that kindly little farewell speech.

"Thank you, miss!" replies Nancy, yet with a certain hesitancy in her voice, and pulling shut behind her the cottage door on the threshold of which they stand, that her grandfather, sitting at the fireside, may not feel the draught of the snow-chilled air.

"And you will try to be good, won't you, Nancy?" continues the young lady, truly solicitous for the welfare of this little village maid on the eve of quitting home for the first time, but herself not glib at the utterance of good advice. "In trifling things, you know, even more particularly than big ones, always try to be true, and honest, and conscientious, and *reliable*. Don't forget about 'Faithful in the *least*.' If you are careful about small duties, the greater ones will come easy to you."

"Yes, miss. Thank you, miss," responds Nancy dutifully, but rolling the hem of her blue-checked apron somewhat nervously as she speaks. A blush, commencing somewhere behind her ears, is slowly spreading over her plump cheeks, and threatens to immerse the many freckles round about her good-natured nose. "Please excuse my saying of it, miss!" she continues, in a desperate blurting fashion, as Miss Dayrell steps off on to the pebbled path; "but I know something as 'ud help me to remember!"

"What is it? Anything I can do?" asks Daisie Dayrell encouragingly.

"If you *would* be so kind, miss! And I ask your pardon if it ain't convenient. But it's—it's your likeness, miss!"

This great confession, this well-nigh unspeakable request fairly uttered, shy Nancy hangs her head, and zealously folds her apron-border into a bunch of tiny pleats.

"Do you really think that would be a help to you?"

"Oh, miss, I'm sure it would! I should hang it up in my little room, I should *love* it! And it would remind me so! Oh, miss, can you spare me one?"

"Yes, Nancy, you shall surely have it if you desire it so much. I never thought of it myself," returns Miss Dayrell, with frank readiness. "I will put one of my latest photos in an envelope and post it to you to-night, so that you shall have it to take away with you in the morning."

Nancy is too full of bliss at this prospect to be very eloquent in thanks—her attachment to the beautiful young lady of Larchwood Park is quite a romantic passion—but Daisie quite understands the glowing face and almost trembling lips with which Nancy follows her down the path.

"You *won't* forget, miss, will you?" pleads Nancy, as she opens the gate. "I know what lots of things you have to think about, but——"

"You may depend upon me to do as I said," Miss Dayrell assures her pleasantly. "Good-bye, Nancy; God bless you! You shall not be disappointed."

Long and radiant is Nancy's gaze after the graceful figure, whose pansy-purple mantle of rich silk plush limns it so clearly against the contrasting whiteness of the snow. It will live, embalmed in love, in her heart for many a future year.

At that very moment, the selfsame form of beauty is vividly present to the mental vision of a young man who briskly traverses the road to Larchwood Park from a different point. He is a tall, athletic, well-grown fellow, but his skin is boyishly fresh and clear, and the golden fringe upon his upper lip is in its tenderest youth. But, though barely yet "of age," Alan Paulet has been deeply in love for the space of half a year, and should you meet the glance of his grave dark-blue eyes, you would be disposed to judge that love, once awakened in the soul that lay behind, might never sleep again, or change, so steady is their light.

He is poor, she is rich. He has been occupying the position of temporary assistant to the busiest medical man in the neighbourhood, for his intellectual qualifications are in advance of his years; but she is the only child of one of the wealthiest magnates in the county. He does not dare to hope—such presumption is undreamed of by him—yet, so inconsistent is human nature, as he goes to-day to bid her in all probability a long farewell, and thank the family generally for the many kindnesses they have shown him during his sojourn in their vicinity, he is haunted by an intense desire to discover, if possible, the state of Miss Dayrell's feelings towards himself. He has almost fancied that there was sometimes a scarcely perceptible shade of *something* in her manner towards him, but he is afraid to think of it. If only he knew for certain, how he could live upon that knowledge, and work, and wait, and be cheerfully patient, until at some far distant time, crowned with well-won honour, he might venture into her presence once more and lay his laurels at her feet!

Daisie passes beneath the portico of Larchwood House ere ever Alan's footprints have dinted the

smooth snow between the pines, that stand like sombre sentinels on both sides of the road by which he approaches the mansion. On entering the drawing-room, so anxious is she to remember and fulfil her promise to Nancy that, straightway unlocking the door of a cabinet, she searches for some recent photographs of herself there bestowed. Only one, however, remains—such *souvenirs* rapidly become distributed among numerous acquaintances—but this she willingly allots to her humble friend, standing it, for the nonce, on a shelf of the overmantel, to be placed in a wrapper and despatched at an early opportunity.

Ten minutes later, as she is occupied with the finishing touches of her simple toilette, a servant taps at the door to say that Mr. Paulet is below, and that Mrs. Dayrell requests her daughter to entertain him for a few minutes, until she has concluded a letter upon which she is engaged. Mrs. Dayrell has taken a great fancy, in a patronising kind of way, to this pleasant, well-bred youth, and always treats him with both courtesy and cordiality, resting assured that the difference in their position will prove an effectual safeguard against any undesirable result from this benevolence.

The maid retires, and almost eagerly Daisie advances to her chamber door, a radiance of which she is herself unaware illuminating her frank face. But she suddenly turns back to substitute the knot of ribbon at her throat for another of more becoming hue, fastening among its loops, moreover, a cluster of sweet-breathed early violets which she had meant to keep longer fresh in water. But they may be sacrificed now!

Alan is standing before the overmantel when she enters, gazing so earnestly upon the photograph that he is unaware of her presence until she speaks, when he turns towards her, blushing more deeply than herself.

"I have come to say 'good-bye,'" he confesses, after a few commonplaces have passed between them. "Duty, or rather, opportunity, which is sometimes the same thing, calls me to London; and, I regret to say, at once."

Daisie is conscious that the pleasant, fire-brightened room suddenly appears cold and grey, and taking up the poker, she beats and splinters the already blazing coals as though they were to blame for that curious change. But her voice betrays only polite concern as she replies, "Really! This seems rather sudden, but I hope it will prove to your advantage."

"So do I, indeed," returns Alan, "or I could never reconcile myself to going. It is a chance I feel I should do positively wrong to lose. But I have been so happy here!"

Daisie still punishes the flaming Wallsend, apparently determined that not one lump bigger than a hazel-nut shall be permitted to exist. Meanwhile, the sensation as of a tightening band of iron so compresses her throat that speech has become impossible.

The ensuing silence grows embarrassing to both. Alan breaks it by observing with an inward trepidation which the remark itself does not seem to warrant, "That is an extremely pleasing portrait of yourself, Miss Dayrell!"

This helps Daisie. She does not guess that it is but the pilot of something more agitating. "Most people like it," she simply replies.

Alan's heart is beating like a steam-engine; he can scarcely hear his own faltering accents as he proceeds: "May I—would it be asking too great a favour if I were to beg one of them? Just as a memento of the many happy hours I have spent with—with—beneath the roof of your estimable parents!"

The footsteps of one of those worthy personages are already on the stairs, but Alan is not at the present moment impatient for the pleasure of her company. He holds his breath, and his hair grows damp about his brow as he waits for Daisie's reply to this request, which he has made up his mind shall be the testing-point of the interview.

The suspense is brief, but the seconds seem hours, both to the palpitating youth and the maiden who, still as is her drooping face, is fighting so hard a battle for the right. "Faithful in the least!" Her own parting words to Nancy echo through her brain. Shall she hold to her promise? Shall she show herself faithful, reliable, to the simple-minded girl who trusts her, and looks up to her as a pattern of all goodness? Or shall she disappoint—shall she fail?

"I cannot!" she replies. "It is promised."

The very effort by which her brave decision is uttered makes the words sound stiff and cold, and Alan, with a smothered pang, takes them for a repulse.

Mrs. Dayrell, half patronising, half motherly, just then bustles in. She expresses voluble regret on hearing that Mr. Paulet is about to leave the neighbourhood, asks many questions, and in short takes the remaining conversation entirely upon herself. For this Daisie is thankful. Yet, if she *could*, in a perfectly modest and proper fashion, with just warmth enough and not too much, have let Alan know how sorry she was to be unable to grant his request! But no opportunity occurs. The young man's stay is short, and his final leave-taking so distant and dignified that she blushes to think that she ever imagined him attracted to Larchwood House by anything but the agreeable society of her estimable parents. "Alas! how easily things go wrong!"

CHAPTER II.

"BUT I did right—I did *right!*" sobs Daisie to herself over and over again as she tosses on her tear-wet pillow at night. "It would have been cruel to disappoint poor Nancy, and unfair after giving her my word. Surely the keeping of one's promise, even with a little cottage girl and about such a trifle, must be one of those 'least' things in which *He* would have us faithful; and there is no knowing how it might have caused her to stumble if I had failed—she believes in me so, poor child! But it is hard; I would have liked him to have just one little thing—the thing he *cared* for—to remember me by! But surely the Lord notices and knows, and will not let me lose anything precious for my trying to do His will!"

This thought is a real comfort to Daisie in the months that follow, and calms her often when,

recalling many a look and word scarce noticed as they passed, she knows beyond a doubt that blue-eyed Alan was her lover, and that, though unwittingly, she met him with a sharp rebuff. She is sufficiently acquainted with the almost too great modesty and sensitiveness of his nature to feel assured that, even should they some day meet again, he will not, remembering the disparity of their station, make another advance towards her. She cannot, moreover, conceal from herself the fact that no other man can ever now be to her what Alan Paulet might have been. And yet, with it all, the Master whose voice speaking in her heart she had obeyed at such a cost is nearer and more real to her than ever before. Nothing draws us closer to Him than consciously suffering for His sake, which is a secret spring of purest joy in many a heart to whom happiness appears denied. It is a lovely experience that Daisie would not have chosen for any earthly bliss to be without.

The seasons circle round. The first year after Alan's departure seems terribly long; after that they grow more endurable. Towards the completion of the third twelve months from that vividly remembered farewell, another trouble comes to disturb the serenity of Daisie's life. A neighbouring baronet seeks to win her for his wife, and her parents strongly favour his suit.

"But I do not love him, mother!" Daisie pleads.

"You might, nevertheless, give him the chance of winning your love," returns Mrs. Dayrell. "Sir William is a most agreeable man, and a really good man, besides, or we should never wish to persuade you to encourage him. A more desirable match, from every point of view, you could not make."

"Except that I can never feel towards him as—as anyone he meant to make his wife ought."

"This is sheer nonsense, Daisie!" declares Mrs. Dayrell, not without vexation. "You cannot tell what your feelings might be if you came to know him better. Of course you do not love him now; no modest girl loves a man until she is wooed."

Daisie's white brow flushes deeply as she bends to inhale the fragrance of some hyacinths in the window.

"I know my own mind, mother," she answers firmly; for one who was "faithful in the least" can surely not prove unfaithful to the verities of her own heart and life. "It would not be kind of me to allow Sir William by deed or word to ask for what I am unable to give. It would not be right."

"I did not think you could be so unreasonably obstinate, Daisie!" is her mother's comment. "If you cared for someone else, I could sympathise with you; but this perversity is a totally different thing."

So for several weeks Daisie is argued with and coaxed, scolded and teased, remonstrated with and generally worried, with the most affectionate intentions in the world, till in desperation she is almost on the point of yielding, when deliverance appears in a most unlooked for, and in itself most unwelcome shape. And she is freed!

* * * * * *

It is more than five years since Alan Paulet passed out, with a heavy heart, from the hospitable door of Larchwood House, but since about eighteen months from that day, at which time his friend the doctor also left the neighbourhood, he has had no news of the Dayrells. But although the once-coveted portrait of sweet Daisie was denied him, her image stands an ever vivid picture in the most sacred chamber of his heart. Her innocent brown eyes often look out upon him with startling clearness in the brief pauses of his busy life; her frank, bright smile flashes when least he expects it, across his mental gaze. He is a successful man, prosperous, and rising in his profession, but as yet he has done nothing startling, nor seems likely to do so. The once dreamed of "laurels" he scarcely now desires; to honestly do his every-day duty is enough for him.

"I must ask you, Dr. Paulet, to step up-stairs and see my housemaid," a convalescent patient says to him one day. "She looked so ill this morning, and complained so of a pain at her side, that I sent her back to bed again."

Alan does as he is desired. The servant's room, furnished plainly enough, but neat and clean and cosy, as every maid's room should be, is sweet with the odour of spring violets—flowers that possess a strangely sad fascination for the young doctor; but not until he has carefully noted the sick girl's condition, and advised accordingly, will he turn his head to the spot whence the perfume comes.

They are standing, a bowl of fresh, deeply purple country violets, just in front of a little velvet portrait-frame. The likeness which it encloses seems somehow to have been evoked by their magical scent—those large, clear eyes, that tenderly curving mouth, that pretty gown, just a little old-fashioned now! For a few seconds Dr. Paulet's whole conscious being is in the past, and he stands once more with *her* in the dancing firelight glow. Then he comes to himself again.

"Is this a friend of yours?" he quietly asks, taking the frame in his hand.

"Ah, yes! A dear, dear friend," Nancy answers warmly. "'T was her as sent me those lovely flowers."

"From the country, I suppose? From her own garden?" A more direct question he cannot bring himself to utter.

"I don't know where they come from, sir, only that she sent them. Most likely a friend of hers sent them to her, for she lives in London herself, and ain't got a bit of garden of her own now, poor dear! But she always thinks of me when she gets anything like that, being both from the old home, as you may say."

That is all Alan hears on his first interview with Nancy, for he is almost as shy as of yore, and is afraid of betraying himself. But later on, when the girl visits his consulting-room, an intense desire to learn more of Daisie's story, during those hidden years, urges him, on more than one occasion, to set his patient talking on what is evidently to her a favourite theme.

Thus he draws from her the saddening tale of the Dayrells' misfortunes: how, some two years previously, Mr. Dayrell had embarked nearly all he possessed on a tempting speculation, which, proving a complete failure, brought the family to the verge of destitution. "And they had to leave Larchwood



"'I cannot. . . It is promised.'"—*p.* 710.

Park," the girl tells him, "and all their beautiful things, which was sold up, as it 's enough to make one cry to think of, and come to live in a little stuffy bit of a house in a little poky London street, which it's a wonder it didn't kill poor Mrs. Dayrell outright; and Miss Daisie she goes every day to teach at a school, as I'd sooner sweep mud in the streets than be plagued with a lot of unruly brats, but being that sweet in her manners no doubt tames them. For she is just as sweet as ever, and sweeter if she could be," concludes Nancy, with far more zeal than discretion, encouraged by the doctor's evident interest, "and I always will say that Sir What's-his-name showed his bad sense in throwing her over as he did."

Alan turns deadly pale. "Was—was Miss Dayrell engaged, then?" forces itself from his faltering lips.

"Not as anyone knew of for certain. Only he was backwards and forwards at the Park a deal. Some people do say that that was no fault of hers, and that she had gone so far as to declare she wouldn't have him was it ever so. But, la! you don't know what to believe. I only hope there wasn't anything between them, poor dear! that I do."

It is surely unnecessary to relate that before very long after becoming possessed of the foregoing information, Alan, with more confidence but not less delicacy than in the past, finds means of renewing his acquaintance with the Dayrells, and of ascertaining for himself whether Nancy reported truly concerning the inextinguishable sweetness of her adored Miss Daisie.

Humbled by adversity, the elder folks receive him as cordially, but far less condescendingly, than of yore, soothed and gratified to find the successful professional man as courteous and deferential in his manner towards them as had been the lonely *protégé* of the days of their prosperity.

And Daisie?

"Isn't it wonderful, Alan," she says, sitting one evening in the gloaming with her betrothed, "that the very thing which I fancied had made everything go wrong should be the means of bringing us

together after all? But for seeing that likeness you would never, in all probability, have heard anything about me, nor ever come across us again. London is so large, and we have not a single mutual friend."

"It is wonderful, dearest," Alan earnestly agrees. "It has been marvellous all through. Had you granted my request that day we parted, I might have been tempted to go farther and declare my love. Knowing your father as I do now, I can see what opposition and misery and conflict such a step would then have brought about. It has all been for the best—beautifully for the best. For those who are faithful to conscience, my Daisie, nothing can really go wrong."

JENNIE CHAPPELL.

THE DAY OF REST.

WHEN all the labour of the week is done,
The weary heart
Rejoices, that once more the morrow's sun
Brings rest in part,
That the tired limbs may pause a little while
From painful strife,
And God's refreshment may have room to smile
On busy life.

So, when the day of life is near its close,
And shades are grey,
The weary pilgrim waits with calm repose
For God's own day.
Though shadows deepen, yet no coward fear
Disturbs his breast;
The night of gloom but serves to bring him near
The Day of Rest.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

"YOU CANNOT DOUBLE NOTHING."

COLLECTORS of gifts or of promises of other aid for good causes have a difficult and delicate office. Theirs is not always pleasant and sunshiny work. They meet rebuffs and are chilled by icy negatives. But sometimes even an unwelcome visit may bring blessing in its train. A friend of missions on one occasion set out to enlist new subscribers, and a rich man was called upon. The pleas for the enterprise of carrying the Gospel far and wide through the nations of the earth were urged with a gentle force that seemed to compel attention. "I want to get you on my list, Mr. ——. Oh, if you would see your way to double what you have done for missions." The answer was a strange one, considering the signs of wealth on every side. "What you ask is not in my power." The riddle was too much for the applicant, and a brief silence ensued. It was broken by a humiliating explanation. "You are surprised. It sounds like a flimsy excuse. But it is nothing of the kind. The thing is impossible, for you cannot double nothing. I have been neglectful." And shame and regret were in the rich man's heart that he had received so much and returned so little. There should be a new departure. And the mission collector went away rejoicing that at last the sealed streams of liberality had begun to flow. Perhaps the contrite words, "You cannot double nothing," have a message. Many a beneficent institution is restrained in service by narrowness of means. It may one day be a joy to increase aid. Let not a beginning be delayed.

ARE WE CHRISTIANS?

A short while before he died (in 1524), Linacre, the first president of the College of Physicians, read the New Testament for the first time. So great was his astonishment at finding the rules of Christians widely at variance with their practice, that he threw the sacred volume from him in a passion, and exclaimed, "Either this is not the Gospel, or we are not Christians."

SANTA CLAUS IN SUMMER.

Some months since, we alluded in THE QUIVER to the beneficent winter work of Santa Claus in providing all kinds of comforts and delights for hospital patients, through the agency of Miss J. F. Charles. But it is reasonable that one so benevolent as "Santa Claus" would not be content to benefit people only when wintry winds are blowing. Miss Charles has been enabled to extend the good work carried on under his name into the days of summer. Many needy ones are thus sent to country and sea-side homes, and letters for convalescent institutions would be most welcome. "She is made a woman of," said a mother of her fragile little girl, to whom Santa Claus afforded change of air; and of a boy similarly

helped we read, "He looks quite a different boy, has got a place, and goes to work." What is wanted now is a "Santa Claus Home:" a place near London to take in "ineligibles"—that is, cases needing a certain amount of surgical nursing, and children under three years old; these would usually find it difficult to obtain admission at ordinary convalescent homes. To everyone out of health, the convalescent time is a trial, and needs special and watchful care. The workers in this society are most anxious to supply this need as concerns the poor, in the bracing air of the north side of London, where there are woods and open spaces to be reached without much expense and difficulty. Flowers and fruit for the sick can be well and wisely used by "Santa Claus;" but Miss Charles would like to supply the kind givers with addresses to which they can go *direct*. Several readers of THE QUIVER have helped this society, and we are asked to thank them heartily for their interest and aid.

"THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE."

The three latest volumes of the "Expositor's Bible" are now before us. An old friend and contributor, Dean Chadwick of Armagh, contributes the volume on the Book of Exodus, which, it is almost needless to say, is at once brilliant and thorough. The chapters dealing with the liberation of the Israelites, the Ten Plagues, and the Tables of the Law, are perhaps the most useful in the volume. The important historical period covered by the books of Judges and Ruth is dealt with by the Rev. R. A. Watson, the author of "Gospels of Yesterday." The moral lessons to be drawn from the stories of Samuel and Ruth are very clearly and very cleverly pointed out, as is also the true significance of the less-understood portions indicated. Here is one of Mr. Watson's admirable comments on the story of Ruth. He is speaking of the compact between Naomi and Ruth:—"The training in resoluteness, therefore, finds highest value and significance in view of the religious life. Those who live by habit and dependence in other matters are not prepared for the strenuous calling of faith, and many a one is kept from the freedom and joy of Christianity not because they are undesired, not because the call of Christ is unheeded, but for want of the power of decision, strength to go forward on a personal quest. Thousands are in the way of saying, 'Will you go to an evangelistic meeting? Then I will go. Will you take the Sacrament? Then I will. Will you teach in the Sunday-school? Then I will.' So far something is gained: there is a half-decision. But the spiritual life is sure at some point to demand more than this. Even Naomi's advice must not deter Ruth from taking the way to Jerusalem." Mr. Ball, the chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, had, perhaps, a more difficult task than either of his colleagues whose volumes we have already noticed, when he took up the Prophecies of Jeremiah. The preliminary sketch of the life and times of the prophet was almost necessary to a proper appreciation of the chapters which follow. Mr. Ball sometimes allows himself to be carried beyond the limits of exposition pure and simple, as, for instance, in the following passage, which will be read with mingled approval and dissent, as the views of the reader may prompt. It is an extract from his chapter on popular and true religion:—"A Christian country: where human beings die, year after year, in the unspeakable, unimaginable agonies of canine madness, and dogs are kept by the thousand in crowded cities, that the sacrifice to the fiend of selfishness and the mocking devil of vanity may never lack its victims! There is a more than Egyptian worship of Anubis in the silly infatuation which lavishes tenderness upon an unclean brute, and credulously invests instinct with the highest attributes of reason; and there is a worse than heathenish besottedness in the heart that can pamper a dog, and be utterly indifferent to the helplessness and the sufferings of the children of the poor. And people will go to church and hear what the preacher has to say, and 'think he said what he ought to have said,' or not, as the case may be, and return to their own settled habits of worldly living as a matter of course. Oh, yes! it is a Christian country—the name of Christ has been named in it for fifteen centuries past; and for that reason Christ will judge it." These three handy volumes do credit alike to their authors and to the splendid series of which they are the latest members.

A RESCUE THAT WAS A REWARD.

The really bright spots in war annals are not those that reflect the glory of a great victory, but the simple episodes that show the bond of human brotherhood recognised even in a time of strife. In the days of the war with France—when that country aided the revolted American Colonies—certain English sailors and soldiers were captured and interned in Normandy. These unfortunates found a friend. A French exile lately returned from America, M. Crevecœur by name, pitied their forlorn and miserable state, and set himself to alleviate it by every means in his power. They were his country's foes, but the fact did not make an end of the tie of kinship. With large-hearted love he helped them, and looked for no return. But God's providence girdles the globe, and Crevecœur was to reap as he had sown. It is a beautiful sequel. M. Crevecœur was a farmer, an author, and something of a diplomat. He knew Washington, and was esteemed by him. So when his visit to Normandy ended, he went back to New York accredited as French Consul. Bad news was awaiting him. His homestead had been burnt by Indians, and his young children were missing. Who can picture the new consul's despair? But a ray of light shot across the

XUM

clouds, and its source was his own kindness. To his intense joy and surprise, the bairns were safely returned to his care. The story of his goodness to the British prisoners had kindled gratitude in an English merchant's heart, and at great risk, and with no little hardship, he had, as a recompense, rescued M. Crevecœur's children. How often is there a totally unlooked-for return—full measure, heaped up—for the kind word and the generous deed!

sion surely lifelong. Some of the little invalids come from such poor homes, that a visit to the country entails clothing them afresh entirely. A lady much interested in this work of love records the case of a feeble little girl for whom the doctor said there could be no recovery without change of air. The mother believed the remedy impossible, but Mrs. Kerwin came to the rescue: the child was brought away from the crowded, smoky atmosphere of town, and bright eyes and rosy cheeks were the



CITY CHILDREN IN EPPING FOREST.

CITY CHILDREN IN EPPING FOREST.

"Can't we help the little ones back to health and happiness?" asks Mrs. Kerwin, of Leytonstone. Already she has proved this possible, and, as far as the kindly aid of sympathisers will permit, she continues to arrange for poor, weakly London children to come out for a never-to-be-forgotten holiday among soft grasses and wild flowers, waving leaves, and the music of the birds. Her first charge had been under treatment at the London Hospital, and was growing thinner every day. The doctors prescribed good food and country air, and after she had been two weeks with a kind Christian woman in fresh health-giving surroundings, her mother exclaimed, "Is it really you, Alice?"—so great was the change in the little one's looks. The children spend the summer days almost entirely out of doors, and every morning there is a simple Bible talk, which, with family prayers, must leave an impression surely lifelong. Some of the little invalids come from such poor homes, that a visit to the country entails clothing them afresh entirely. A lady much interested in this work of love records the case of a feeble little girl for whom the doctor said there could be no recovery without change of air. The mother believed the remedy impossible, but Mrs. Kerwin came to the rescue: the child was brought away from the crowded, smoky atmosphere of town, and bright eyes and rosy cheeks were the result. Milk and pudding and the doctoring of Nature had saved the little life.

RECAPTURE YOUR COLOURS!

There was once a regiment in India—the 64th Bengal Infantry—which had mutinied, and of which the colonel had, in consequence, been cashiered, and their colours had been taken from them. Not long after, a hundred men of this regiment volunteered, as a forlorn hope, for the dangerous task of climbing the wild hills and storming the strong fortress of Trukkee. "Soldiers of the 64th," said Sir Charles Napier to them, "your colours are on the top of yonder hill." So it is that we are permitted by the grace of God, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

IN DISTANT LANDS.

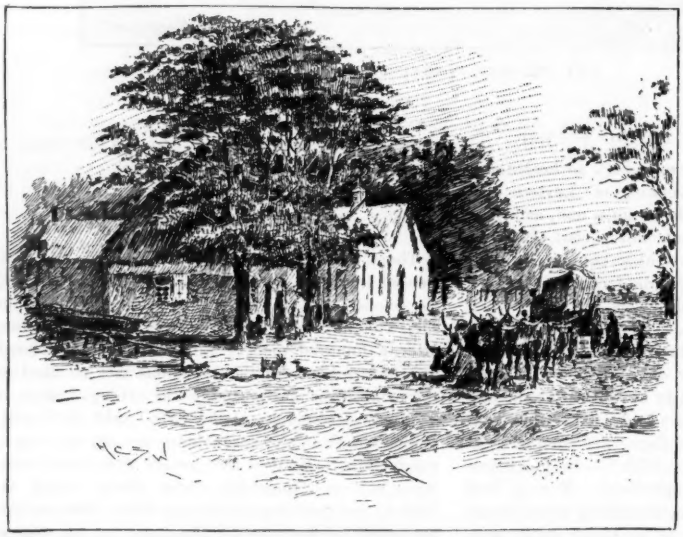
How far are Christian missions really successful? The question has often been asked, and as often answered contemptuously by prejudiced people. Let any who are anxious to see the true state of the case turn to Mr. Robert Young's book on "The Success of Christian Missions," just issued by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. The testimonies he has gathered as to the value and influence of the mission works all over the heathen world ought to be sufficient to convince the most sceptical and re-assure the most despondent. One great method of arousing interest in foreign missions is foreign travel, and, failing that, reading the reports of travellers. So we turn next with special interest to the Rev. Andrew Russell's "Glimpses of Eastern Cities" (Nisbet and Co.), in which he gives us pleasant reminiscences of Jerusalem, Damascus, Egypt, Palestine, and Ephesus, in a style that ought to make the book valuable to teachers. From the same publishers we have received the latest volume of the "Men of the Bible" series, in which "the Lives and Times of the Minor Prophets" are dealt with by Archdeacon Farrar. It is hardly necessary to say the work is thoroughly as well as popularly done. Are we not too apt to pass over the writings of these prophets whom we are taught to call "minor?" And yet there are some much-needed lessons to be learned from their books, and it will be easier to learn them with Archdeacon Farrar's book to show us the circumstances under which the prophecies were uttered. Two stories are before us at the same time—each appealing largely to young readers. First comes Mrs. Hugh Bell's "Will o' the Wisp" (Longmans), an admirably told story whose hero is indeed well described by the title. And the other story is Mrs. Molesworth's charming "Little Mother Bunch" (Cassell), a beautiful study of child-life that ought to please both children and their older friends.

FOR BUSY MEN.

At the battle of Edgehill, brave Lord Lindsay, with his son Lord Willoughby, headed the Royal foot-guards. Immediately before charging, he prayed in these words: "O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." Prayer has been defined as "thinking to God," and this can be done in all places and in our busiest moments.

DELAY WAS NOT DEFEAT.

A touching instance of woman's faith winning the quality of prescience is found in the story of the first meeting of missionaries and converts round the Table of the Lord at Kuruman. All had seemed dark for so many years. Not a single Bechuana came into the Christian fold. Even the true-hearted Moffat began to question if indeed he was sent of God to South Africa. But his wife was sure that delay was not defeat. A friend in England wrote to ask if there was any special gift that would be welcomed. If so, it should go out. Ten years of seed-sowing and no hint of harvest! yet Mary Moffat saw afar off the fulfilling of the promise, "Ye shall reap if ye faint not," and she returned the answer, "Send us a communion-service; we shall want it some day." There is a dramatic unity in the little tale of triumphant faith. By-and-bye dead souls were quickened. The day of ingathering had dawned. Six selected candidates received baptism, and in due course assembled with their friends and teachers to remember Christ in the breaking of bread. A few hours before, an overdue box had reached the station. Its contents were a communion-service. They



DR. MOFFAT'S HOUSE AND CHURCH AT KURUMAN.

had arrived not a week too early, and on the other hand not a day too late. And there was living proof now that zeal in God's service cannot go unrewarded. The age of miracles is past. Perhaps. But not the years in which a sunny confidence may pierce the prevailing gloom of disappointment, and in all humility — pleading but the Word — challenge Heaven for the blessing, and in that meek faith receive it.

MORE VALUABLE THAN MONEY.

It is often said that "time is money," but there are many things far more valuable than money. "Some years ago," says Sir John Lubbock, "I paid a visit to the principal lake-villages of Switzerland in company with a distinguished archæologist, M. Morlot. To my surprise, I found that his whole income was £100 a year, part of which, moreover, he spent in making a small museum. I asked him whether he contemplated accepting any post or office, but he said certainly not. He valued his leisure and opportunities as priceless possessions far more than silver or gold, and *would not waste any of his time* in making money."



MAKING A RAMBLE USEFUL.

AN HISTORICAL APPLICATION.

I think that the following historical application of Fuller's is most apt:—"The English ambassador, some years since, prevailed so far with the Turkish Emperor as to persuade him to hear some of our English music, from which (as from other liberal sciences) both he and his nation were naturally averse. But it happened that the musicians were so long in tuning their instruments, that the great Turk, distasting their tediousness, went away in discontent, before their music began. I am afraid that the differences and dissensions betwixt Christian Churches (being so long in reconciling their discords) will breed in pagans such a disrelish of our religion, as they will not be invited to attend thereunto."

HELP FOR YOUNG WORKWOMEN.

In connection with the "Old Welcome," Cross Key Square, and also the "New Welcome," Jewin Street, dinner and tea-hour services are held weekly in many workrooms. Christian ladies and City missionaries carry the message of salvation again and again to City workrooms, and frequently, through the kindness of country friends, such visits are accompanied by gifts of flowers. The texts which are linked with the bouquets are seen again on the walls, the gas-branches, and the lines which hold the work. Some of the young lives toiling in the City are greatly cheered at this time of the year by invitations to pleasant country gardens, where the wants of soul and body have been lovingly and wisely helped. Girls' classes and Y.W.C.A. gatherings in country places frequently arrange picnics and rambles during the finer weather. Very often such rambles, resulting in beautiful leaves, flowers, blackberries, etc., might minister pleasure to their less favoured sisters. Many are the ways in which cheer and gladness can be devised for London's work-girls; one dear old lady, an invalid and bedridden, sent them on her seventy-ninth birthday seventy-nine pincushions with texts attached.

THE INCREASING INTERCOURSE BETWEEN HINDUS AND EUROPEANS.

Every year seems to increase the number of cold-weather visitors to our great Indian dependency. We English are learning to take more and more interest in our Hindu brothers, and they, on their part, seem to be increasingly bent on familiarising themselves with our manners and methods. Caste remains a mighty power still, but even caste rules have to be modified when they are found to conflict with the wishes of any large section of the better-

circumstanced people. The crossing of "the black water," which had to be so seriously discussed and prepared for when undertaken by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, is becoming a matter of course, and the rajah's precaution in bringing with him a Brahman cook to save his caste has now been conveniently discovered to be unnecessary. Where there's a will it has been found that there is a way, even in the matter of caste. Doubtless the fathers of the Hindus of to-day would have been shocked had they had prophetic insight to see what their sons were going to do. But had they been in their sons' places they would probably have done the very same. All things considered, we may hope that the movements in the social condition of India are for good. That there should be no evil admixture with the good is of course far too much to expect. The British methods of government, which some of the Indians wish to adopt, and the British customs into which others desire to be initiated, are far from being perfect in themselves, still further from being perfectly suitable for those not to the manner born. A petty rajah of one of the Indian States, some time ago, wishing to become acquainted with the home life of the Westerns, and to free himself from the thraldom of the social shackles of Hinduism, appealed to a well-known American missionary for help. The American at once offered to do what he could, and it was arranged that the rajah and rani should become for awhile the missionary's guests. While staying at this gentleman's house, the rajah was of course invited to various dinners in the station, many of which were given, indeed, in his honour. One day the sister of the missionary, who, like almost all American clergymen, was an abstainer, was shocked to find the rani hopelessly intoxicated. The rajah explained that his wife, hearing his accounts of the wines he had tasted when out visiting among the British residents, had expressed a strong desire to taste them, and, since their host's teetotal table did not furnish the opportunity, he had quietly introduced it into their own apartments, with this sad result.

A SWEET SINGER.

When Dr. Horatius Bonar died, it was well known that there were not a few hymns and poems of his scattered about different hymn-books and other publications which had never been included in any one of his volumes of verse. His son has now collected them under the pleasing title, "Until the Day Break, and Other Hymns and Poems Left Behind." We dare not begin quoting from the volume, for it would be difficult to select any specimen that would fall within the limits of our space; but the verses are characterised by all the fervour and intensity of the earlier writings of the author of "I heard the voice of Jesus say." Doubtless not a few of our readers will be glad to welcome these last songs from their old friend.

Dr. Bonar was not the only Scottish teacher whom death took from us during last year. He, indeed, fell asleep in a ripe old age; but Professor Elmslie was cut down at what seemed to be the beginning of a great career. The Memoir and Sermons which Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton (who are also the publishers of "Until the Day Break") have sent us, include an admirable sketch of Dr. Elmslie's brief career, together with a very representative selection from his sermons and other writings, which only tend to deepen in our minds the sense of the loss we have suffered in the removal of this able young thinker and teacher. Yet another memorial volume; this time the subject is a lady. "Life and its Author: an Essay in Verse," by Ella Haggard, is the volume before us, in which is represented the poem from which the volume takes its title, together with a very feeling little memoir by the author's distinguished son, Mr. H. Rider Haggard. Dr. Pakenham Walsh, Bishop of Ossory (a former contributor to our own pages), has gathered into a volume entitled "Voices of the Psalms" (Hodder and Stoughton) a series of papers originally prepared for use in a Bible-class. They are admirably calculated to aid leaders of such classes elsewhere by their suggestive and helpful thoughts, and we heartily commend the volume to the attention of all preachers and class-leaders. From the same publishers comes "Veni Creator," in which the Rev. H. C. G. Moule gives us his thoughts on the person and work of the Holy Spirit of Promise. No word of ours is needed to emphasise the importance of his subject; we can only draw the attention of our readers to his work, which seems to us admirably fitted to impress the great lessons surrounding this marvellous subject.

"HE THAT TOUCHETH PITCH SHALL BE DEFILED THEREWITH" (Ecclus. xii. 1).

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, tells us of a Christian convert who was persuaded by his friends to go to a gladiatorial spectacle. He went, but would not open his eyes, till a shout from the multitude caused him to do so involuntarily, and "so soon as he saw the blood, he drank down savageness; nor turned away, but fixed his eyes, drinking in phrensy and madness, and was delighted with that guilty fighting and intoxicated with the bloody pastime. Nor was he the man he came, but one of the throng he came unto; yea, a true associate of them that brought him thither." "Be not deceived: evil company doth corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. xv. 33, Revised Version).

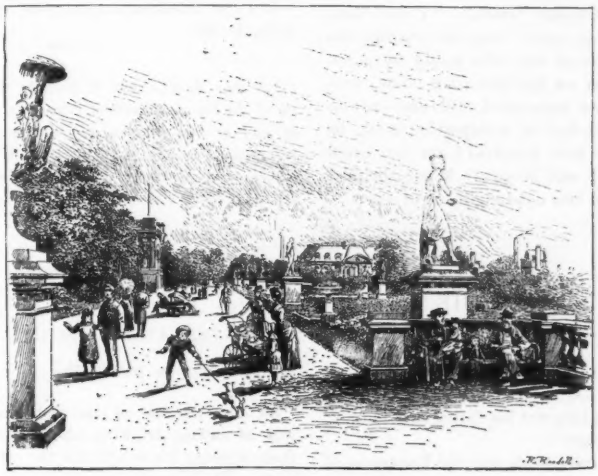
RELIABLE PEOPLE.

A man said, "I have a very reliable clock, for when it points at two, it always strikes twelve, and then I know it's half-past seven o'clock." There are people equally reliable. What a relief to turn from them to Him "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

XUM

"I AM GLAD TO BE ALIVE."

Not long ago, when returning from a short but very rough voyage, as we were getting into harbour I heard two ladies grumbling at the accommodation afforded by the hotel in the town we had just left. Never having been more comfortable anywhere, it astonished me to hear these fastidious persons saying that the cooking was bad, the attendance not good, and that the charges were excessive. I moved away to another part of the deck, where two old gentlemen were talking about the rough night we had passed. One, a Frenchman, observed to the other in broken English, "Truly, monsieur, I am much thankful to be alive." Was not this old gentleman more philosophical, not to say religious, than the ladies who were thankless for their preservation while they only thought of the few rose-leaves in their couches that had got crumpled?



THE PEOPLE'S PARK, HALIFAX.

(From a Photograph by Messrs. Frith & Co., Reigate.)

"FOR THE LORD'S BENEFITS."

It is a pleasant and comely thing to see in subscription lists the significant words, "A Thank-offering," or "A mite of acknowledgment for mercies received." Would that such lines occurred more frequently! It was this spirit of gratitude that gave Halifax its public park. Sir Francis Crossley, the first baronet, has himself related how it came about. On a glorious September day he stood in the midst of the magnificent scenery of the White Mountains, in America. Companions were with him, and they turned into the hotel for a cup of tea. Sir Francis felt the spell of the rare beauty of the spot laid with almost painful power upon his soul. He did not go into the crowded public-room with his friends. Instead he went on a few paces alone. And the question came, "What shall I render to my Lord for all His benefits to me?" Swiftly, as if some voice replied, his mind had the answer. Away in Yorkshire were thousands of pale-faced toilers to whom the loveliness of nature was an idle phrase, and freedom to stroll in green glades a strange thing. Some of them were helping to increase his wealth. They should reap advantage from the well-spring of gratitude that was leaping into happy life in his heart. He went home and prayed about it, and rose up resolved, and henceforth had a plain project before him. And the working people of Halifax had soon to thank Sir Francis Crossley for a large, beautiful, and well-arranged park—a lung to their great city. If in their own station and degree other holiday-makers, enjoying earth's beauty-spots, would shape thankfulness to a pattern of help for the less fortunate, how often singing would replace sighing in our midst!

"YE SHALL REAP IF YE FAINT NOT."

It is said by some that people nowadays have a taste for the exciting and adventurous. Those with inclinations in this direction will find plenty of interest and romantic-seeming truth in the annals of the London City Mission, which possesses heroes worthy to stand by the side of many exalted in narrative and song. It wants nerve, courage, and faith to stand up for the Gospel in the face of ridicule, opposition, and threats; it wants more, perhaps, to go in and out of homes where the air is heavy with impurities, and the absence of cleanliness brings much that is revolting in its train. Yet

if precious souls be led to the Redeemer, the disciple of Jesus counts not the cost, but ascribes to Him the glory, and goes patiently forward bearing light into dark places in His name. A missionary told lately of much difficulty and discouragement when he first began his labours, a couple of bulldogs on one occasion being brought into his mission-hall, causing him some natural disquiet as he continued the service. But one day one of the roughest men in the neighbourhood called to ask him to take his pledge, and though the man's own wife said, "He 's fooling you, sir," it turned out that the man's change of character was sincere, and much blessing was experienced by him whom many would have considered a hopeless wreck. "I will kick you out if you come in here!" was the greeting the missionary received from one who would have nothing to do with him on his first visit. But, with kindly tact, the visitor persevered, till one day, as he stood by the sick-bed of a departing soul, he heard the cry, "Oh! how thankful I am you cared for me through all I said to you! What should I have done now if you had not taught me of Jesus?"

"THE QUIVER" WAIFS FUND.

List of contributions received from April 23rd up to and including May 23rd, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

A Grown-Up Susie, 5s.; G. J., Birmingham, 1s.; A Glasgow Mother, 1s.; H. Nicholson, Salisbury, 1s.; Lillie Allen, South Shields, 8s.; Thankful and Hopeful, Cockermouth, 2s.; For Jesus' Sake, Glasgow, £1; J. J. E., Govan (31st donation), 5s.; G. L., London, 10s.; Two Wellwishers, Southampton, 3s. 6d.

"THE QUIVER" FREE GRANTS FUND.

L. C. D., Beckenham, 5s.; G. W. Boyce, Wookey Hole, 4s. 6d.

*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help movements referred to in the pages of this Magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

97. In what way are we to understand Christ's words that "if a man hate not his father and mother, he cannot be My disciple"?

98. What example have we in the Old Testament of such a sacrifice for God?

99. What particular warning does Christ give to those who would be His disciples?

100. In what words does Jesus set forth the great blessing of true repentance?

101. Quote a passage from the Old Testament in which the sinner is likened to a lost sheep.

102. In what way does a sheep illustrate the sinner?

103. What is the special characteristic of the life of the Prodigal Son?

104. What words of the Prodigal show that we must look upon sin against our fellow-men as also sin against God?

105. In the Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver, of what are we reminded?

106. What words of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus tell us of the way in which sin separates us from God?

107. In what way are riches a hindrance to the spiritual life?

108. What lesson ought we to learn from the Parables of the Unjust Steward and the Rich Man and Lazarus?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 640.

85. "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (St. Luke xii. 15, and iv. 4.)

86. The parable of the rich fool, whose thought was of eating, drinking, and taking his ease, rather than of using his wealth for the benefit of his fellow-man. (St. Luke xii. 16—22.)

87. Treasure in Heaven — peace with God. (St. Luke xii. 21—33.)

88. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (St. Luke xii. 32; see also St. Matt. xiii. 43.)

89. "Seek not ye what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind." (St. Luke xii. 29; St. James i. 6.)

90. That they gave up all for Christ's sake. (Acts ii. 45.)

91. By seeing the miracles which He performed. (St. John iii. 2.)

92. Healing woman with spirit of infirmity—healing man with the dropsy — healing man with withered hand. (St. Luke xiii. 11—13; xiv. 2—4; St. Matt. xii. 10—13.)

93. That works of charity and necessity are lawful and right on the Sabbath. (St. Matt. xii. 1—12; St. Luke xiii. 15—16, and xiv. 5.)

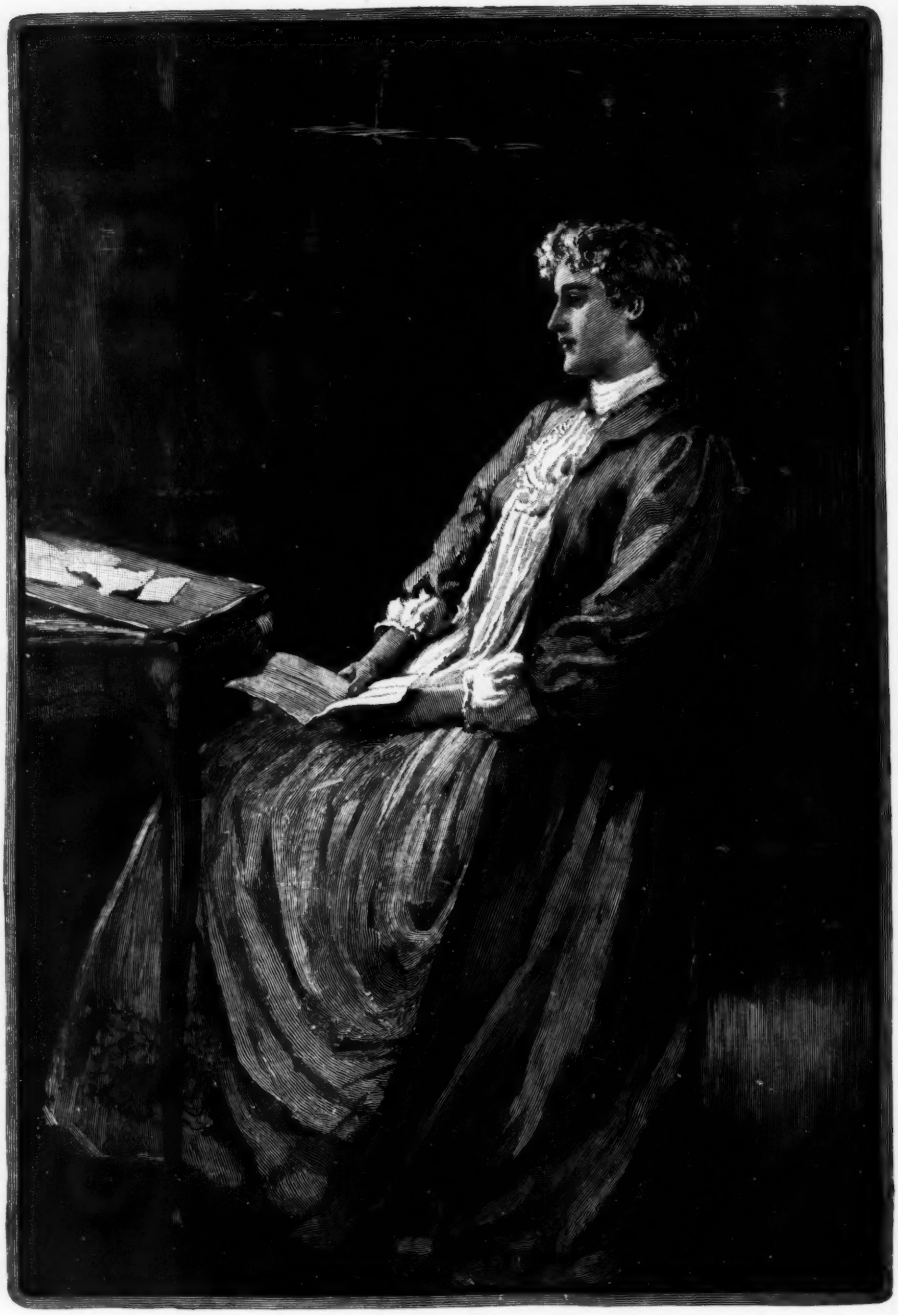
94. That while men acknowledge the blessedness of Heaven, they are too ready to make any excuse for not listening to God's call. (St. Luke xiv. 15, 16—20.)

95. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." (Prov. i. 28; St. Luke xiv. 24.)

96. That we should seek the Lord while He may be found. (Is. lv. 6; St. Luke xiii. 25—27.)



UNIV. OF MICH.



(*Drawn by* PERCY TARRANT.)

A HAPPY MEMORY.

(*See p.* 726.)

THEIR BRIGHT EXAMPLE; OR, HALF-HOURS WITH THE WORTHIES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

BY TH REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S. EDIN., ETC. ETC.

II.—JONATHAN EDWARDS.



"Three times a day he resorts to secret prayer."—*p.* 725.

THERE are few men to whom bigger adjectives have been applied than Jonathan Edwards. Robert Hall, in the glow of his enthusiasm, called him "the greatest of the sons of men." Sir James Mackintosh said of him that "his power of subtle argument was perhaps unmatched, certainly unsurpassed among men, and was joined, as in some of the ancient mystics, with a character which raised his piety to fervour." Coleridge's copy of the "Freedom of the Will" showed his appreciation in his usual way, by the number and quality of his manuscript comments written on the margin. Dr. Chalmers recommended this book to his students "more strenuously than any other book of human composition."

But Edwards was not only a philosopher, he was an evangelist and a saint. The combination was very remarkable. How few philosophers are evangelists; how few evangelists are philosophers! Never man sought more earnestly to win souls than Edwards. And as he sought, so he succeeded. The

two great revivals in the American Northampton under his ministry were times when the great Reaper seemed to swing his sickle to its utmost compass, and leave hardly a stalk unreaped. As to his saintliness, it was written on his very countenance. It was written, moreover, in the seventy "resolutions" which he framed for himself from time to time for the guidance of his life. And it was written on a more enduring tablet—written on his life; written on full fifty years of holy diligence and blameless devotion to the service of God and the service of man; a half-century that left a memory the fragrance of which seems eternal. His soul was penetrated through and through by the faith of Christ and kindred graces. No man was ever enabled to discipline his spirit more thoroughly after the Christian standard, or to bring every thought more effectually into captivity to Christ.

The power of Edwards in the region of abstract thinking is the more remarkable if we consider the condition of the colony during his life. His great-grandfather had emigrated to New England in 1640, just twenty years after the earliest of the Puritan settlers. When he himself was born, it was but eighty-three years since the Pilgrim Fathers had landed at Plymouth, and it was a much shorter time since any part of the colony had begun to assume the aspect of a settled country. There were men living on the banks of the Connecticut whose childhood had been haunted by the vision of the Red Indian and his tomahawk, and who had shuddered as, with his fierce war-cry, he swooped from the woods and dashed at the white man's settlement. The first hard struggle of emigrants in a new country for the bare necessaries of life was, indeed, past; but that second stage of civilisation had hardly begun when the choicer spirits of a community can be set free from daily toil, either to explore the depths of philosophy, or to cultivate the graces of art, or to bring to light the secrets of science.

The college at which he studied was in its infancy, and in very untoward and unpromising circumstances, for a controversy was raging among four neighbouring towns as to which of them it was to be placed in. When Edwards entered, fourteen students were at one place, thirteen at another, and four at a third. There was little indeed to smile on the birth of the celebrated Yale College, which has thrown so much lustre on the town of Newhaven, the State of Connecticut, and New England generally. Of literary and philosophical society there was scarcely a trace in the country; libraries were hardly known, and Edwards was indebted to Dr. John Erskine, of Edinburgh, and others, for such books as served to show what men were thinking at home. The only opportunity he ever had of contact with a Christian philosopher of the first order was during the time (1728 to 1731) when Bishop Berkeley was residing in Rhode Island, in furtherance of his scheme for the erection of a colonial college in Bermuda. But in 1728 Edwards was only twenty-five; he had but recently entered on his ministerial charge, and there is no evidence that he and Berkeley ever met. As pastor of a considerable congregation in a country town, and as father of a large family, his hands and his heart were full of work. Sometimes he was in great difficulty and anxiety; even the glorious awakenings among his people brought anxieties and troubles. His views on the sacredness of the Holy Communion brought him into collision with his people, and the collision ended in his being dismissed from his charge at Northampton in 1750, and in his spending the last few years of his life at Stockbridge as a missionary among the Indians. Finally, when at last, through the premature death of his son-in-law, Mr. Burr, he obtained a position of learned leisure, as president of what is now known as Princeton College, New Jersey, a single month ended his incumbency; he fell a victim to small-pox. There seemed little scope here for a man attaining eminence as a philosopher, least of all during the years spent among the barbarians; and yet it was at this very time that his greatest work, "On the Freedom of the Will," was written. It was wonderful how the philosopher and the missionary contrived to get on so well together.

On the other hand, certain providential circumstances in his lot were much in his favour. His great-great-grandfather, and earliest known ancestor, a native of Wales, was a clergyman in London in the days of Queen Elizabeth. His great-grandfather and his grandfather were successful merchants in Hartford, New England, and were both men of high character. His father, Timothy Edwards, was minister at Windsor, on the banks of the Connecticut, for sixty years; while his mother, Esther Stoddart, a woman of queenly mien, was the daughter of a celebrated minister, Solomon Stoddart, of Northampton. It thus happened that there mingled in his veins Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and New England blood.

But what was of more significance, all his more immediate relatives were singularly like-minded in matters of religion. Their character was of the same type: the grand old Puritan creed at its base, and resting on this the intense convictions of Puritanism—its all-conquering faith, its omnipotent discipline, its sublime subjection of the flesh to the spirit. Everything conspired to the production of that calm, orderly, devout character which was so conspicuous in Edwards. There was so little of original sin *apparent* in him, that what was pleasantly said of Dr. Marsh, of Beckenham, might have been said of him—he must have been born before the Fall. Rather, we should say, that when the breath of the Spirit entered, bone had so gathered to bone and sinew to sinew, that nothing was needed but the vivifying power.

And when the decisive change took place, the leading view which dominated everything was THE EXCELLENCY OF GOD. A blessed experience, truly! In his very boyhood he tells of his seeing "the majesty and grace of God wonderfully combined; majesty and meekness joined together; a sweet, gentle majesty, and also a majestic sweetness; an awful sweetness, a high, and great, and awful gentleness." He tells us how at such times the appearance of everything was altered: God's excellency, His purity and love, seemed to appear

in everything—in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature. "I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time, and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the meantime singing forth with a low voice my contemplations of the Creator and the Redeemer. And scarce anything among all the works of nature was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so terrible to me."

This delight in the contemplation of the Father extended to the person of the Word made flesh. "Pure and humble, holy and heavenly, Christ appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be in everything a complete Christian, and conformed to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live in all things according to the sweet, pure, and blessed rules of the Gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things, which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry how I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God and follower of Christ."

With this view he began at about the age of eighteen (1722) to draw out that memorable series of resolutions to which we have already referred. The first of these is the keynote of the whole seventy. "*Resolved*, that *I will do whatsoever* I think to be most to the glory of God and my own good profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. *Resolved*, to do whatever I think to be my *duty*, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. *Resolved*, so to do, whatsoever difficulties I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever."

Surely a right noble resolution for a young man beginning life, with all the siren sisters calling him to their islands of seeming bliss.

And the second is like unto the first. "*Resolved*, to be continually endeavouring to find out some new contrivance and invention to promote the fore-mentioned things."

Wise as well as good! Not everyone that desires the first sees the need of the second. Yet how can we reach the first without the second? How can we constantly do our duty—our irksome, painful, almost impossible duty as it often appears—unless we are in the frame and under the living influences that *dispose* us to it? The science of godly living is, in point of fact, the science that shows us how to be as much as possible under the full influence of all that disposes and encourages us to do the will of God.

"*Resolved*, to live with all my might, while I do live." Well done, good and faithful servant! There shall be none of thy life spent in aimless dreaming, or halting between two opinions, or see-sawing between the flesh and the spirit. When thou hast settled what to live for, the whole machinery of soul and body shall be set to work to realise it. There shall be no discharge in that war!

Let us add a few more, without note or comment.

"*Resolved*, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

"*Resolved*, to endeavour to the utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented and easy, compassionate and generous, humble and meek, submissive and obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable, patient, moderate, forgiving and sincere temper, and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to do; and to examine strictly at the end of every week whether I have so done."

"*Resolved*, when I am most conscious of provocation to ill-nature and anger, that I will strive most to feel and act good-naturedly, yea, at such times to manifest good-nature, though I think that in other respects it would be disadvantageous, and so as would be imprudent at other times."

"*Resolved*, whenever my feelings begin to appear in the least out of order, when I am conscious of the least uneasiness within, or the least irregularity without, I will then subject myself to the strictest examination."

"*Resolved*, that I will endeavour always to keep a benign aspect and air of acting and speaking in all places and in all companies, except it should so happen that duty requires otherwise."

"Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak."

Can there be any doubt what this man was aiming at? His burning desire was that every faculty and force of his soul should be in order, in constant order, controlled by the highest of them, reason and conscience, enlightened by the Word and directed by the Spirit of God. Duty has ever a sublime sacredness in his eyes, and it is not only a burning sin and shame to come short of it, it is a sin and a shame to neglect anything that disposes one to it. Every avenue to the heart is guarded, and every help to goodness is applied. Three times a day he resorts to secret prayer. On the Lord's Day he is specially careful to repel every thought that will withdraw his soul from Heaven, or cool its spiritual ardour. His continual thought is, "Thou God seest me."

Edwards began his ministry at the age of twenty-three, as colleague to his grandfather at Northampton in Massachusetts. It is to this day but a small town of one considerable street, with straggling villas and cottages dotting the roads in the neighbourhood. It is a place of great beauty; the fine river Connecticut, at the distance of little more than a mile, brightens a meadow of remarkable fertility; on the opposite bank the wooded heights of Mount Holyoke close in the view with a noble sky-line; while Northampton, on the right bank, nestles among the gentler rising grounds that form the western ramparts of the valley.

Respect for the memory of Edwards carried the present writer some years ago to Northampton, and as he strolled along the pleasant lanes that traverse the woods and fields, he found it not difficult to fancy the tall slender figure, six feet one, with the thin pale face, moving silently along, pausing here and there to note in his little book some train of thought that had occurred to him, to be amplified in the house into

the head of a sermon, or into a section of one of those treatises which posterity will not readily let die.

Of the two memorable awakenings that occurred under his ministry, Edwards has himself given the history in his "Narrative of Surprising Conversions." The first of the two followed the delivery of some powerful sermons on the way of salvation, among others one on "Justification by Faith Alone." A few marked cases of conversion were the first-fruit. By-and-bye, the interest of the people in religion became universal. There was scarcely an individual in the town, whether young or old, who remained unconcerned. This was true alike of the gayest, the most licentious, the most ungodly. Northampton seemed full of the presence of God. The interest spread to neighbouring places; in no fewer than twenty-seven there was something similar. The number of persons in Northampton who appeared to undergo a great change was three hundred.

With the commencement of the second revival Mr. Whitefield had much to do. In this case, the movement was limited chiefly to the young, and the results, though striking, were not so remarkable. Mr. Edwards deemed it a singularly pure movement in its first stages, but it degenerated towards the end, chiefly by the rushing in of strangers who disturbed the movement, and brought in not a few elements of mischief.

The controversy that arose between Edwards and his people, and finally drove him from Northampton, was caused by his coming to see that his grandfather's (Stoddart's) view of the Lord's Supper was erroneous. Mr. Stoddart had taught that it was or might be a converting ordinance; but Edwards came to a clear conviction that only converted persons ought to be communicants; and this the congregation did not like. And the result was, that they came to the pastor who had been the means of bringing such transcendent blessing to the place, and besought him to depart out of their coasts. And no other flock seemed to care to have him. It is one of the most humbling chapters of Christian history. For six years he laboured among the Indians at Stockbridge, preaching to them through an interpreter—with what result we hardly know. The leisure he enjoyed was spent (as Luther spent his in the castle of Wartburg, translating the Bible) in writing books. At last, in February, 1758, he was appointed president of what was then called Nassau Hall, in New Jersey, afterwards Princeton College. As it was a literary college and not a theological institution, he was very unwilling to accept the office, but at last he yielded. Hardly had he been inducted, when, having been inoculated with small-pox (then raging in the district), in accordance with the medical practice then prevalent, he fell a victim to the endeavour to save him. He died on the 22nd of March, 1758. It is remarkable that his aged father: his son-in-law, Aaron Burr: his daughter, Mrs. Burr: he himself, and his much-loved wife, all died in the course of the year, between September, 1757, and October, 1758.

The body of Edwards was laid in the cemetery at Princeton, in the most honoured and frequented of a row of tombs where the remains of the successive presidents of the college have been deposited. In the burial-ground of Northampton you come on the tombs of some of his people. His daughter Jerusha was to have been married to holy David Brainerd, but death came between them. On one slab of marble you read, "Sacred to the memory of the Rev. David Brainerd, the faithful and laborious missionary to the Stockbridge, Delaware, and Susquehannah tribes of Indians, who died in this town Oct. 10, 1747, ætat. thirty-two." Contiguous is a slab that bears that "Jerusha, daughter of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, was born April 26, 1730, died Feb. 14, 1747. [N.S., 1748.] 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.'"

A HAPPY MEMORY.

I HAD not hoped for this. He writes,
In words whose charm through life shall last,
A grateful letter that unites
The present with a vanished past!
An act of kindness long ago
I did for him, and straight forgot,
Had strength and grace from God to grow
To cheer the darkness of his lot—
And this dear letter thanking me
Recalls a happy memory!

O precious is the task we take,
Though but in feeble human hands,
For simple love and mercy's sake!
Upon the seas, in distant lands,
Or by the hearth, glad hearts may yearn
With gratitude for word or deed!
And to the sower may return
Some flower of beauty for the seed
Dropped and forgotten—as to me
Comes back this happy memory!

I sit and muse upon the past
While twilight shadows gather round—
The bread upon the waters cast,
After these many days is found!
In joy and thankfulness to-night
My prayer would rise to Heaven above:
O God, may other lives be bright;
I ask alone Thy grace of love—
That, looking back, my life may be
Henceforth a happy memory!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

IN THE SECOND PLACE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I," "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," "ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.



THE carriages had gone by another road, and Hope and Rossiter were after all the first of the party from Beeches to arrive at the *rendezvous*. The sportsmen were all standing about when Rossiter galloped lightly into their midst, went straight up to Markham, and thrust his nose into his hand.

"Good gracious, Miss Karron!"

Hope was quite pale, and for a moment she felt too breathless to articulate.

"I did not know Rossiter was to be brought out to-day—he's much too fresh for a lady to ride. What a gallop you have had! May I help you to dismount?"

Scarcely touching the hand which he proffered to her, Hope sprang lightly to the ground. At another time she would have owned the truth. She was a perfectly frank girl, and not a particle of shame would have occurred to her in owning that Rossiter was beyond her control. Now, however, her tongue was tied. It was odious of the horse to walk up to Markham just as if she led him there! But no, the man could not be conceited enough to imagine that.

Rossiter was still rubbing his nose against his master's hand and shoulder.

"I trust you did not find him too much for you," he said, looking anxiously at the still breathless girl.

"Not at all. Well, perhaps he was a little fresh."

"But you weren't afraid?"

"Afraid! No, I don't fear horses. There's Mr. Grey; I'll go and speak to him."

She moved away, managing her habit gracefully. In such a dress she looked to the best advantage. The colour in her cheeks, and a certain wilful light in her eyes, added a new piquancy to her always piquant face.

The other girls came up, eager and laughing; the landaus with their loads arrived.

"Come and help me to get the lunch out of the hampers," said Cecil to Hope.

As they unpacked a savoury pie together, Cecil said suddenly—

"I am surprised and amazed—Markham accuses you of want of sympathy."

Hope nearly flung her delicate pie on the grass.

"Oh, Cecil! I don't care what he thinks of me. Do you know, he doesn't suit me a bit."

"I'm surprised! A right good fellow doesn't suit you then, Hope! Why, he's the most honourable, the most generous—— Oh! good gracious, what have I said?"

"Only, that if he's *the* model man, he's not agreeable to me," said Hope.

"Well, I repeat, I'm sorry. You are prejudiced. I praised him too much. He likes you; he told me so last night. He said you had the courage of your opinions—that you were no milk-and-water miss."

"I should think not, indeed. I'm awfully obliged to him! Cecil, I had a letter this morning from Jo."

Cecil raised his face eagerly. Hope had effectually and intentionally turned the subject.

"They all talk of coming back in May," she said. "Jocelyn is in the highest spirits. She says that Mrs. Seaton will get her presented. She evidently thinks a great deal of Jocelyn, and Jocelyn seems thoroughly happy with her."

"You will be a good deal with them when they come back?" said Grey.

"I? No, that I certainly won't. Of course I shall see Jo, darling pet, but I'm not going to Mrs. Seaton's house. She knows that."

"Why do you call her Mrs. Seaton, Hope? Is not she your aunt?"

"She is Jocelyn's aunt, but not mine. She is nothing to me. I can't enter into this story to-day, Cecil. It distresses me."

"You don't look well," said Cecil tenderly. "I am sure that ride was too much for you. Come and sit here, in this sheltered corner, on the rugs. What a wonderful day it is for the end of January! Quite a spring air, quite warm. I'll bring you something to eat, and then you'll feel better. You know I never want to worry you, Hope."

"You never do worry me, Cecil. At least, scarcely ever," she added with a smile. "Perhaps I'm not quite well to-day. I had a bad night. It is very nice to see an old friend again like you, Cecil."

Grey supplied Hope with dainty morsels, stood by her while she ate, and chatted of his own desires, which had once more risen high at the prospect of Jocelyn's return.

"I certainly mean to try for her again," he said. "I am amazed she is not married before this. Perhaps she did care for me a little bit."

After lunch, as there was to be no more sport that day, the girls and young men started off for rambles together. They went in different directions, Cecil and Hope still keeping side by side. Presently Hope complained of fatigue, and asked to be allowed to rest on a sunny bank by the wayside.

"You must not wait with me, Cecil," she said. "There are the Chatterton girls up yonder without any gentleman. I won't have you stay—you shan't. I shall just rest for five minutes, and then go back to Mrs. Chatterton and the other ladies until we are ready to start home."

"Come on, you two," called out Maud Chatterton

from the top of a picturesque ascent a short distance away.

"Do go, Cecil—I really wish it," said Hope.

And seeing that she did so, and that she was in perfectly safe quarters within sight of the matrons of the party, he left her somewhat unwillingly.

A moment later a gay shrill voice sounded in her ear as Roley, very red in the face, and somewhat dirty in appearance owing to several falls, rushed to her side.

"This *is* luck! I've got you all to myself. Won't Phil be in a state! Phil thinks you are Queen of Beauty—he told me so last night."

"Roley," said Hope, "I don't think you are at all improved. I had not the most remote idea, when we were in London together, that you could talk such absolute nonsense."

"Oh, bosh!" said Roley; "a fellow must be carried away now and then. Phil's in a great state about you, Hope. He's nearly as bad as Grey and Markham."

"Roley, if you say another word of that kind to me, I shall walk away and leave you."

"Well, I won't, then. Is it true that you were awfully frightened?"

"How? When?"

"Markham said so. Phil heard him. He said you were all shaking from head to foot, so that it was the greatest wonder you were not killed, riding Rossiter. He said you were too much of a coward to ride such a horse, and he'd take care you didn't have him coming back. He means to have Rossiter himself, and you are to mount old Jenny. She's safe enough, anyhow. How white you look, Miss Karron!"

"I'm a little tired," said Hope, speaking in a still, constrained kind of voice. "I'm a little tired, and I don't want to talk to anyone just now. Go away, Roley—go away, and join your friend Philip. Go at once, please."

"Oh, I say!"

"I mean it: I am tired. Go, please, Roley. We were always good friends."

The tender inflection in her last words melted Roley's very affectionate heart.

"If you put it in that way," he said, "I'll be off in a twinkling. I see Phil up the path; I'll join him. No one shall come near you."

He darted away, and was soon lost to view. The moment he was quite out of sight, Hope rose, looked quickly to right and left, saw that she was quite unobserved, and then walked off in the direction of the farm, where she knew the horses were stabled.

A groom came out to meet her, who, recognising her as one of the young ladies from Beeches, respectfully touched his hat.

"I want the horse Rossiter," she said. "I am obliged to ride back to Beeches at once. Will you bring him to me here, and help me to mount him?"

The man stared, and hesitated.

"Why don't you go?" said Hope, who felt inclined to stamp her foot. "It is necessary I should get back to Beeches directly. I rode Rossiter coming."

"Yes, miss. But Mr. Markham, he said as Rossiter was a bit fresh, and you was to ride one of the grooms' horses back."

"I understand. I will explain to Mr. Markham," said Hope haughtily. "I wish to ride Rossiter; bring him round at once."

Still hesitating, the man obeyed.

Rossiter, clean of limb, bright of eye, and curvetting playfully, was brought up. With the groom's assistance, Hope sprang lightly on his back.

"You'll let me come with you, miss—they're bringing round Jenny. You'd better, miss; the critter is a bit fresh."

"No, thank you, I prefer going alone. You can mention I was obliged to hurry on to Beeches."

Again she gave Rossiter a sharp little touch of her riding-whip, and, with a bound, the animal flew down the road and was out of sight.

"Now, I call that a gal with spirit," exclaimed the groom Harvey to his companion. "But ef she hasn't a firm seat, and a firm hand too, it's my belief as Rossiter will be too much for her."

Meanwhile, Hope, with tingling ears, flushed cheeks, and smarting eyes, was enjoying the delights of a swift passage through the air. She had naturally high courage. Roley's words repeated to her as Markham's had stung her beyond endurance. *She* a coward—she to submit to the indignity of riding home on a spiritless, broken-down animal! She quite concluded, in her anger, that Jenny was of this description. No, she would show this odious, this officious personage that she, Hope Karron, was made of different mettle. What fun it would be to walk coolly into the drawing-room before dinner, and expatiate on her pleasant ride on Rossiter's back—not that she wanted to ride him again. She would take care not to put herself under a compliment to that model—but oh, how intolerable!—Mr. Markham. But for the present she must uphold her dignity. Yes, it would be very nice to talk about her delightful ride.

But was it delightful? Had a horse ever before taken any girl so quickly over the ground? Now he had broken into a canter. It hurt her to ride like this. She gasped. Rossiter *must* obey her. He should; she would show him that she was his mistress. Not a bit of it; Rossiter took not the smallest notice of her silken touch. He was just as anxious as she was to get back to Beeches, but he intended to get there his "ain gait." He knew a short cut which led down a steep uneven road, very different from the smooth, well-kept king's highway.

Hope felt really frightened when she found herself flying down this steep incline. She had to acknowledge that she could make nothing of Rossiter; that she must trust herself altogether to his tender mercies. She had to confess that her ride was not pleasant, that she had done a rash, a mad thing.

The uneven road was very steep, and Rossiter rushed quickly along. Still, up to the present he was not actually running away; he was simply enjoying himself in his own fashion, thinking nothing at all of the light weight on his back.

But just then, just at the most dangerous curve of the steep downward path, an ill-starred half-fed donkey put his head out of the hedge and brayed.

It was all up with Rossiter then. His gallop

increased in velocity—it seemed to Hope he no longer ran, he flew. She shut her eyes; the end must come, she said to herself. "How silly, how ridiculous I have been! Poor Jo! will she miss me a little? There is no one else. After all, it is quite right I should be punished, for I was in a bad temper and conceited. Oh, to be off this horrid animal's back! I won't stay; I'll let go." She prepared to slip her leg off the crutch. A gate stood open into a ploughed field; Rossiter dashed in. Now was Hope's time. The ground would be soft here. She shut her eyes again, uttered a prayer, and sprang. She came with a great bump to the ground; there was a flashing blue light before her eyes, a whirr of something whizzing through the air. It was the horse flying faster than ever now that he was delivered of his burden.

For a moment or two Hope felt stunned. She could neither move nor speak. Then she began gently feeling herself to ascertain if she was much hurt.

A sharp pain went through the foot which had been already injured. She had come down on it with great force. She could not attempt to stand on it, nor to move from her ignominious position in the middle of the ploughed field.



"'I want the horse Rossiter,' she said."—*p.* 728.

CHAPTER XIV.

Markham was feeling rather dull. He was a sociable fellow as a rule, always ready to forget himself and to make matters agreeable to others. Notwithstanding his ugliness, he was a very popular person, and Gray was quite right when he said that girls found him

fascinating. He was a clever man, a don at Oxford, and when he chose to exert his powers he could exhibit very brilliant qualities.

He was a man without any home ties—he had no near relations. From his earliest days he had lived among strangers, and this fact perhaps gave him a kind of outward coldness, and a manner which could at times be sarcastic and almost disagreeable. In reality Markham had a great deal of passion and tenderness in his nature, and he had an ideal hope which was more to him than to most. Some day he should meet a girl who would bring to him the sacredness of home and the warmth of love. This hope he buried deep in his heart, for though he fascinated most girls, no one could accuse him of falling in love with any.

Girls there were in plenty who thought Dick Markham *the* most delightful of mortals, who adored his ugly face, his divine voice, and his big, rather ungainly figure. But none of all these girls, in appearance at least, had touched even the surface of his heart.

"What's the matter, Markham?" said Grey, on this particular afternoon. "You look quite moped, old man. Why aren't you with the Hiltons? Those girls are perfectly wild to hear your explanation of the Hindoo puzzle."

"They must grow still wilder," said Markham. "I'm not in the humour to gratify them."

"Look here," said Grey, "we ought to be starting home soon; it will be dark directly. Mrs. Chatterton wants me to help her to collect a number of her party. Do you mind looking after Hope Karron? I left her sitting on a bank up that road. She said she would join the Chattertons, after she was rested, but I don't see her with them. Look her up, Dick, will you?"

"She won't be obliged to you for sending *me* to her aid," said Markham, smiling. "She has taken a prejudice against me. Oh, of course I'll go. Up that road, did you say?"

He sauntered away, not so unwillingly as his slow steps seemed to indicate. It was true that Hope both interested and irritated him. She reminded him of a certain face, a certain voice. No one could have accused Markham's rugged features of assuming a pathetic, even a sentimental expression, but as he thought, not of Hope, but of another, his deeply set brown eyes wore an expression both of longing and tenderness, his whole face softened with a light which even his nearest and dearest friends had never seen on it.

As he walked up the road he met the groom who had helped to mount Hope on Rossiter.

"Ef you please, sir," he said, "you have heard about the 'oss? The young lady said as she'd explain."

"What?" said Markham. "I don't understand. I gave you directions that Miss Karron should ride Jenny home, and I would take Rossiter myself."

"The young lady said as she'd explain, sir. She come up all in a hurry like, and said she must have Rossiter at once. She wouldn't look at the other 'oss, sir. She said she wanted to get back to Beeches all in a hurry, and she's off on Rossiter half an hour ago. I offered to ride behind her on Jenny, sir, but she wouldn't listen to me."

"Is it possible!" said Markham.

All the pleased look left his face. It grew hard and grim.

"Saddle the fleetest horse you have," he said. "Bring him to me this minute. I'll wait here. Don't waste time staring. Go, bring the horse."

"Black Bess, sir?"

"Black anything that has got four legs, and knows how to canter. Go."

The groom disappeared.

"Mr. Markham's real gone on that young lady," he said to himself. But a dim idea of the rashness of his own act in yielding to Hope entered his mind, and put wings to his feet. Black Bess was saddled, and a moment later Markham was tearing along the road. What possessed that headstrong girl? If Rossiter were dangerous coming out, he would be worse returning. Even then Hope could scarcely hold him in. What chance had she when his stable, his oats, his warm mash, awaited him? Markham felt inclined to blame everybody and everything. What a fool he was not to have sold the horse when he parted with the groom!

"Just for a sentiment, too," he muttered to himself, as he let Black Bess feel a touch of his whip; "just because the creature's eyes overcame me, and he only showed his submissive and gentle side to me. Already the brute has nearly killed that girl. Now of course he has made an end of her. That girl, too, with eyes like—like—and a voice which reminds me—ah, what a wretch I feel!"

Black Bess was a fleet, good-tempered little horse, but she was a little small for Markham's weight, and she did not like the pressure which he brought to bear on her. Suddenly he pulled her up so short that she reared in affright and almost fell backwards. His practised eye saw the freshly dug-up turf where Rossiter had turned aside to pursue the by-path home.

"God help the girl, if the brute took her down here," muttered Markham. "Yes, of course; down here they have gone. Come, Black Bess, down this path you too must follow."

He loosened the reins, bade the horse go forward, and then gave her her way. Now he ceased to have any consecutive thoughts, but with each step he was haunted by a direr and direr vision. Such a slim young thing, so graceful, so sprightly and upright in movement, with so spirited an eye, so arched and proud a lip. What was she like now? God help the girl, and God help him, for if any real harm had happened to her he could never be the same man again.

The spiteful donkey was still poking his head about, and casting inquisitive glances up and down the narrow lane. Could he have spoken, he might have told a story which might not have been to his own credit. It was his present humour to be quiet; as Markham passed he uttered no aggressive bray.

Two or three moments later the man pulled up short, uttered a cry of thanksgiving, sprang from Black Bess's back, rushed across the ploughed field, and was kneeling by Hope's side.

Thank God! what a mercy!

XUM

"Are you very much hurt?"

"My foot hurts badly, and I cannot stir," answered Hope, turning her head away, for tears of weakness and nervousness were springing to her eyes.

"Don't try to speak; I know all about it. The brute threw you."

"He didn't. I jumped from his back. I am not a coward, Mr. Markham."

"I should think not—about the bravest girl I have ever known. Now I 'm going to see to my horse—I won't be away a moment. I just want to tie her up until I can find someone to fetch her. I 'll be back directly."

Hope had almost to press her lips together to keep back the wild desire which prompted her to say—

"Oh, don't leave me—I am a coward—I 'm awfully frightened. Oh, don't leave me!"

She did keep back the words, but to save her life she could not have uttered any others.

"I 'll be back in a moment," he repeated; and ran across the field to tie Black Bess by her bridle to the nearest post.

When he returned the tears were raining down Hope's cheeks.

Whatever Markham was destitute of, he had, when he chose to exercise it, abundance of tact. He looked at Hope now in as a matter-of-fact a way as if it were quite the ordinary thing, in fact the usual thing, for a girl to sit helpless in the middle of a ploughed field, and look up with eyes drowned in tears to a man's face.

"I am glad you are so far recovered," he said. "As to your poor foot—it is your foot, isn't it?—we shall soon make that comfortable when we get to the Beeches. Now, the thing is to get there. We are not more than a mile away. If I stoop down so, do you think you could manage to put your arm round my shoulder?"

Hope felt herself shuddering all over.

"I really can't," she managed to mutter.

"That is silly."

Markham intentionally adopted a matter-of-fact, wooden tone. "You can't stay in this field all night, nor can you be left while I go to fetch some people to carry you. You are very light, and I am very strong. Try and think of me as your horse for the time being. I assure you I shall be a much safer one than Rossiter."

"The pain," muttered Hope; "I can't move an inch without screaming."

"You must try not to give way to that feeling. Each moment you sit in this damp field increases the chance of inflammation setting up in the injured joint. Now, one more flash of the courage which you so really possess. Nonsense, I will have it—put your arm so—tighter, please. That is right."

In a moment Markham was walking across the field, managing his light burden skilfully. The injured foot suffered agony, but Hope did not utter a sound. Not once did she groan, nor even once try to alter her position. Markham felt his heart stirred to its depths with compassion; he could form some idea of the fortitude and pain and humiliation which were animating the breast of his slight burden. Both he and Hope thought that walk would never come to an end. At last the avenue was reached, at last the lights from the cheerful and hospitable house streamed into view.

"The worst is over," said Markham, in a cheerful voice. "What? did you speak?"

He slackened his steps.

"It was only to say 'thank you,'" said Hope.

"You have nothing to thank me for. That brute of a horse was the cause. I shall part with him as soon as possible. Here we are—courage—the haven is won!—Yes, Mrs. Chatterton, I have brought you back this young lady in a sorry plight. Rossiter ran away with her, and she jumped off his back to save herself. She has been very plucky. I will lay her down here, if you will allow me. Give her some tea while I fetch a doctor."

CHAPTER XV.

THE dreaded inflammation did set in, and for some days Hope was a close prisoner to her room. She was sufficiently ill, and there was a sufficiently remote chance even of amputation of the injured member, to make her case of great interest in the house. It was the fashion at each gathering of the assembled guests to ask how Miss Karron was now; to discuss the chances of her recovery; the kindness of her host and hostess; the foolhardiness of her own deed. The kind people pitied Hope, the less good-natured showed sympathy for Mr. and Mrs. Chatterton. It was so unpleasant to have a confirmed invalid in the house—the very look of a trained nurse about the place was gloomy.

Then the kind and the unkind alike tried to put together what pieces they could of Hope's history. She was a penniless lass, rather low-born, with no expectations. No—not at all—her birth was excellent, her connections irreproachable; she had a little money of her own, and made more, and some day she would receive a large fortune through the medium of an enormously wealthy aunt, who had already adopted her sister.

These kind of remarks flew lightly all over the place, not affecting Hope, for they never reached her where she lay and suffered, in the pretty bedroom which joined Katie Douglas's.

After a week of great pain, the inflammation subsided—the fear and the interest alike abated downstairs and up-stairs. Hope began to smile, to have long intervals of delicious peace and ease, and returning strength.

At last the doctor gave permission that she might leave her room, and be very carefully carried into Mrs. Chatterton's boudoir, which was on the same floor.

"You don't know how deliciously pretty we have made the room for you, darling," said Katie Douglas, kissing her friend's pale face with enthusiasm. "The gardener has been up and down all the morning, putting in fresh hot-house flowers; and Mr. Grey himself has arranged the sofa for you, so that you can see out over the lawns and the distant trees. It will be a change from your bed and this dull sofa, dear; for of



"Two or three moments later he was kneeling by Hope's side."—*p.* 730.

course you will be able to see people. Not that there are many in the house who were here at the time of your accident. Poor Gus Chatterton went off yesterday" — here Katie blushed, and looked intensely melancholy—"and of course Roley and Phil have been back at school for days. That's the worst of country houses," concluded Katie; "when you do meet a nice fellow who quite suits you, he's certain to have to run away on account of some horrid profession or business of some sort."

"Is," said Hope, colouring faintly, and bringing out her words with more effort than Katie had any idea of, "is Cecil—is Cecil still here?"

"Yes; he's here still, and so is Mr. Markham. I'm not fascinated by Mr. Markham. Maud Chatterton does rave so about his singing. I suppose it is very fine, and that I have no soul for music. Bee is just as bad about Mr. Grey. I never saw such girls: they certainly wear their hearts on their sleeves. What's the matter, Hope? You look quite white. Have some of your tonic, darling. Yes, your dear Cecil and his charming friend are still here, but that's all that can be said of them, for they go this afternoon. Rossiter is to be sold; did you know it? He was sent off yesterday, and they are both going to Tattersall's about him. He is a thoroughbred, you know, though he is so vicious."

"He's not a bit vicious," said Hope, colouring again, and sitting upright on her sofa. "Katie, I should like to see Cecil before he goes. Can't you manage it for me, Katie?"

"Of course I can. You shall be moved into the boudoir at once. It's quite ready. Do you know, Hope, although your face is whiter and thinner than it ought to be, you look wonderfully nice. I can't make out what is so nice about you: I suppose it's the colour of your eyes, and the way they are set, and the arch of your brows; I can't make it out—is it your expression, I wonder? For you have not got handsome features. No, critically, you have not."

"Oh, don't dissect me now, please, Katie; here is nurse quite ready, and I want a change of room and

scene so badly.—Now, nurse, please help to wheel me out of gloom into sunshine.'

Katie had gone to look for Cecil Grey. Hope lay back on her new sofa, and enjoyed the lovely surroundings of her new room. Flowers made it look like a bower; a faint perfume, not too strong, pervaded it; the view from the window, the distant view as well as the near, was of great beauty, and refreshed Hope's tired eyes and brain. A little colour from excitement had come into her cheeks. Her heart was beating faster than was quite consistent with returning health.

"I hope Cecil will come to say good-bye," she said to herself. "I do trust Katie will be in time; they may have gone off for a long walk, and then there will be lunch, and then only just the necessary half-hour to catch the train. I must see Cecil. He cannot be allowed to sell Rossiter—he must not sell him; it would make me wretched to think of it. He would always then associate my name with a loss in his life. I don't think I could quite bear it. How weak of me to cry—I suppose I am weak; it's just physical—but it's provoking all the same. Oh, I wish Cecil would come! Yes—there he is—that's his tap at the door. Come in, Cecil, come in."

"Cecil will see you afterwards," said Markham's quite cheerful, matter-of-fact tone. "I am so glad you have been moved here before we went away. I wanted to assure myself that you were really better by getting a good peep at you before I went away. Now, tell me how you are. You don't mind my having a little chat with you, do you?"

The tears were still wet on Hope's cheeks. She felt provoked. Was Markham always to see her in this condition?

"I'm a little weak," she said, somewhat lamely, for she was not feeling at all composed.

"I see—I am greatly concerned; but you will be better soon now, and Mrs. Chatterton takes so much interest in you. She says she is going to take you to Bournemouth next week; the sea-air will soon set you up."

"Mrs. Chatterton is more than kind. Of course I shall soon be all right again. Nobody need worry about me. Mr. Markham, I wanted to ask you something. I sent Katie to find Cecil, for I didn't think perhaps I'd see you."

"Yes? Did you really suppose me to be such a heartless being as not to make an effort to come to see you? You want to ask me something—what is it? My dear Miss Karron, you won't get well at this rate. Your hands are quite shaking. Now, rest assured I shall accede to your modest request beforehand. Ask—command—I obey."

"But it isn't a modest request. I want you not to sell Rossiter."

Markham, who hitherto had preserved a very cool, every-day expression, and whose words were carefully modulated to denote only common courtesy and friendliness, started now, the colour rushed into his sallow face, and he gave Hope one of those lightning glances which had so displeased her on the first evening of their acquaintance.

"Why do you ask me not to sell my own horse? Why do you interfere?"

"I—because——" Hope hated to find herself stammering. Then she looked full up at Markham, and spoke bravely.

"You are selling Rossiter because of me. You love him, and he loves you. Don't sell him for my sake."

"My dear child!"—Markham's tone was tender enough now. "It is good of you speak like this," he continued; "still, I have made up my mind to sell Rossiter. He gave me the ugliest half-hour of my life, and I can't forgive him."

"But he is not vicious; oh, not really—it was *my* fault. I was hurt, and I took hold of some words the wrong way. It is very hard on Rossiter and on you, that he should be sold because I had a whim—just a freak, no more. Girls are always having freaks."

"In this instance the freak or whim nearly cost you your life."

"Nearly, but not quite. Please don't sell Rossiter."

"You remind me——" said Markham. He closed his lips before any more words came out; and moving a step or two, stared fixedly out of the window.

There was a rustle of drapery outside the door—it was opened wide, and Mrs. Chatterton, Bee, Katie Douglas, and Cecil Grey, all appeared on the scene.

"Here we are," said Katie's gay voice. "I found Cecil and Bee hunting for mosses. I brought them both up together to see you. How do you think she is looking, Mrs. Chatterton?"

"Very pale," said Mrs. Chatterton, stooping down and kissing Hope. "But you'll soon be better, dear, now. The doctor speaks so cheerfully of you; and I have heard from Bournemouth; my sister can take us both in next week."

"I'm going too," said Bee. "I'm not going to lose the fun, and I want to smell the pines once more.—Mr. Grey, did you ever try to catch a squirrel in the Bournemouth pine-woods?"

"I'll come next week and try how I can succeed in your company, Miss Chatterton," laughed back Grey.—"What do you say, Markham, old man? Shall we both run down to Bournemouth for a day or two? The sea-breezes won't do us any harm, either. What do you say?"

There was a babel of eager voices, in which Markham's reply, if he made one, was quite inaudible. In the midst of the gay laughter and merry sounds Mrs. Chatterton looked at Hope, and saw that the pink flush was too bright on her cheeks. At the same time she also remarked that Markham was looking at the girl with a rather peculiar gaze.

"You can arrange all future meetings down-stairs," she said. "Now, gentlemen, please say good-bye to Miss Karron. She is very weak still, and must not be over-excited. Of course we shall meet at Bournemouth. No one need look lugubrious. Bee, my dear, please take your friends down-stairs."

"Good-bye," said Markham to Hope.

He took her slim fingers in his, and gave them almost a crush.

"And he never told me what he had made up his mind to do about Rossiter," thought the girl. "He never told me. He did hurt my hand when he said good-bye."

No one was there to look, not even Mrs. Chatterton, who was poking the fire and arranging curtains. Hope raised her slightly reddened fingers to her lips and kissed them.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARKHAM and Grey had a compartment to themselves when they travelled back that afternoon to London. It was a bitterly cold day towards the latter end of February. Markham, when not roused or excited or specially interested in things, was a very silent man. He was silent now, looking straight before him. The window was open; he was sitting by it, facing the engine.

"You 'll catch a sore throat or something," said Grey, who, wrapped up in a thick ulster, was leaning back luxuriously in the opposite seat.

Markham continued to gaze out at the wintry landscape without replying. It began to snow afresh, and a few flakes came in and rested on his shoulder.

"Do you specially want rheumatic fever?" pursued Grey, raising his voice once more.

Markham stared at him, gave a slight shake to his big frame, seemed to wake up, and answered cheerily—

"Not at all. I 'll sit at this side by you, Grey. I want to have a talk with you."

"By all means. But might we shut the window?"

"Of course."

Markham pulled it up with a bang.

"Grey," he said suddenly. "I wish you would tell me what you know about Miss Karron."

"About Hope, or her sister?"

"Don't be provoking. I have only the pleasure of Miss Hope Karron's acquaintance. Tell me what you know about her, Grey—I 'm in earnest."

Cecil dropped his bantering tone.

"I see you are," he said. "I thought you were interested in her when you were so keen about selling Rossiter."

"I don't want your thoughts about me, but about Miss Karron, at the present moment," retorted Markham shortly.

"Oh, I have nothing but good to tell you. Good? The best. I have known Hope all my life. She is not as beautiful as Jocelyn. Jocelyn has a way about her—she quite comes over a fellow—you can't withstand her anyhow. Hope has not got that way, but I could understand some people thinking her finer, nobler. You don't love a girl for being fine and noble, do you, Markham?"

"My dear Grey, I never asked you to compare Miss Hope with her sister. I can see pretty well for myself what sort of girl she is. I only wanted to know something of her history. You need not tell me that she is a lady—anyone can see that. I don't care really either about her birth; her father may have been anything, it makes no difference to me. Only I should like to know why she is so poor and lonely; why she has absolutely to work for her living, and the other sister appears to be wealthy—at least, she is able to use the wealth of others?"

Grey coloured slightly.

"That 's just it," he said. "That 's why some people would say that Hope was nobler than Jocelyn. It isn't that, really. The two girls saw things from different standpoints. The aunt who adopted Jocelyn wanted to take Hope too, but Hope was offended about something or other. She thought this aunt had been unkind to her mother. Anyhow, she took a whim against her, and wouldn't live with her or have anything to say to her. So poor Jocelyn had to go off alone. It must have been a great trial to her, for she was so fond of Hope."

"And what did Miss Hope do?"

"They lived at Downton, then, close to our place. That 's how I got to know them both so well. Hope came to town. There was forty or sixty pounds a year, or some such pittance, saved out of the wreck. Their mother had been extravagant, poor soul—a charming woman. Hope came to town and began to teach little dunces to read. She has a faculty in that direction, and she makes a living out of it. Little Douglas, whom you saw at Beeches, is one of the dunces."

"Thank you," said Markham.

He leant back again in his seat.

"Why do you ask me so many questions?" said Grey suddenly.

"It is fair you should have an answer, Cecil. I am going to ask Miss Karron to marry me."

"Dick, old fellow! Really! I am glad! What a splendid husband you will make for Hope!"

"I don't know that I shall," he said. "I am anything but sure on that point. It is very unlikely, too, that she will have me, for I have a story to tell her which would certainly make many a girl say no. Besides, I have not the least reason to suppose that she cares for me."

"She scarcely knows you, certainly," said Grey. "But I'm awfully delighted that you 've fallen in love with her. I always said that Hope should get a splendid husband, for she 's such a really jolly girl—so plucky, and with such a nice distinguished sort of offhand air. I never did think, however, that she would be lucky enough to take your fancy. I am delighted! Oh, she 's certain to say yes; you may be as spooney as you like down at Bournemouth. You 'll soon win her round."

"I have thought over it a good deal lately," said Markham, whose manner was provokingly quiet, without a trace of Grey's enthusiasm. "I have thought over it and made up my mind. If, after hearing my story, Miss Karron is content to marry me, I shall be glad. We are both lonely people—we have neither of us near ties—I expect we shall pull together very well."

"Hope has got her sister."

"Oh, pooh! a sister she never sees. I shall be glad if she says yes. I think I can make her happy, and I know she will bring a great deal into my life. At first, for a certain reason, her face tortured and distressed me. Now it gives me a feeling of rest. I like to think of it, and look at it. What 's the matter, Grey?"

"Only you always were a queer fellow, Dick; and—

forgive me for saying it—I never thought you queerer than at this moment. You talk a great deal of a story you have got to tell, and you have never once said you loved Hope. Certainly, if you do love, you have not the ordinary way of expressing your feelings. Good gracious! a man who is in love—in love, mind you—does not talk of it being a 'suitable arrangement,' that 'two lonely people should keep house together.' I know better than that," continued Grey, taking out his handkerchief, and mopping his forehead.

"You are very much excited," said Markham. Then he sighed, and that queer tender light came into his face, which, while it lasted, had the power of transforming it, and making it beautiful. "You 're a lucky fellow, Grey," he continued. "You love some girl with your whole heart, and she loves you."

"I 'm abominably unlucky, Markham. I love Jocelyn Karron, and she won't look at me."

Markham sat grave and silent.

"This is no particular news to me," he said, after a pause. "I have guessed it, or something like it, with regard to you for some time. Very likely it will come right, Grey. You have my best wishes."

"Thanks. I mean to try my chance again when she comes back to England. But now, about Hope. You will understand, after what I have told you, that I look upon her as a sort of sister."

"I am glad to hear it, Grey. You are an excellent brother for any girl to have."

"Look here, Dick, I 'm going to exercise a brother's privilege. Are you in love with Hope?"

"I am not."

"Then, good gracious—why ever—I say, Dick, old fellow—do you call this right or fair?"

"I said I had a story to tell. When she has heard it, it is for her to decide."

"This is very mysterious—will you trust me with the story?"

"I intend to take you into my confidence this minute. The story is short. You may even ridicule it. But things that can be shortly told, and that may even provoke a smile, will sometimes revolutionise a life."

"You certainly are mysterious," continued Cecil. "You know what a friend you have always been to me, Dick, old fellow. You may be certain I 'll respect your confidence; and now for pity's sake give it me. For those quiet words of yours, and your whole manner since we got into this beastly railway carriage, have made me feel positively uncomfortable."

"It's a short story," said Markham. He changed his seat again, turned his face a little towards the window, and began.

"Two years ago I was in Rome—I dare say you remember. I had just recovered from that touch of fever—I sometimes laid part of the blame of what followed on that—I mean on the fact that my brain was weaker, more impressionable. I may be wrong; of course it might have happened in any case."

"But what did happen, Dick? All this moralising is positively tiresome."

"Well," said Markham, shooting back a direct glance full into Grey's face, "after all, in one sense of the word, nothing happened. Briefly, what occurred was this. I saw a girl one day in St. Peter's—I fell in love with her. That is nearly two years ago. I have loved her madly ever since."

"And *you*—you dared to ask Hope to be your wife? You shan't have her. Why don't you marry the girl you are in love with?"

"I should have married her long since if she would have had me and I could have found her. She is lost."

"Dick, are you quite right in the head? Really, now?"

"Perhaps not, Grey. I can only say I have had a miserable two years. I have resigned myself now to my fate. I shall never find the girl I love best. Hope Karron reminds me of her. She is like her—very different, but still like. If she will have me, knowing my story, I will consider myself a lucky man."

"The girl you were in love with was like Hope—like with a difference? What was her name? You saw her in Rome? When did you see her?"

"The Easter of two years back. I never heard her name. What is the matter, Grey? You look quite white—are you faint?"

No. This carriage is abominably stuffy. I 'll open the window again, if you don't mind."

"I, my dear fellow? It was at your request it was shut. No," continued Markham, in a meditative fashion, "I never did hear the girl's name. I 'll just tell you absolutely what occurred. You will judge for yourself how much and how little it meant. I was in St. Peter's, wandering about; there was service going on, as there always is; the priests were chanting in the distance; and there was that sickly smell of incense. I was walking down one of the many aisles, when I saw a girl standing with her profile slightly turned towards me, gazing up at an exquisite bit of painted glass. It was a treacherous day—the sun hot, the wind cold. She held a fur wrap loosely on her arm. Her hat was pushed back. I was attracted by the delicacy of her profile, and the easy grace of her attitude. She started when she heard my step, and turned towards me. 'I am so glad,' she said, in a low voice. 'You are an Englishman, are you not?'—'And you are an English lady,' I replied.—'Yes; I have lost my party, and this big place frightens me so dreadfully.'—'You will doubtless find your party again very quickly,' I answered. Then I made a commonplace remark—I think about the bit of painted glass she had been studying. 'I am too nervous to admire it,' she answered. 'Will you walk down with me as far as the nearest entrance? Perhaps I shall see my people coming up.' I bowed again. She was a very beautiful girl; it was a pleasure to walk with her even a few steps. She had a certain manner—I don't know how to describe it—which prevented my thinking it strange that she should ask me to do this trifling service for her. We met her party at the entrance. I bowed—she thanked me with a smile. That's all, Grey. I fell in love with her. Thinking of it calmly, I am inclined to attribute such a sudden fancy to the fever from which I had just recovered."

"What was she like, Dick? The girl, I mean."

"I can't quite describe her. She had a look of Hope Karron, but her face was more delicate, and altogether more beautiful. Her voice, too, was like—— I don't think I could take her features to pieces, even to oblige you, Grey."

"Oh, never mind, Dick. It's a queer story—I mean your falling in love like that. There, I believe I've caught cold. That window is chilling me again. I say, Markham, why didn't you follow her up, when you were so—so far gone?"

"That's just what I did do, and it was just in that particular that I absolutely failed. Remember, I had not the smallest clue—I could not identify one of her party—I could not even tell you now what dress the girl herself wore. I remembered the soft white fur she carried on her arm; I remembered the colour of her hair, her face, her voice. I dare say I did not remember that face as it appeared to others. I have no doubt I idealised it. Perhaps the girl I have dreamt of does not exist at all. At any rate, I have not seen her since, although I have looked for her, and morning after morning waked up with the vague hope that I might find her. She flashed into my life and went away. She took something—the best of me, with her. I have not been the same man since."

The train was fast nearing its destination, the daylight had long departed. Markham's voice died away into silence, and Grey did not articulate a single word. As they approached Paddington, the younger man roused himself with an effort.

"About Rossiter," he began: "shall I meet you to-morrow at Tattersall's?"

"I forgot; did I not tell you? I am not going to sell the horse."

"No? What do you mean?"

"What I say. I have changed my mind; or rather Miss Karron has for me."

(To be continued.)

WORK AND REST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED," "FAINT, YET PURSUING," ETC. ETC.

IT is easy to imagine new arrangements of society, and the great improvements that would result from their adoption. On the principle, however, that it is not safe to prophesy unless one knows, we can never be sure that these imagined advantages would follow, or that greater evils might not be involved in the proposed changes. Of course this good old-fashioned argument, if pushed too far, would paralyse every effort at reform; but we only allude to it to show that in advocating a more equal distribution of work we are not insensible to the fact that even perfect equality of labour, if it could be realised, would not bring about the millennium. Fancy the whole of society turned into a huge workhouse, regulated by hard-and-fast labour laws! Where would there be room for taste, refinement, elegance? But though it may be well to have a leisured class to hold up a standard in these matters, few will deny that some people work too little and others work too much. There must be something wrong when the bodies and minds of thousands of people called well-to-do, but who are really doing very badly, become weak and diseased for want of healthy exercise, while thousands of others have to work twelve, sixteen, and even eighteen hours out of the twenty-four to get the barest subsistence. Is not the great need of the first class work, and of the second rest? and would it not be better for both if they could divide the labour and the leisure between them? An Emperor of China once said that if anyone throughout his wide dominions lived a perfectly idle life someone must suffer hunger in consequence. There is a certain amount of truth in this statement in reference to every country. No one can consume much of the limited supply of food that is at the disposal of all, and produce little, without greatly injuring others.

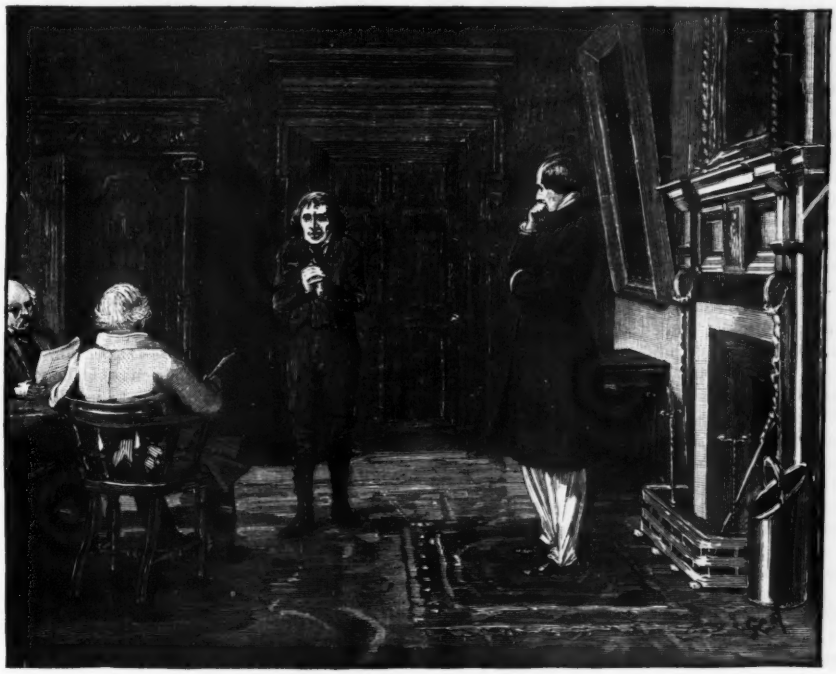
And if there ought to be a more equal distribution of labour and leisure amongst all the members of the body politic, so there is a balance between work and rest that should be properly adjusted in our individual lives. *Employer:* "You are so awfully slow about everything." *Clerk:* 'One exception: nobody can get tired as quickly as I can." This class of man works too little; but there are others, like Sir Walter Raleigh, of whom it was said that he "toiled terribly," who do not allow themselves enough rest. Employment is a "perennial fire-proof joy," and one of the best remedies for the maladies of men, especially of young men. Many kinds of evil are like the nightmare, which goes away when we bestir ourselves. The devil tempts men, but the idle man tempts the devil. Carlyle used to say that the latest gospel in this world is, "Know thy work and do it. Know thyself: long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself! thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at, and work at it like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan. Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. . . .

"The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was happiness enough to get his work done; not. 'I can't eat!' but 'I can't work!' that was the burden of all wise complaining among men. It is, after all, the one unhappiness of a man that he cannot work: that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled. Behold, the day is passing swiftly over, our life is passing swiftly over, and the night cometh, wherein no man can work."

At the time of the Crimean war, when England was

> "All service ranks the same with God;
> If now, as formerly, He trod
> Paradise, His presence fills
> Our earth; each only as God wills
> Can work."

It is wonderful how much work a man can get through who works with system and method, and who has acquired the invaluable habit of putting odd moments to a good account. As a good packer gets more things into a portmanteau than a slovenly



CHARLES LAMB AND THE DIRECTORS.—*p.* 738.

going through a difficult crisis, Dean Stanley, then a canon of Canterbury, asked the writer just quoted what he thought was the particular duty to his country of a canon of Canterbury at that trying time. The philosopher of Chelsea answered: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Is not this the secret of success and usefulness in every sphere of life? If we take for our motto, "With both hands earnestly," and act upon it, then the work which was felt to be so irksome when done in a half-hearted, perfunctory spirit will become a pleasure and a joy.

Nor ought our work to be undervalued because it seems humble and unimportant. The fact is that we are all very bad judges of what is or is not important. So complicated are the relations between things that great events often depend upon what are called only trifles. We are in this world where God has placed us, and the work which we do is not ours, but His.

one, so this sort of man packs as it were more time than another into the twenty-four hours. He is never idle, but as little is he in a fuss or hurry; and if you ask him to do anything for you, he will find time for it far more readily than another who has nothing to do but kill time.

Let us remember that one day we shall all value time, or the stuff of which our lives are made, as much as Queen Elizabeth did, when on her deathbed she exclaimed—"My kingdom for a moment!" We should have a book at hand to take up in the spare quarters of an hour that so many people waste, or something to think about—some plan of becoming more useful: an article, a speech, a sermon, anything that will put to a good account what may be called the threads, patches, and remnants of time. Even knitting a sock in spare moments is better than doing nothing.

Two men have arrived at a railway station some time before the train. One will do nothing, or only fret and fume; the other will employ the interval in studying human nature, enter into a profitable conversation, or try to learn something from the contents of the bookstall. In the same number of years the second class of man will live twice as long as the first, because he will do twice as much with his time.

How much more energy would we have for good work if we wasted less of it in foolish anger, useless repining, envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness! Then many of us would work with far more spirit if greater variety could be introduced into our work. Change of work is as good as rest. Pity that the manual and intellectual work of the world should be confined to separate classes of people, instead of being divided amongst all. Why should some have their bodies worn out by over-work, and others their minds, when, if the work were divided, there would be just enough for the healthy and pleasurable exercise of all the faculties of both parties? Every boy, however high his social position may be, should be taught a handicraft. It is all very well for him to "manipulate his feet" well, as an Irish reporter wrote, at football, but would it not be better for him to learn to do useful work with his hands? Five or six hours' reading or other intellectual work is as much as most men can do with profit in the day, and this leaves them plenty of time for using their hands.

Many are discontented with the name of idler who are nevertheless content to do worse than nothing. Of course, when it is said that every man should work, we mean that he should do good and useful work. If he be one who will do mischief, the more energetic he is the worse it is for society. He will have to be shut up in prison to check his energy. It would be as safe to allow an energetic tiger to go at large as him. Strange that so many are willing to work hard for Satan who will do nothing for a loving Heavenly Father, although they must soon find out that "Satan as a master is bad, his work much worse, and his wages worst of all."

One of the best means of saving power is to rest just before getting tired. A man may work up to the point of fatigue without injury, but the moment exhaustion supervenes, that moment a debilitated state sets in, which cannot be recovered from readily. Many energetic men do not know when and how to rest. They allow themselves to become mere machines, and leave all parts of their nature, except those employed in business, to grow weak and die out for want of use. When forced to give up active work, they are as miserable as the retired chandler, who could not stay away from his old place of business upon "melting days." They have not provided themselves with a hobby; they take no pleasure in philanthropical or religious work; they are so accustomed to work for money that they do not care to fill those positions in a parish the duties of which someone must do, but for which there is no pay in pounds, shillings, and pence. Thus they have laid up for themselves a miserable old age, because they did not learn how to rest or to appreciate the luxury of doing good unselfishly.

Nothing is more praiseworthy than for a man to patiently and conscientiously do work which is uncongenial to him, but which it is his duty to do. Charles Lamb disliked being a clerk in the India House, but he stuck to the work and did it faithfully for thirty years. He sat like a nightingale with his breast against a thorn—the desk. "Thirty years," said he, "have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke." Then came his deliverance. One day, as he was pining in that leaden East India House, with fear and trembling he received an intimation that he was wanted by the directors in the parlour. Had he done anything wrong, and were they going to dismiss him? No; they were very gracious, and after a long preamble, he was told that the Board were most grateful for his patient services, and that he would receive a pension of £441 per annum, or two-thirds of his salary. Oh, the delight of Lamb at being thus set free! He "stammered out a bow," and left the office for ever. "It was like passing from time into eternity." "If I had a little son," he said, "I would christen him 'Nothing-to-do.'" He gaily and quaintly wrote to a friend, "Would I could sell you some of my leisure! Positively the best thing a man can have to do is nothing, and the next to that, perhaps, good works." But the enchantment was short-lived. Lamb was not old enough nor stupid enough to do nothing. It takes a peculiar man to do nothing well. Most of us have a fine talent for it by fits and starts, but Lamb got tired of too much of it, and sighed like the chandler for his melting days.
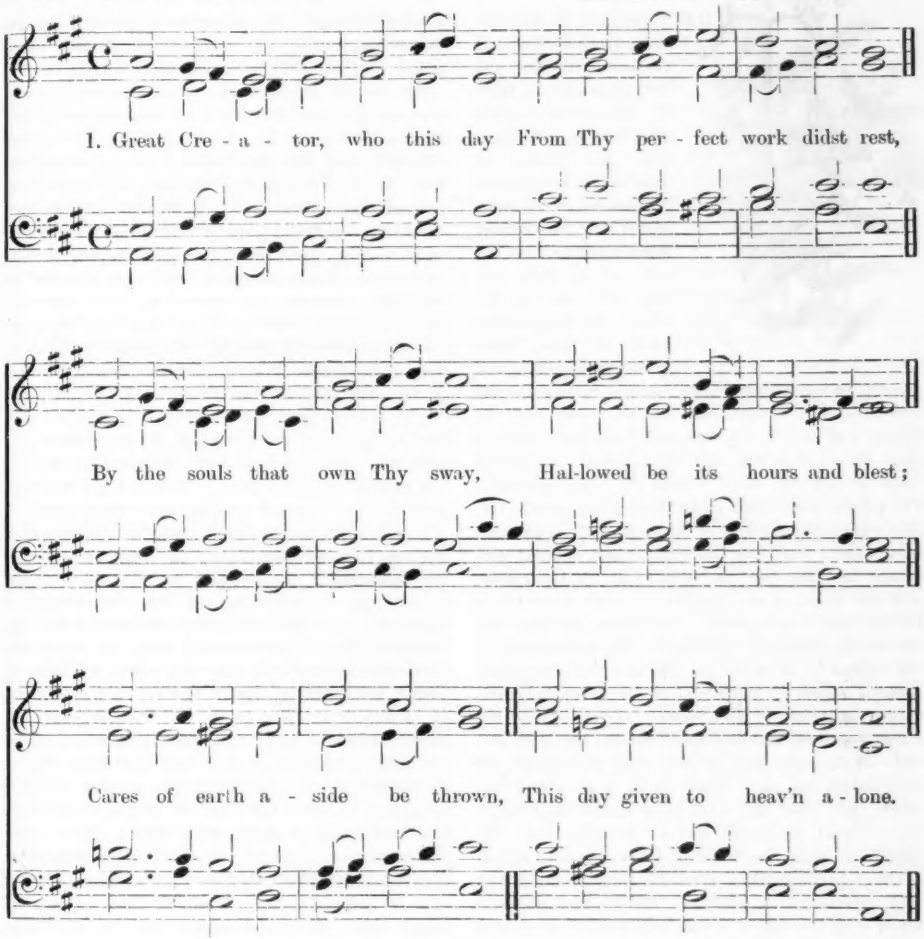
> "Calm Soul of all things! make it mine
> To feel, amid the city's jar,
> That there abides a peace of Thine
> Man did not make, and cannot mar."

This is a prayer which we who live in a high-pressure, unresting age have much need of praying. Rest in the Lord! The soul of man turneth hither and thither, on this side and on that, but findeth no rest till it rest in Him who hath made it for Himself.

Great Creator, who this day.

Words by JULIA ELLIOTT, 1833.

Music by A. H. MANN, Mus.D., Oxon.
(*Organist of King's College, Cambridge.*)



2.

Saviour, who this day didst break
The dark prison of the tomb,
Bid my slumbering soul awake,
Shine through all its sin and gloom;
Let me, from my bonds set free,
Rest from sin and live to Thee.

3.

Blessed Spirit, Comforter,
Sent this day from Christ on high;
Lord, on me Thy gifts confer—
Cleanse, illumine, sanctify;
All Thine influence shed abroad,
Lead me to the truth of God.

THE CHERUBIMS ON THE VAIL.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D.

"With cherubims shall it be made."—EXODUS xxvi. 31.

THE Tabernacle in the wilderness was divided into two compartments—the holy place and the Holy of Holies—by a vail. That vail was stretched upon four pillars of wood overlaid with gold. It consisted of one huge screen of fine-twined linen, reaching from the roof to the floor, and from one side to the other. On the groundwork of linen were spread, in various ornamental patterns, the simple colours known to the ancients—blue, purple, and scarlet. The Holy of Holies was shut in by this vail from every human eye. No worship was carried on there. No human voice or step was heard within its sacred precincts. The priests worshipped in the holy place outside, but they were never allowed to pass within the vail; and only once a year was the High Priest himself permitted to enter—on the Great Day of Atonement, with the blood of the sacrifice—to make propitiation for the sins of the people. This awful solitude was the dwelling-place of God alone. The most conspicuous objects in it were the ark and the mercy-seat, towards which all the ritual of the tabernacle converged as its centre and crown. On the top of the mercy-seat were two cherubims, formed out of its two ends—of the same mass of gold with it—wrought by hammering, not cast. Their faces were turned towards each other, and with their outstretched wings they covered the sacred shrine. Between them the Shechinah cloud, the token of God's presence, rested.

These cherubims were symbolic forms, composed of four representative creatures, the highest of their kind: with the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle, and with the human figure as the prominent and pervading part of the composite structure. They were meant to sum up and shadow forth the creation of God, with man at its head—the whole living world associated with man, not only as possessed of his own superior physical and spiritual nature, but also as endowed with the qualities of all the other animals, and so contributing to his ideal perfection. When first seen on earth, the cherubims were placed at the gate of the Garden of Eden, to keep the way of the tree of life. The flaming sword with which they were associated, which turned in every direction, was the symbol of God's judgment, the witness of the terrible majesty of God's holiness which had been insulted by man's sin, telling our fallen first parents that so long as their sin continued, the flaming sword would shut up every avenue against their return to their original happy state. The cherubims, on the contrary, were placed there as an image of mercy and hope, to signify that for the creation that had become alienated from God was destined a happy reconciliation. In the very place where man, and with him creation, had sinned and suffered, man and creation stood in a symbolical form by God's gracious appointment, to keep their privileges and to represent their restoration. The same great truth was signified by the golden cherubims that covered the mercy-seat with their wings, and between which God met and communed with the High Priest. The cloud of glory was the awful manifestation of the justice and holiness of God, like the flaming sword of Eden; but the cherubims indicated the interest of man, and with him of creation, in the work of redemption—represented not what men and creation actually are, but what they are destined to become when the purpose of God in regard to them is accomplished.

Now, what I want to draw particular attention to is the fact that, secluded as was the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, and guarded by the most solemn prohibitions, its mystery was not left altogether unknown. The most conspicuous feature of the vail—that which at once arrested every eye—was the cherubims embroidered over its whole surface, in such a way that it seemed to have been fashioned of nothing else. Thus on the vail that concealed the awful shrine of Jehovah from mortal eye was revealed one of the most characteristic and significant objects of that shrine. In this way the priests, who were not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, could have some conception of what was within it. Never once in all their lives could the priests behold the cherubims, between which, above the mercy-seat, was the symbol of God's presence. They would live and die without seeing those glorious realities; and yet, by God's merciful provision, every day that they ministered in the holy place they could see on the vail a picture of what was behind it. Nay more, the worshippers who were not allowed to come into the holy place with the priests, but had to perform their worship outside in the court of the Tabernacle, even they could get a glimpse of what was within the vail; for in the cunning work of the curtains that hung over the roof and fell down over the back and sides of the Tabernacle, the cherubims of glory were embroidered with their expanded wings. The cherubims pourtrayed on the vail and on the curtains were no doubt faint and inadequate pictures of the originals on the mercy-seat. They could not have been otherwise. They were a

flat representation of objects that stood out in the sacred shrine in the clearest and fullest relief. They were an embroidery in perishing materials, at comparatively slight cost of labour, of a work of the highest art, beaten out in the purest gold, with the most unwearied industry and the most consummate skill. But with all these necessary imperfections, the needlework of the vail and of the curtains gave a fair idea of the cherubims which stood in the most holy place, in their invisible and unapproachable glory. The Jewish priests and worshippers were not left in complete ignorance. There were witnesses to picture to them that which they could not see. They had shadows of the realities behind the vail. Their faith had elements of sight to support it. As Mrs. Browning says in "Casa Guidi Windows:"—

> "The selfsame cherub faces which emboss
> The vail, lean inward to the mercy-seat."

I wish to make use of this most interesting fact as a graphic illustration of the great truth, which is true throughout the universe, that things concealed from us have their shadows manifested in the things we see. The universe is a great tabernacle divided by a vail and curtains into an outer and inner compartment, as it were. From the inner we are shut out, and we cannot see with our bodily eyes the things that are contained in it. And yet we have representations of these hidden mysteries before our eyes every day, which give us a more or less satisfactory idea of them. Here we see in part, and prophesy in part. Here we see through a glass darkly; and yet there are revelations given to us in our common experiences, and in the things amid which we have our daily being, of what is complete, and full-orbed and transparently clear elsewhere, which are sufficient to sustain our energy and feed our hope.

The horizon, for instance, is a vail that comes down to conceal from us what is beyond. Many of us will never be able to visit foreign countries, and ascertain with our own eyes what the nature of these countries and the mode of life in them may be; and yet, within the horizon in which we spend our life we have shadowy intimations of the most distant regions of the earth. Ships come to us with their produce; our houses are full of objects brought from them; books describe them to us; and letters from friends make us partakers of their larger experience. Even the scenery around our homes is not so dissimilar to that of foreign lands as we might suppose. Travellers tell us that in foreign countries, what strikes one most at first sight is not the strange, but the familiar, look of the general landscape. Indeed, the more extensive our acquaintance becomes with other countries, the more numerous do we find the features which they possess in common with our own, the more numerous do we find the representative forms of life and dead matter which they possess in common with each other.

Between us and the lofty summits of a great mountain range there is a vail often woven of cloud and mist. Elevated far above the busy common-place haunts of man, these sublime peaks seem to dwell apart, to retire into a more awful solitude than exists on the surface of the earth. We long for the wings of the eagle, to surmount in a moment all intervening obstacles, and reach the shores of that upper world, that we may know what new forms of life occur in a region so near to and so favoured of the skies. To many destitute of the requisite strength of limb or lung to climb these peaks, or chained hopelessly to the daily task, this must ever be an unattainable enjoyment—in sight, and yet unknown. And yet the lofty summit of the mountain sends down into the valley by the streams that channel its flanks waifs of brilliant Alpine flowers, which take root and grow among the common lowland plants: and thus the dweller at the foot of the mountain knows what kind of vegetation abounds in the upper regions as truly as if he had actually scaled the heights.

Many who live far inland have a vail of mountain ranges between them and the great ocean. They may never be able to stand on its shore, gaze on its foaming billows, or listen to the beating of its mighty pulse. And yet, up the reaches of the quiet inland river, into the heart of the mountains, into the midst of shady woods, the ocean sends its tidal waters, its fresh invigorating breezes, and its white-winged sea-birds, so that the inland inhabitants may have some idea of the vast world of waters that extends far beyond their horizon. The vail of daylight hides from us the other worlds in space; and the darkness of night which brings out the stars only increases their mystery. But the vail which conceals also reveals. Spectrum analysis has made known to us the chemistry of the sun and stars, the physical constitution of the most distant worlds; and this knowledge is given not by the brightness of light, but by the black spaces which cross the spectrum, and are as significant as the shadows of the dial.

This wonderful science shows to us that the substances of the stars are identical with those of our own earth. Not a single new or unknown element has been discovered in the remotest stellar ray subjected to its scrutiny. The meteors that fall from the inter-planetary spaces to our earth are made up of the same metals with which we are familiar, and hold shut up in their cavities the same gases which form our common air and water. And thus the sunbeams, moonbeams, and starbeams bind with chains of gold and silver our world to the worlds of space; and our feelings take possession of the silent fields of the sky, include them within the sacred precincts of home, and people them with our human sympathies. Upon the very vails that separate us from the inmost and remotest sanctuaries of nature we see impressed the images of the objects which they hide from our view.

But it is not only natural things that thus reveal themselves by that which conceals them; the realities of the spiritual world are also manifested to us on the vail of earthly things. The things that are unseen

and eternal are illustrated by the things that are seen and temporal. We have numberless analogies in nature which make plain to our understandings the mysteries of grace. Every object around us may be used to shadow forth spiritual truth. Our Lord revealed to His disciples and to the multitude what the Kingdom of Heaven was like by showing to them its shadows on the vail of common objects and common processes, in His parables. The Kingdom of Heaven is like everything we see and deal with. Things visible answer to things spiritual, as in the calm mirror of the lake below we see the reflection of the sky above. The beautiful landscape we see touches within us a secret sense of still more beautiful and perfect scenery—the original within the vail of which the earthly landscape is only the rough draft and copy. To us it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, if we not only see and admire the fair colours of the vail, but also comprehend the meaning of the cherubims embroidered upon it—if we have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand the revelation which God is giving to us in the common things that are around us. God has never left Himself without natural witnesses of His spiritual things. His invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

The mysteries of grace are the common heritage of all. Whatever differences of education and intellectual ability may divide human beings from each other, on the ground of moral feelings and religious truths, they all stand on the same level. In every human being there is a foundation for the fabric of Christian character; and the Gospel is built upon the sense of sin, and the longing for forgiveness which is in the nature of everyone. Even the profoundest mysteries of God's infinity and personality are not unsuitable to the humblest capacity. His incomprehensibility, by the very teaching of natural religion itself, is felt to be His glory; and man has a sense of sacred joy in this shadow of the Divine falling upon him. It harmonises with the immeasurableness of the things he sees—the sky, and the ocean, and the boundlessness of space, and with that infinite craving for the marvellous and stupendous which is a part of every man's nature. The little child is enabled to understand the mystery of the Divine love from what it learns of the patience and self-sacrifice of human love at a mother's knee. The youngest person can see the meaning of the great truths of salvation in some degree and measure by the help of the figure of them which his own experience presents to him. The doctrine of the Atonement is in remarkable keeping with the sympathetic nature which God has imparted to children, by which they feel for others, and can therefore understand how one person may carry his loving-kindness to such an extent as to give up his life for his friend. The forgiveness of God has a shadow of it in the sorrow which all truly sensitive minds feel when they have offended one dear to them, and in the joy which the sense of being reconciled and accepted by the one from whom their faults had estranged them imparts. There is thus not a mystery of the Holy of Holies of Divine truth but may be seen in dim yet true shape, embroidered as it were upon the vail of natural objects around us, and of our own common instincts and experiences.

But I go on further to show that the realities of the eternal world are manifested to us by the things of time. The vail of death, which no human hand can lift, hides the scenes beyond from our view. Death is a solitary experience. Each human being has to die alone; and no one has come back from the other side of the grave to tell us what it is to die, to disclose to us what there is to know; and there are moods in which we are tempted to think that there is nothing to know, that the heaven which our fond imagination pictures, is only like the stained glass window with which the builder contrives to hide the darkness of a blank wall outside. But such sceptical and despondent moods are evanescent. They vanish, and we come back to the faith of our childhood in the Happy Land. The Bible speaks to us of the existence of that Happy Land, and discloses its glory in forms which far transcend our earthly imagination. It calls our future Home a new heaven and a new earth: not new in the sense of being before unknown, but new in the sense of restoration; the very terms implying that it will correspond to and exhibit in brighter manifestation all that is pure and lovely in the heaven and earth which now appear.

The ascension of our Lord to heaven, with all the attributes of perfect man, the resurrection of man in a body strictly identical with his present body, prove beyond doubt that the scene of our translation, with all its circumstances, must be accommodated to the nature of man. The blessed of the Father are to inherit the Kingdom *prepared* for them from the foundation of the world; and that Kingdom is often spoken of in Scripture as an inheritance. The very idea of an inheritance implies previous acquaintance and familiarity. An heir grows up gradually from infancy in the midst of what is to be his own property when he reaches his majority. With the scenes of his future state are connected all the tender associations of his childhood and youth. He passes insensibly, without any abrupt or startling transition, from the condition of an heir to that of a proprietor. Now, so will it be with us in regard to the future state. From the very constitution of our nature, we form our anticipations of the future from our past experiences. The objects and experiences of earth are preparations for those which await us above. On the vail that hides our future home from us, we see pictured the cherubims of glory. The cherubims of the shrine are the same as those on the vail. Earthly forms hold possession of the heavenly places. The future revelation will be but the full unveiling of the present; the new creation will be

but the old creation breaking forth, after its dreary winter of sin and death, into brilliant bloom and fruitage when the eternal summer of Christ's advent is come.

Yes: the cherubims of heaven are seen on the vail of earth. Heaven is filled with objects long endeared to us, and with pleasure which we have already enjoyed in part, and learned from the foretaste to long for the full fruition. We have now the earnest of the purchased possession—the first-fruits of the great harvest. Fore-shinings of the heavenly land appear to us, as Canaan shone to Moses from the crest of Pisgah. In our higher moments it seems not as if we saw the cherubims vividly displayed on the vail, but as if the vail itself had become transparent, or a corner of it had been lifted to show to us the glories that shall one day be ours, when every vail shall be removed, and the whole universe shall be in sight.

Now, what is the practical outcome of thoughts like these? What lessons for the conduct of life do we learn from the fact that the cherubims of the spiritual and eternal worlds are revealed to us on the vails of earthly things and earthly experiences? Does it not teach us that we have no excuse for sinful ignorance, seeing that God has brought within the range of our touch and vision in earthly images His perfect heavenly things, and placed us so that we can understand the things that belong to our spiritual life by the things that belong to our daily life? Do not these glimpses and foreshadowings of unseen and eternal things also inspire us with a deeper interest in them? Instead of having a sense of vagueness and unreality connected with heavenly things, offering nothing upon which the heart and the mind can fix, we learn to love them—to set our affections upon them, and live under their transforming power, because they are already partially ours. And more than all, does not the fact of the cherubims upon the vail being the same as those in the shrine show to us that our life is continuous here and hereafter—that it is one history and one development? It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we have in our own bodies and souls premonitions of our future state.

It is a common idea that death will make a great change. You lie down in the sleep of death with a selfish, grovelling spirit, and a pampered and corrupted body, and you imagine that you are to wake up with a spirit perfect in every attribute, and a body pure and immortal. You imagine that somehow, through God's mercy, you will pass into a state of blessedness of which you have no foretaste or anticipation here, and of which your own experience can bear no testimony to the fact that heaven commences in this world. You have some vague idea that your happiness will consist in exercises and enjoyments for which you have no relish here, and in perfect communion with that God with whose nature your hearts are at enmity now. What would you think of the conduct of an apprentice who was destined for a particular trade, and yet confined his training to the learning of another altogether different? What can you think of a man who expects to go to heaven at last, and yet lives here in a way that is entirely different from what he believes heaven to be? Surely the whole analogy of Scripture teaches you that just as the circumstances in which Providence has placed you here must have some affinity to that more advanced state of being to which you aspire, so equally must your moral character correspond with its moral conditions. If this world be but a school of education for the world to come, then manifestly the lessons which you are taught now must have reference to the things to be practised and enjoyed hereafter. How, then, can you expect to be fit for heaven if you have served no apprenticeship to holiness on earth: if you have not been taught in the school of this world the very rudiments of heavenly learning?

The Apostle speaks of hoping to the end for the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. You may expect or desire what you please; but you can only hope for that which you have a right to believe will come. You can only hope and wait for the full revelation of the Lord Jesus, if you have Christ formed in you now, the hope of glory—if you have already in your quickened heart the bud of which that revelation is the expanded blossom and fruit. If you are to behold and enjoy the glorious cherubims of the heavenly world, you must have them represented as it were on the vail of your earthly tabernacle. Your hearts must be tuned now to the heavenly harmonies. Your souls must now be restored by Divine grace to the Divine image; your bodies must have all their powers and senses trained to purity and righteousness. You must exercise yourself unto that godliness which hath the promise of the life to come, as well as of the life that now is. And in proportion as you exercise yourself unto godliness, so will that promise be fulfilled, so will you see and have communion with God, so will you realise your own immortality, and so will you anticipate the full fruition of heaven.

When certain conditions of light are present, if you look through a window at a particular angle into the street, you see a flame apparently outside, flickering strangely in the air. It is only the reflection of the fire in the room on the window-pane. Is not the heaven you see beyond the window of this life, the projected reflection of your present experience? What you are now determines your future; and the heaven of each man is just what he himself makes it, according as the fire of love and holiness burns more or less brightly on the hearth of his heart.

ANOTHER MARY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A LONG ENGAGEMENT," ETC. ETC.



"I REALLY should have given Mary North credit for more common sense. It seems *too* ridiculous. But just look at them, Dr. Everton. Wouldn't one be tempted now to believe that those two were a recognised pair of lovers? It is excusable, of course, for such a mere boy as Walter; calf-love, like the measles, is best had early and done with; but for Mary to listen seriously to all that rubbish—she must be two-and-thirty at the least—absurd woman!"

Dr. Everton, who had obediently glanced in the direction pointed out by Miss Bustridge's eye-glass, gave a guilty start as the object of her rather scornful criticism rose, turned, nodded brightly to them both, and walked away with her companion.

"Thirty-two, Miss Bustridge?" he said, a flush on his thin face. "Ah, when one finds oneself so dangerously near fifty——"

"Oh, Dr. Everton, for a *man*, that is youthful—just in the very prime of ripened manhood," interrupted Miss Bustridge, toying with the knot of ribbons on her sunshade. "No, I won't say a word against your favourite pupil," she continued, "scarcely over twenty, poor boy; Mary has always been such a friend of his mother's, naturally they would feel like sisters, and Mary used to help Walter with his exercises and scold him about his French verbs, like—well, just like an aunt. And now there is quite a report in the town, and no wonder. Mrs. Smith told me she had heard for a *fact* that Walter starts for the Hague as Miss North's *fiancé*, to come back and claim her at the end of a year. I have felt so anxious ever since, poor thing, thinking of the wreck of her happiness, and her extraordinary delusion, when she has her widowed sister and those two children to devote her life usefully and honourably to—*for*, I mean. Ah, the trust of little ones is a very sweet responsibility, I often say, as I look at your dear little Ethel, Dr. Everton, left motherless *so* early. You must find it so difficult to watch over her health and all the little things a woman can do; you remember those exquisite lines of Mrs. Browning's—something about tying sashes. I know——"

"Please excuse me," said Dr. Everton, quite alarmed. "I want particularly to speak to Mr. Brown about his boy—good afternoon," and he was gone.

Miss Bustridge bit her lip, but recovered herself in a moment as she heard the rustle of a silk dress on the August scorched lawn and turned with a conscious smile to her friend and gossip, Mrs. Smith, who said, meaningly—

"I am afraid I have frightened the doctor away, Miss Bustridge; and you seemed to be having *such* an interesting conversation."

"Oh, well, a talk with Dr. Everton is sure to have something interesting about it," said Miss Bustridge, with girlish confusion. "Just as you came up, I was repeating something of Mrs. Browning's——"

"What, my dear, the Brownings who have just come to the Manor?—taken it for four months, I hear; Now, can she be related to the Mr. Browning who used to be so attentive to Mrs. Murray when——"

"My dear Mrs. Smith, *no*," returned Lavinia, with the slightest curl of her thin lips. "I mean the great poetess."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Smith. "I never pretend to be up in all the new-fangled poetry and novels that girls waste their time over; as my dear father used to say, it was better to bring us up useful than ornamental, and my late poor husband often told Mr. Smith—'Let me bring a friend in when I will, Rebecca has always a good dinner for us, and not a bit of fuss about it.' Joseph often repeats his words; and how could I have managed it, what with the flightiness of the maids, if I had dawdled about with a book in my hands all the morning?"

"Ah well, Mrs. Smith," said Lavinia, "we unmarried ladies have the advantage of a little more leisure, of course. But really, we must join the others; what delightful garden-parties Mrs. Temple gives—invites the whole town, kind creature! Now, the vicar's, last Tuesday, was much more exclusive—not more than a dozen of us invited. Ah, you were not there, I think, Mrs. Smith?"

We will leave Miss Bustridge to her description. Mrs. Smith had several questions to ask, and particularly wished to ascertain some little details—whether this or that was or was not flavoured with the other, and if the Jones girls wore their new dresses from London, etc., and we will see why the young host, Mr. Walter Temple, instead of helping his mother in the entertainment of her large party, is devoting himself so exclusively to Miss Mary North, who scarcely ever plays tennis, and is already called Aunt Mary by half the children of her acquaintance. We shall find them in the rustic yew arbour, where, in the school-days so many years ago, Mary discovered Walter in one of his many boyish freaks. She has a teasing habit of reminding him of such little incidents at inconvenient and sentimental moments, and he is uncomfortably certain, by the naughty twinkle in her brown eyes, that she is thinking now of that long-past time.

"Mary," he says, with boyish petulance, "you might be serious for five minutes, I should think, when I shan't bother you again for a whole year. But I

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really believe you don't care a bit what becomes of me."

"I care very much indeed," said Mary penitently, "and I shall miss you dreadfully."

"Ah! but you can't think how *I* feel, Mary—just as if I had a lump of lead here, instead of a heart. I've never been like other fellows—Dick Clement, for instance. He falls in love with every fresh girl he sees."

"But you don't see any new faces, my dear boy," remarked Mary. "No, I don't do you injustice. I know you care for me more than for anyone you have ever seen; but that is the point. Your fate waits for you somewhere—in the school-room, perhaps—and when you *do* meet her, I shall be what you ought to think me now—your dear Aunt Mary, who has scolded and petted you all your life. *She* is a Rosalind, or some other lovely name, I dare say, instead of plain Mary."

"It is the dearest name in the world to me," said the young man, looking at her steadily, with honest blue eyes. "At least you will tell me—have I a rival?"

"Yes, two," replied Mary. "Little Rose and Millie."

"Oh well, Mrs. Murray will be jealous of you some day, and fly off with the children," said Walter, brightening up. "I shan't despair, Mary. This time next August, you will see me back again, to claim my *wife*—yes, I *will* say it. You try to seem so horribly decided, but it's no use; you are Mrs. Murray's sister, and no one ever knew her in the same mind two minutes together."

Mary laughed, but shook her head.

"I shall take great care of your mother when you are gone, Walter. We shall read your letters together, and knit your socks, whilst you are fraternising with the Dutchmen. Mind you send me some tulip bulbs in the autumn."



"It is the dearest name in the world to me."

"And you will write to me, Mary?"

"Of course I will! You shall have all the news of Ashtown fresh and crisp from Miss Bustridge's manufactory."

"I wonder if she will get round old Toffee?" said Walter. "I should think the boys would strike if she came peering and prying about the place. No more hot sausages in the dormitory then, Mary. What stunning big cakes you used to make for us!"—with a deep sigh.

"I believe you were only fourteen yesterday," laughed Mary. "People will be going away; I won't stay here another minute. Good-bye. I hope you will be very happy, and—and I shall be *very* glad to see you back again—*with* a moustache!"

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Mary North and her widowed sister lived in the aristocratic part of Ashtown. Their house, of substantial red brick, stood in the midst of a walled-in garden. It had once overflowed with the life and merriment of a large family party, but one after another the young people had left the old roof, until Mary alone remained to nurse her aged parents. Just before their death the youngest daughter, Lilias, lost her husband, and came home again with her two little girls. Mary was now really, as well as nominally, the mistress of the "Firs," and being passionately fond of children, found in her nieces the great pleasure of her life.

The sisters are sitting in the cool drawing-room the day after Mrs. Temple's garden party. Rose and Millie are busy with their dolls; their aunt has a pile of account-books before her, and Lilias, sitting at the window, is yawning over the latest volume from the library.

"I begin to miss Walter Temple already," she says. "Ashtown gets duller and stupider every day. How *can* you pretend to like it? I suppose it must be because you have never known anything better; but I should have thought you would hate to turn into a cabbage, when we might just as well let this prison of a house, and enjoy ourselves in town for a year or two. I don't believe you ever were a girl, Mary; and you can't realise how hard it is for me to have my life over and done with at five-and-twenty."

"But, Lilias," said Mary, looking up from her grocer's bills, "they say London air would be the worst thing possible for you and the children."

"Well, I don't think it would be worse than dying of dulness.—Don't worry me, Rosie."

"What is it, dear?" asked Aunt Mary, as the child was going back to her corner.

"Oh, auntie, my dolly is an 'imbelid' to-day," said Rosie confidentially.

"I'm the doctor, then," said Mary promptly. "Take Ethelinda for an airing in her Bath chair, ma'am—that little stool turned upside down, Rosie," she added, in a stage whisper; and Ethelinda, with her weak back propped up by a cookery-book, was pushed round the room in solemn state.

"Mind! you've put one foot in the sea, Rosie!" Millie called out. "I'm playing Yarmouth, Aunt Mary. This is the pier, and the family is digging in the sand.—Mother, when shall we go to the seaside again?"

"There, Mary!" exclaimed Mrs. Murray reproachfully; "you see even that child is pining for a breath of sea air. Why not go to Scarborough?"

"If we do we will take little Ethel Everton with us," said Mary meditatively; "and, Lilias, it *will* be more pleasant for you to be away for a time. Have you heard that Arthur Browning has taken the Manor for the shooting season?"

"Arthur Browning coming!"—and a lovely flush spread over Lilias's delicate face. "Oh, how it will bring back the memory of those happy days!"

Then, after a pause, and pouting—

"It is just like you, Mary, to hurry me off directly you see the chance of a little brightness and happiness in my life! And I'm sure poor dear Fred would be the last person to grudge me any pleasure!"

"We will go to Scarborough for a month, at least!" said Mary, with a decided air of annoyance. "Now, children, run and have your hats put on, and we will go and ask Dr. Everton if we may take Ethel with us next Monday! *I* confess to wanting a change, too, Lilias!"

Her sister lifted her pretty eyebrows incredulously.

"I shall really believe that horrid Miss Bustridge is right, Mary, and that you *do* care for Walter Temple! But it is *too* ridiculous!" with a little musical laugh. "You seem almost old enough to be his mother—certainly his maiden aunt! Now, Dr. Everton *would* be more suitable. You could get the poor man's muddled accounts into order, go to all the school cricket-matches—how I detest boys!—and"—but Mary here left the room in a tiff, and Mrs. Murray's sketch was never finished. She placidly leant back on her cushions, and murmured, "I wonder if Arthur will think me very much altered!"

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A year has passed away, bringing many changes with it, and a few silver threads in Mary North's brown hair. She is standing before the long oak-framed mirror in her drawing-room now, and looks at them with a little sigh.

"Poor Walter!" she is thinking. "Am I selfish, I wonder? But his mother tells me it is the dearest wish of her heart, and his letters are so affectionate and manly, and everyone says he is so steady and earnest. I *do* love him very dearly, and miss him more every day. I cannot bear this house now the children have gone. I believe Lilias would have let me keep them, but Arthur Browning would not hear of it! Of course, it is quite proper that he should be so fond of them! And what was the use of asking me to come and see them in Edinburgh whenever I liked!" Another deep sigh. "Well, the letter is written now, and his mother will give it to him. Perhaps he is reading it this very minute! I *will* make him happy, dear fellow! He shall have as many tarts and sweet things as he likes! If he were not such a boy, I dare say I shouldn't love him half so much. I hope he will like this muslin—but I'm afraid Lilias is right, and I *am* rather too plump for the æsthetic style! Oh dear, how silly I am! I'll *make* myself read some of these 'Short Studies.' Dr. Everton is sure to ask what I think of them! I

might be a girl of nineteen, my heart beats so ridiculously! Ah me, I wish I were!"

At that moment there was a well-known step on the gravel, a tap at the French window, and Walter Temple came in, looking eagerly round.

"My dear Mary!" he exclaimed, seizing both her hands in his, "how glad I am to see you; and you look so well! Nicer than ever, I declare! It *is* jolly to be back again! And so Lilias is married and gone; how dull you must feel without the children! My dear, weddings seem the fashion, don't they?"

"Did your mother give you my letter, Walter?"

"Letter? no! What should I want with a letter when we can have a good talk; and I've a thousand things to tell you! Why, how you are trembling, Mary! Did I startle you, coming in so suddenly? I'm awfully rough and thoughtless!"

"No, no, Walter! I was longing to see you; and you *have* a moustache, after all!" she went on, with a rather unsteady laugh.

Walter blushed like a girl.

"I hurried away from mother, and came on here to you, Mary, because—well, because I wanted to tell you that you are the cleverest woman in the world—really and truly!"

"And you have only just discovered that!" laughed Mary, her brown eyes sparkling.

"How pretty you look to-night!" said Walter, with a natural, boyish admiration which was the sweetest flattery to our poor Mary.

"Now talk sensibly, silly boy!" she said. "You have only told me *one* of the thousand things, and that I knew before! I mean about my cleverness, of course. The other little fact you have the credit of first finding out!"

"I'm going to talk about myself, Mary."

"It is a big subject," said Mary demurely. "I'm sure you have grown an inch or two since you have been away."

"Mary, you must and shall come and live at the Hague when we are settled; you have nothing to keep you in Ashtown now. You are so jolly! I really like a talk with you better than with anybody else in the world—well, at least, second perhaps, though she is not so clever exactly as you," in great confusion. "There, it is coming out, but I know you will say you guessed it long ago, when I wrote about that Scotch family who were so good to me when I was ill. I had a narrow squeak! Why, how pale you are, Mary! I am all right again, and better than ever. Where was I? Oh yes! I really don't know when it began—my falling in love with her, I mean—but she is the loveliest, sweetest girl—very fair, with eyes like violets, and golden hair that ripples down to her waist. She is *Mary*, too. Do you remember how I told you that it was the dearest name on earth to me? And"—he went on, speaking in a low, steady voice, and grasping Mary's hand firmly—"I must thank you for what seemed to me then very cruel and cutting words. But they were very true, after all. I did *not* love you as a man loves his 'fate,' though I did and do love you as a man loves his dear elder sister, and all my life I hope to show you, Mary, what that means. I never knew what true affection I felt for you, and never realised all I owed to your influence, until I knew and loved *her*."

Then there was a dead silence, and at last Mary North rose, and, with lips as cold as ice, gave a last farewell kiss to her boy-lover. "God bless you both," she said, very quietly. "I shall prize my brother's affection, Walter, as one of the few treasures left to me."

Then Walter, feeling as though further words were impossible to them both just now, pressed her hand, and went away again through the open window, with the last rays of the sunset, and Mary was left alone in the gathering darkness: she covered her face, and moaned aloud.

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Yes, my dear Constance, with your eighteen years, and parties and flirtations, women *do* long for, and sometimes even expect, happiness after thirty! Very foolish and absurd of them, of course; and let us hope that Mary North, like a reasonable person, will some day be of your opinion. But though I know your sympathies are entirely with that pretty young creature—the other Mary, tripping across the prim Dutch parlour, and humming snatches of Scotch ballads to herself—the very apple of her parents' eyes—still, I must say a word for my poor friend. This was her first love, even though her hair *is* getting grey! She somehow had missed her girlhood at its proper season, with pressing family cares and responsibilities on her young shoulders; and, strangely enough, those golden dreams, which you believe, Constance, to be the sole property of happy youth, had come thus late to her. The awaking was sharp and cruel. But courage, Mary! Life is not over for you yet; there are many desolate hearts wanting comfort which you can cheer; and a child's clinging arms will solace you, even though you never receive the sacred name of mother.

Why have I written these prosy lines, knowing that any "Constance" who happens to read the story will be sure to skip them? I should have done it myself, at your age, my dear!

* * * * * *

And now I must ask you to come with me to the Hague, without any of the annoyances of the voyage! I shall not let you linger to admire the glowing beds of begonias, or to exclaim over the fearful and wonderful tidiness of the thrifty Dutch housewives, but we will come at once into this cosy room, where you can breathe the native air of—dare I say?—a little comfortable disorder; or shall I offend our pretty young hostess, who would instantly say, "It is all Walter's fault!" (which it is!)

Just now she is softly playing one of the "Songs without Words," whilst her husband, sitting by the window, seems quite absorbed in a closely written letter.

At last she glances round, and, a little piqued at this absorption, says—

"Really, Walter, Ashtown must be a wonderful place! What *can* your mother find to write to you about?—four sheets covered! You never have letters now from that delightful Miss North! Do you remember showing me some of hers when you were ill,

with such ridiculous stories of a Miss Bustridge? What has beco[illegible] of her?"

"Mother mentions her here. You can see what she says, if you like, Mary," replied Walter.

And leaning over his shoulder, his wife read, in Mrs. Temple's flowing old-fashioned handwriting:—

"Mary North is looking very bright and well, and is fully occupied. She has taken two of your Cousin William's six boys, and has undertaken to provide for their education for a year, at least; so they live at the 'Firs,' and go backwards and forwards to Dr. Everton's school. I went in to see her last evening, and it seemed like the old times over again. Johnny—he is a steady, hard-working boy—was very busy with his Latin grammar; whilst Mary was pretending to be dreadfully angry with Dick, who had covered the page of his exercise with sketches of 'old Toffee,' as the boys still persist in calling Dr. Everton. (How pleased you used to be, my dear Walter, when I brought you back those packets of 'Everton toffee' after my visits to Brighton!) I think Mary ought to be a little firmer with Dick, I must say. However, the Doctor tells me he has wonderfully improved since he has been under her care. Little Ethel is constantly running in to see 'Aunt Mary,' as they all call her."

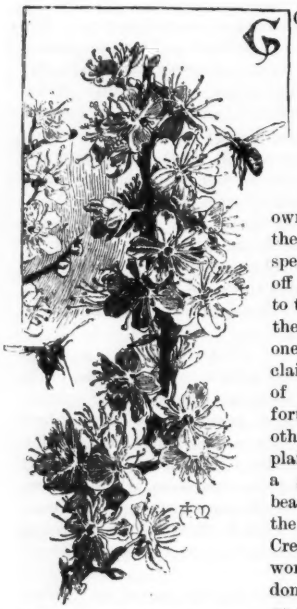
"By the way, Walter, how old is this wonderful Miss North?" asked Mary Temple, looking up from the letter, a slight cloud on her sunny face.

Walter shifted the point of his wife's elbow, which was a trifle sharp, then took one little hand and kissed it.

"How old is Mary North, darling?" he said. "Oh, about thirty-four, I should think."

"Thirty-four, Walter!—nearly forty! Why, quite *old*, poor thing!" said the other Mary, with unaffected pity. "Now leave your letter, like a good boy, and come out in the garden with me."

GOD IN THE BOOK OF NATURE.—I.

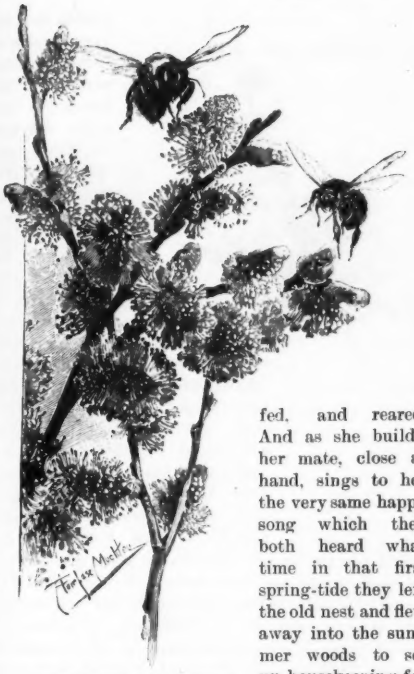


DOMESTIC BEE AND PLUM BLOSSOM.

GOD has given us two great books of truth; that of His written Word, speaking to us from past ages by the voices of His saints and servants, and, above all, of His own Son; and that of the world of nature, speaking from the far-off days of the Creation to this very hour. What the written Word of the one teaches and proclaims as His own gift of truth for our comfort, hope, and life, the other illustrates, and explains, and proves with a grand and simple beauty that echoes back the happy words of the Creator when the great work of Creation was done: "*And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.*" "Good," that is, in its completeness and perfection for the purposes for which it was created, the place it was to fill, the work which it had to do; perfect, in the sense that nothing could be added to it, nothing taken away, without loss or injury to some one of its varied powers, uses, grace, beauty, or life. It is so with man himself, the highest and greatest of God's creatures; and so also with all others, down to the very lowest and least. Nor is it less so in what we call the Book of Nature, spread out before us in the great world of natural things—*i.e.*, the things about us which spring, and grow, and perish, and yet continue to spring, and grow, and revive, day by day, and month after month, and season by season, year by year, age after age, with unbroken regularity, in exact order and unchanging fitness.

Great or small, mean or mighty, each creature has its own instinct, intelligence, capacity, hidden sense, enough to guide, control, and fit it for the life it has to lead, the work it has to do, the food it has to seek, the young it has to rear, the enemies it has to fear, the dangers to be avoided, the future (in some cases) to be provided for. This hidden sense is born in and with it, as it has been age after age from the very beginning of time.

Thus it happens, to our wonder and delight, that the bee builds her tiny cell of wax of the very same, exact material, size, and shape as when she first built it among the groves of Paradise. There has been no change, no need of possible improvement. Each single bird builds her nest by a like hidden law, in her own way, her own fashion, unlike that of any other bird. The robin never builds hers like the swallow, nor the wren like the lark. The tiny tit-mouse may build in the hollow of an old stump, or in a crevice or hole in a ruined wall, but never the swift or the nightingale. Each has her own favourite, known haunt; each chooses her own sort of material—feathers or grass, mud or thistle-down, twigs or moss. These she gathers and uses after the secret influence of her own instinct, and little by little builds up, and at last completes, a nest exactly like that in which she was herself once born, brought up.



WILD BEES AND WILLOW BLOOM.

fed, and reared. And as she builds, her mate, close at hand, sings to her the very same happy song which they both heard what time in that first spring-tide they left the old nest and flew away into the summer woods to set up housekeeping for themselves. The linnet never pipes like a blackbird, nor does a nightingale chatter like that busybody the starling. One and all, every family and tribe keeps to its own song and times of singing, its own fashions, habits, and ways, and, oddly enough, its own language. The ringdove never talks to her young folks as the partridge whispers to her mate, or calls to her callow brood as she leads them out to feed in the dewy fields; neither, perhaps, understands what the other is saying; though if a hawk suddenly sweeps along over the hedgerow, there is a cry of alarm which every bird within hearing understands in a moment, and is ready to join in.

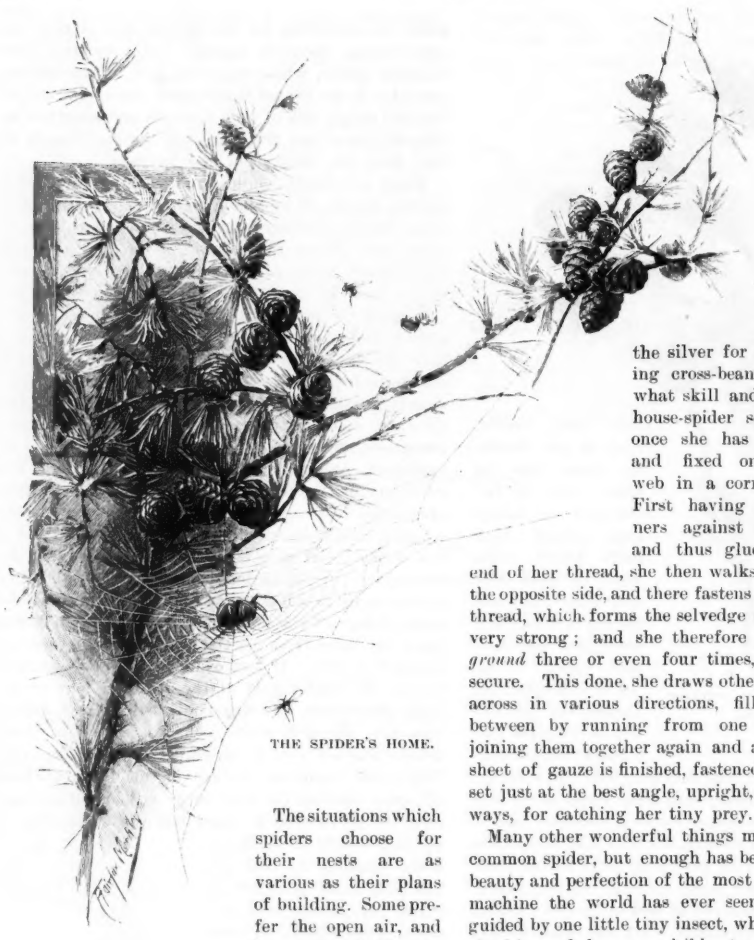
No wild bee ever builds her nest like a wasp, or manufactures paper out of grassy fibres, withered leaves, decayed wood, or scrapings of bark. No wasp ever lived in a hive with a family of his own kin, though, thief as he is, he often tries to pass the sentries at the door of the beehive, and feast on the honey which he knows to be there stored up. The wasp (*vespa*), indeed, builds a six-sided cell, like that of her relation the honey-bee, and lays up a store of honey for the use of her future brood, but for the most part underground, or perchance in a bush or hedgerow—in a nest of her own contriving, and with paper of her own making; the internal domestic arrangements of all the species of paper-makers (wasps and hornets) being always the same. But, however wonderful the paper nest of the wasp or the hornet may be, and however curious and clever the way in which she builds it, and however wise all her plans for providing for her family and getting her own living, there is another little creature, the common spider, whose ways are just as remarkable, and who, if she cannot make paper, can spin a web of fine and dainty silk of such strength and beauty as no human weaver can rival, or even imitate, though he may have the finest loom ever invented.

There are nearly eight hundred kinds of British spiders, nearly all of whom weave webs, and almost every variety working after a fashion and pattern of their own. From the palace* of the king down to the poorest hovel of the peasant, the house-spider finds a home in some quiet nook or other. Among the rafters of the roof, along the smooth surface of the ceiling, and in the corners of the window, wherever there are flies, there, sooner or later, Madame Spider is sure to be found. And there she spins her fairy-like cunning web, every line drawn as truly as the cleverest mathematician could draw it with scale, compasses, and ruler. Yet the tiny spider has had no teaching. At once, as soon as she left the nest and crept out into the world, she began to spin; choosing always the best corner for her work, knowing exactly where it should be strong and where it needed but a few threads, and able, if it were swept away by the housemaid's broom, to build another web, still better and stronger, in a few hours. Or, supposing that she needs change of place among the rafters, or to transplant her house from one tree or bush to another—in a trice it is done. If you examine a spider, you will find at the hinder part of the abdomen four or six little projections, like tiny teats, each pierced with a tiny hole through which comes a thread of such infinite fineness that it is scarcely visible to the eye. This is her "spinneret" or weaving machine, by which she spins together the four or six strands into a fairy rope, strong enough to build her web, or to support her own weight as she hangs down floating in the air. The silk itself is stored up inside her, in the form of a sticky gum, which, in some wondrous fashion, on being exposed to the air instantly dries up into a thread of fine, hard silk. Taking, then, a drop of this gum, she gently draws out of it a long thread, and having fastened one end of it to the rafter, or twig, lets herself slowly down, spinning as she goes, stopping where she will, or swinging to and fro like the pendulum of a clock. By-and-bye she touches the edge of some other beam, or bush, or wall, or goes down to the ground, but always ready to spin a fresh thread or mount nimbly back by the old one.



SPINNERET OF SPIDER FROM WHICH THE WEB IS SPUN (MAGNIFIED).

* So said Agur the son of Jakeh, 3,000 years ago, and so it is now. "*She taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.*"—Prov. xxx. 28.



THE SPIDER'S HOME.

The situations which spiders choose for their nests are as various as their plans of building. Some prefer the open air, and hang the fatal network up among shrubs or plants, where flies and small insects abound; others choose the warmer, darker corners inside the house, old stable, or barn; but whichever is chosen, there she spins the same wonderful thread of silk, so fine that it cannot be wound off alone, yet so tough and strong as to stand both rain and wind, and bear the weight of the cunning weaver and a score of flies. One hundred and fifty yards of it—all that can be drawn from a single insect—weigh about one-twentieth of a grain; and it is said that a rope of it an inch thick (if it could be made) would bear a weight of seventy tons, and so exceed in strength a bar of steel of equal thickness. The silk is of two colours, golden and silver-grey, drawn from separate parts of the spinneret, and quite different in kind and texture: the yellow, the stronger and more elastic, being for the strong, straight, outer edges of the web, and the silver for the swaying, bending cross-beams. See, now, with what skill and wisdom the little house-spider sets to work when once she has chosen the place and fixed on the size of her web in a corner of the ceiling. First having pressed her spinners against one of the walls, and thus glued fast to it one end of her thread, she then walks along the wall to the opposite side, and there fastens the other end. This thread, which forms the selvedge of her net, must be very strong; and she therefore *goes over the same ground* three or even four times, so as to make all secure. This done, she draws other threads across and across in various directions, filling up the spaces between by running from one to the other, and joining them together again and again until the tiny sheet of gauze is finished, fastened into its place, and set just at the best angle, upright, horizontal, or sideways, for catching her tiny prey.

Many other wonderful things might be told of the common spider, but enough has been said to show the beauty and perfection of the most wondrous spinning machine the world has ever seen, all managed and guided by one little tiny insect, who serves no apprenticeship and has no visible teacher, and yet the very moment she has to get her own living is as absolute a master of the craft as if she had been at work for a hundred years. She spins her own silk, twists it into threads, and weaves them into such fairy lace-work as the science and art of man can never match.

Whence, then, comes the wisdom and the skill? From Him only, our own Father in Heaven, who created us in body and in soul; who gave us eyes to search for and to see these wonders of His Almighty hand; minds to consider their beauty and perfection; hearts to feel His goodness in providing for all creatures; souls to magnify and bless Him, as we read but a page in the wondrous Book of Nature.

B. G. JOHNS, M.A.

"COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



THOSE whom God has anointed with the consecrating oil of sorrow have a ministry to accomplish for Him. Some of His servants can go forth to preach and teach, to defend His truth, to uplift His banner and oppose the wrong; you, perhaps, are kept indoors, and your work is given up as concerns teaching the young, visiting the sick, standing in the forefront of the battle, the heat of the busy vineyard. Yet the Lord has not set you free from His happy service; yours is a mission as holy and blessed as that of the most active and energetic Christian worker.

> "To tend the vines, the grapes to store,
> Thou dost appoint for some;
> Thou hast Thy young men at the war—
> *Thy little ones at home.*"

The anointing of sorrow, whether it has come to you in the form of sickness, infirmity, pain, or need, has brought with it a glorious dowry of heavenly comfort. God's afflicted children are His witnesses how He compensates, cheers, and comforts; and those who, being cast down, prove the fulness of Divine consolation, have the ministry laid upon them to bear the grail of love and strength and cheer to other people's lives. "*Comfort ye, comfort ye My people,*" saith your God. This is His bidding to your soul; there is much weariness, much heart-sickness, much despondency, many a secret burden that the life comforted by God can help. Let it not be in vain that *you* have a strong consolation, who, amid every outside storm, can steal to Jesus, the Hope of His people, the Harbour of the drifting, the Covert from the blast.

If you are in need of comfort to-day, if depression is clouding your horizon just now, the message for you is—*try how the Lord can comfort.* Not with vain and mocking promises that will never be fulfilled, not with cold platitudes, not with loving goodwill that lacks power to perform, will the Lord God comfort you if you cast yourself and your every trouble upon His heart. "As one whom his mother comforteth," saith the Lord, "so will I comfort you." Let the sweetness of this promise be tried and proved in your own experience. A little child can go through a great deal with the tender face of the mother bent watchfully above, with those tireless, patient arms clasping the little sufferer loved unspeakably. So the Lord takes this sweet thought of tireless eyes, of helpful arms, of fadeless love, and makes the comfort a *mother* brings near, a faint, fair blossom of promise of the full, rich, radiant flower of His own comforting.

"*To strengthen by company*—that is comfort," the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse reminds us—"*co*, together with, and *fort*, meaning strength." Since you have God's strength for company, since "His love is as great as His power," and His weakest saint can draw every moment upon the eternal springs of His comfort, will you not be of good cheer, and take your rest with thanksgiving, and praise the Lord that He anoints and prepares you to strengthen the faint-hearted that pass your way? "*Comfort ye My people,*" saith your God.

Forget your own special cross for awhile—the Lord is thinking about *it* and *you*—let that suffice. Let Christian love make you quick to read the shadow on your neighbour's brow, the wistful look in the eyes, the tokens that confess the life as weary and heavy-laden. You little know how that life may be needing a message concerning God the Comforter: speak a word concerning the Merciful One, the Mighty, the Pitiful, the prayer-hearing Lord—it will come like sweet music to the tired and troubled breast, it will come like an inspiring psalm. Beecher said once that when he listened to "the Chimes of old Trinity," one bell came to him across the water clearer and sweeter than all the rest; so, in all the Bible-music, there were words he held precious with exceeding sweetness—"*The God of all comfort.*"

If you are too weak to speak, then strengthen the sinking heart, the troubled face that watches you, by a glorious, patient, triumphant witness that the God of comfort sustains you, supports you, keeps you from repining, floods the shadows with such light that your own face catches the glow. By lip, by life, by tender word, by victorious faith and patience, take up the blessing that was breathed by one in the past who knew many comforts, yet counted religion the chief:—"He who, in answer to my prayer, has helped me when every prospect of help vanished—that God who has safely conducted me, not merely through flowery paths, but likewise across precipices and over burning sands—may this God be *thy* God, thy refuge, thy comfort, as He *has* been mine!"

M. S. H.

AT A CHRISTIAN CHINESE WEDDING.



"We heard the sound of pretty hymn-singing."—*p. 753.*

THOSE of our readers who may remember the young Chinese couple—Lee-fok-tsoo and Yung-tsü-ting—whose betrothal was described in our pages in June, 1889, will be interested in a brief account of the wedding with which, a few days ago, that initial ceremony was consummated.

According to the invitation sent us—the now familiar large crimson envelope with cross-bands of a lighter red inscribed with our Chinese names—we presented ourselves at 10 a.m. at the Mission Boarding School, where the bride-elect has dwelt from early childhood, first as a pupil, latterly as a teacher. The ladies in charge, who received us, had added to their foreign dress some pretty touches of Chinese fashion: ornaments of yellow everlastings were fastened in their hair, and their black silk gowns were brightened with silk-embroidered native scarfs.

But we had to learn afresh the oft-repeated lesson that in this country punctuality is its own and only reward. Nearly two hours we waited for the bridegroom's coming; there was a difficulty, we were told, in his procuring a sedan-chair, as many marriages were taking place in the native city, the day being considered a "lucky" one for the purpose: and for a bridegroom to walk to his wedding, however humble his rank or adjacent his abode, was impossible.

At length we were admitted to inspect the bride, whose four hours' toilette was just completed: and a marvellous spectacle, truly, was the figure seated motionless in the centre of a room adjoining the



A CHINESE BRIDE.

mission-hall. Gorgeously elaborate was her array from head to foot: the former crowned with a helmet-like erection of a material resembling turquoise enamel, wrought into the finest filigree work, from which projected glittering artificial beetles and butterflies, and other quaint, rich ornaments, the whole surmounted by three large round tufts of crimson silk, arranged tiara-wise. From the brim of this head-gear fell all around strings, about half a yard in length, of pearl and ruby beads. Just visible through these at the back, were broad loops of jet-black hair, stiff and solid-looking as polished ebony, and decorated with artificial pink roses. Her principal vestment was a long tunic, whose foundation fabric of crimson satin was scarcely discernible amidst its embroidery of gold: a corner turned back, lined with emerald satin, disclosed an under-skirt panelled in brilliant red and blue silk, this also profusely trimmed with gold embroidery. A belt of scarlet satin, studded with tablets of white cornelian, crossed the waist behind. From the front edge of her head-dress a red silk veil fell almost to the ground, adding much to her præter-human aspect. The whole costume was, I learned, hired for the day.

Into some aperture of head-gear, *coiffure*, and veil, I contrived to insert the sympathising inquiry, "Are you very tired?" and caught a faintly whispered reply, "Veh sadoo" (Not tired), as I was called off with the admonition that the damsel must neither speak nor be spoken to.



A CHRISTIAN CHINESE WEDDING.

And now, mingled with the discordant piping of native professionals on the verandah, we heard the sound of pretty hymn-singing, and found that the waiting company in the adjoining hall, consisting of about forty Chinese school-girls and as many friends of the bride and bridegroom, were thus relieving the weariness of the long delay. A bright and pleasing scene was presented by the interior of the little mission church, still gay with Christmas trappings, evergreen stars and festoons, many-coloured paper flags and flowers, inscriptions in Chinese characters, some on gilded cardboard, some most ingeniously formed in foliage of fir.

At one end was a platform, where a native teacher

was playing the harmonium, and where now the officiating missionary and the nearest relatives of bride and bridegroom took their stand. For the wedding pair was spread the inevitable red carpet, in this case consisting of a foreign scarlet blanket. Strange to say, I had last seen this custom of a bridal carpet in far-off Finland, where, sometimes of costliest texture, it invariably figures among the wedding gifts.

Suddenly, on some signal of the bridegroom's approach, the singing ceased, and the young man entered, attended by his friends, he and they alike dressed in gowns of deep purple satin, and hats of velvet or fur, the crowns covered with scarlet fringe, and surmounted by a crystal and gilt ball. Then appeared his brilliant, if not graceful, bride, half led and half supported by two motherly Chinese women in every-day dress, save for a broad bordering of gold-garnished azure satin on their large hanging sleeves.

A simple marriage service, partly from a Chinese version of the English Prayer Book, was performed by one who had befriended the bridegroom from his childhood, and trained him as a helper in his mission work. No ring was used, but Lee-sien-sang (Mr. Lee) made deep obeisance to the new-made Lee-niang-niang (Mrs. Lee) in native fashion, and then a joyously sung hymn concluded the ceremony.

Afterwards the bridegroom, with his native friends, partook of dinner, the women in a separate room, while the heroine of the day was conveyed to some retreat where the foreign lady visitors were privileged to see her enjoy some refreshment, the red veil now lifted from a very calm and contented countenance. Thankful she must have been for this merciful violation of Chinese etiquette, which would have prohibited her tasting food till the end of the day.

Finally the bridal pair, closely encased in sedan-chairs, adjourned to the home prepared by the husband hard by in the native city, where, as we have good reason to believe, a very happy and useful life awaits them.

ALICE JANE MUIRHEAD.

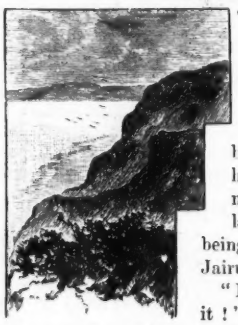


STEPHEN FLEMING'S PICTURE.

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit."

CHAPTER I.



"WELL, Laurie, what do you think of it?"

Laurence Fleming had been standing for a long time in silence before the big easel in his father's studio. A nearly finished painting lay thereon, the subject being "The Raising of Jairus's Daughter."

"I like it, dad! I do like it!" said nine-year-old Laurie, not removing his gaze from the two principal figures in the picture: the Saviour, who stood by the bedside, holding the girl's hand in His own with what one *felt* was a clasp both strong and tender; the child, her white face lifted, her eyes, newly opened from their death-sleep, fixed on His with answering love. "Tell me what it means! Who is that Man? and what is He doing?"

"His name is Jesus; and the girl is supposed to be the daughter of a great man called Jairus, whom Jesus, as the story goes, raised to life again after her death. It 's as good as a fairy tale, isn't it?"

"It doesn't exactly sound like a fairy tale," said Laurence, considering; "isn't it true?"

"Not more so than the fairy tales, Laurie. It is true that there once lived a Man called Jesus, a poor Man who lived in a poor town in an out-of-the-way part of the world; but it is not true that He ever raised the dead to life, or did any other of the wonderful things they have put down to His credit."

"Why have they put them down to His credit if He never did them?"

Stephen Fleming shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"Human nature loves the marvellous," he said, forgetting the tender years of his interlocutor; "and the Man lived in a superstitious age. They believed in this kind of thing then, and afterwards even more blindly. But people are growing wiser now."

"Oh, I wish it was true!" exclaimed Laurence, whom the picture fascinated greatly; "for He looks

so beautiful, father, so kind, as if He was so glad to make the little girl better!"

"I hope all my critics will be as easy to please as you are, my boy!" and Mr. Fleming laughed again.

"What have you put a gold ring round His head for?" Laurie asked next.

"Well, you see, Jesus—this poor Man (a carpenter He was)—fancied that He was God, or else others fancied it. The old masters always painted Him with a halo round His head, so, somehow, one falls into the absurd habit."

"Did the old masters believe Jesus was God?"

"Yes, for the most part."

"Does anybody believe it now?"

"Oh, yes! every superstition has its votaries."

"You don't, dad?"

"No, my boy."

Laurie heaved a deep sigh.

"I wish you did," he said simply, turning a pair of large, thoughtful blue eyes up to his father's face.

"Why, dear?"

"Because He looks so sweet and kind, and I love Him. I'd like to think He was God, and could make dead people alive again. I wish it was true! Don't you think, dad, that maybe—just *maybe*, you know—it *is* true?"

"I think everything is one great Maybe! But I don't want my dear little boy to grow up credulous and superstitious. Fairy tales are all very well for the age of ignorance, but afterwards only that which can be proved should be credible."

Mr. Fleming had a way of talking, half to himself, in language of which Laurie only caught the drift. Laurie was quite used to it.

"It makes people bad to believe in Jesus, does it?" he asked now. "Do you think that man that was hanged yesterday—I heard nurse telling cook about it—believed in Him?"

"It makes them no better, as a rule," said Mr. Fleming, ignoring the question of the criminal.

"Well, no; it couldn't, you know, if it isn't true! But, dad, you've made Him look so good! When you are out, and I wake in the dark—so frightened—I should like Him to hold my hand and look at me like that. And if I died, dad, you could have asked Him to come and make me alive again. But still," after a thoughtful pause, "there 's God. Nurse says He can do anything He wants; and if Jesus isn't God, still there *is* God, father."

"Listen to me, Laurie. There may, or there may not, be a God. If there is, we know nothing of Him. Nurse is both ignorant and disobedient, for I have forbidden her to talk to you on these subjects. Be content with this: that your own loving father is here, as I am content to know my darling little son's love and trust are mine. We shall always have each other. Now, go and play with your soldiers, laddie, and don't trouble your wee head with crazy old superstitions that ere long the world will have forgotten."

When the child had gone, Mr. Fleming took his brush and began to paint. He painted industriously for a little while, then stepped back a few paces to contemplate the effect.

"Strange the attraction that still remains about this single historical Figure," he mused; "that it should have such power to move hearts in this nineteenth century! I suppose there will ever be something attractive about genuine enthusiasm, however deceiving and deceived."

Again he worked a little in silence, and again lowered his brush, some new emotion breaking up the cynicism of his face.

"Oh, Laurie! Laurie! you hit your father very hard once!" he murmured aloud. "You have brought me back the memory of forgotten days—days when I too was a child, when I was taught—not to doubt, as your father is teaching you, but to believe."

As he spoke, the artist threw himself back in a chair and covered his eyes with his hands. Before him rose another picture: a pale, sweet-faced woman with a child seated on her knee—his mother and himself. The child had been listening in rapt attention to the "sweet story of old," and in the ears of the man his mother's long-silent voice seemed sounding just as it sounded then—

"'Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go.'"

"Stephen, my own dear son, never forget those words," she said; "never forget that this same Jesus loves and blesses you now. Never forget to pray!"

No, it did *not* "make people bad to believe in Jesus!" For his mother had so believed with fullest, purest faith, and her life had been as nearly perfect as a human being's life can be.

His own life—the life of one far advanced beyond the age of ignorance and superstition—how black it showed against the whiteness of hers!

Stephen Fleming's heart softened involuntarily as he recalled the past. He heaved a deep sigh.

"It is impossible, of course! It is past belief; but, somehow, little Laurie has made me ready to echo his childish longing—'Oh, I wish it was true!'"

CHAPTER II.

STEPHEN FLEMING'S gentler mood did not last long. Indeed, he fought against it, and did his best to return to his old habit of contented unbelief. A man of sense cannot be taken in by fables, however pretty they may be. The cultivated intellect cannot feed on the food which is all-sufficient for women and children. Besides, what ridicule would be heaped on him by the sceptical circle of which he was no obscure member, if he should be found kneeling, or even wishing to kneel, at the feet of the poor Carpenter whom ignorance had made into a God!

Such were some of the thoughts by means of which he hardened his heart afresh.

He resolved that his son should never pass through the struggle between faith and unfaith that he himself had experienced.

"Laurence shall grow up into a man, not a fool!" said Stephen to one of his friends, who applauded the sentiment.

He spoke with proud assurance, thinking not at all of the history of one who disposed of the future in the same positive manner, and to whom it was said —"Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Yet Stephen Fleming, the gifted artist, the logical thinker, was also to be proved a fool; was also to have his wise plans overthrown, his helplessness made apparent.

Though little Laurence was not robust, he was a healthy child, and had never known an ailment serious enough to cause anxiety. So that Stephen was not alarmed when nurse informed him, one day, that "Master Laurie was sickening for something." But when that "something" was pronounced to be scarlet fever, when the small, flushed face ceased to wear a smile in answer to his greeting, when the blue eyes looked on him as if he were a stranger, when the childish voice babbled deliriously or only moaned in pain—then the father's heart was like to break with an anguish of terror and despair—utterly helpless terror and despair! To himself it seemed an impossibility that, as he phrased it, "anything should happen" to his child—his one darling, the idol for whom he thought and toiled, and even existed. It seemed as if the very power of his love, the very passion of his anguish, must keep his treasure alive. But, alas! no love, no anguish, can do this.

"Love is strong as death—and death is strong!"

There is but one weapon that can be used against this enemy, and that Stephen could not use.

Day by day, and finally hour by hour, Laurie grew worse. The servants stole about their work with red eyes and bated breath. The doctor shook his head.

"It's all up with the poor little lad!" he said to the weeping nurse; "he won't last long now."

And the distracted father overheard the words.

"What—what do you mean?" he asked, seizing the doctor by the shoulders with unconscious fierceness. "He is not—*dying?*"

"He is dying," was the brief, sad answer.

Stephen staggered back with a groan that made nurse begin to weep afresh, while the doctor's own eyes grew dim.

The father tottered to the bedside. There, on its white pillows, lay the little white face, no longer moving restlessly to and fro, but deathly still, with half-closed eyelids and parched, parted lips. Not a word, not a glance for him who would have died to save that ebbing life!

For a moment Stephen gazed in silence, then he rushed wildly from the room.

"I can't bear it! I shall go mad!" he cried beneath his breath. "Oh! is there *no* help—*no* hope?"

Up and down the house he wandered, unable to rest anywhere; into the sick-room and out of it again, well-nigh frantic with the anguish that none could comfort.

The celebrated physician, who had been summoned in hot haste, came and went. He could do nothing; there was nothing to be done—but to wait for the end.

At last Stephen wandered into his studio, and there, facing him, lit up by the sunset, stood his finished picture. Almost it seemed an actual scene at which he gazed with dry, despairing eyes: the child's face bright with love and trust, even though still pale with death; the incredulous rapture of the father and mother; the calm, quiet Figure "with the glory-crownèd hair," so gentle, so human, so almighty to help, smiling tenderly at the young girl whom His voice had called back to earth and earthly ties. "One only daughter, and she lay a-dying;" and the artist had one only son who lay dying too. But there was nobody who could restore *him* to life!

There was a strange, passionate bitterness in Stephen's thoughts as he gazed at his picture—the picture Laurie had loved so much. Distinctly he seemed to hear a little, earnest voice saying, "He looks so sweet and kind, and I love Him. I 'd like to think He was God, and could make dead people alive again. I wish it was true! Don't you think, dad, that maybe—just *maybe*, you know—it *is* true?"

A child's words only, only a child's unquestioning love and innocent groundless faith; and yet, maybe, the pure, unworldly instinct could apprehend that which worldly-wise logic had no power to grasp.

"Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

Maybe—just maybe—it was true.

Stephen's heart began to beat wildly.

"Oh! if all that was written of this Man were true, surely He would come now to the help of a father more desolate than the ruler of old! No help but the help of One who could control life and death could avail now. And yet—Stephen could not believe; the long habit of incredulity bound him still. No, no; it was a beautiful tale, but wholly impossible!

Once more that little voice seemed to plead: "Don't you think, dad, that maybe—just *maybe*—it is true?"

With a short, suppressed cry, Stephen fell on his knees and hid his face in his hands.

"Oh! I can't, I can't believe! but if Thou canst help—if Thou hearest me—pity me! Help my unbelief! Give me back my child! give me back my child!"

A moment longer he knelt speechlessly there; then he rose feebly, and tried to smile at his own agony. He felt curiously weak and shaken, but

calmer, and almost ashamed of the momentary impulse which had broken down the philosophical reasoning, the mature decision, of years, and shown him that after all, in spite of himself, he really believed in the existence of Him whom he had denied.

He went heavily back to Laurie's room. At the door he was met by Dr. Grey in a state of unusual excitement.

Then once again the sceptic fell on his knees, but this time to cry, with tears, from the depths of a broken and contrite heart, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!"

* * * * * *

Stephen Fleming neither exhibited nor sold his picture. With Laurie's glad consent, he presented it to a large public hospital, where it remains to this



"'Tell me what it means! Who is that man?'"—*p.* 754.

"I was coming to look for you, Fleming," exclaimed he, speaking below his breath, but hurriedly; "your little son has taken a turn, and, please God, he will be spared to you now. It's almost a miracle, but——"

Putting the good man aside, Stephen hastened to the bed. There lay the small, wan face, faintly smiling. The sunken eyes met his haggard gaze with all their old intelligent love, and, "Dad!" breathed a weak voice, "dad! I'm better!"

day, teaching its silent lesson to rich and poor, to young and old. Beneath the painting, on the lower part of the frame, these words are printed:—

"Be Thou our great Deliverer still,
Thou Lord of life and death;
Restore and quicken, soothe and bless,
With Thine almighty breath;

"To hands that work, and eyes that see,
Give wisdom's heavenly lore,
That whole and sick, and weak and strong,
May praise Thee evermore."

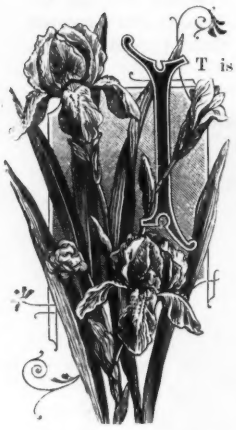
S. W.

THE HYMNS OF HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

IV.—THE HYMN OF THE VICTORS.

(Revelation xv.)



It is ever to be lamented that good men and ingenious have spent more time in discussing the chronology and the historical allusions of the Apocalypse than in trying to discover its perennial lessons for the spiritual life. One idea is continuously forced upon those who read it, not for the purpose of predicting the destiny of the Russian Empire, but for elevating and purifying their own existence; and the idea is this, that the scenes described from chapter to chapter are being always enacted in some portion of the Church, and that similar visions may be witnessed, likewise, in the struggles and triumphs of individual souls. Whatever may be the full relation of the book to the nations of the earth, there can be no doubt of its relation to every Christian by himself. And while this thought intensifies its interest, it ennobles its study by withdrawing the mind from questions which agitate to facts which deepen faith, and nerve and gladden the strength and courage of the soul. It is chiefly in this light that we are considering the Hymns of Heaven.

After the magnificent chorus of the angels, saints, and elders, there passes a remarkable series of pictures. The *Loud Voice* breaks out with a clearness of articulation which none can mistake, and tells the triumph of Christ and the saints. The calumniator of the brethren was cast out from heaven, and the contest—decided in the celestial battle—is transferred to the earth. Forthwith there comes a vision, no longer of the dragon, but of an earthly power—a Beast bearing a combined resemblance to the grace of the leopard, the strength of the lion, and the brutality and coarseness of the bear. It may well represent to us the difference between refined sin, physical passion, and base sensuality; while, at the same time, it proves these to be absolutely one in the sight of God. They are the worship of the Beast or of his image: they are each deadly sin.

And just so soon as this vision is witnessed, behold there is another; for the Lamb stands on Mount Zion to assert the rights and sustain the cause of the saints. It is the visible fulfilment of the old promise, that He will be always and everywhere with His Church; and it is the old prophetic promise which has poured its peace into many a dying soul, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Then arises—whether as a distant sound of the battle we are not told—the surge of multitudinous waters as when the mighty deeps of huge Atlantic are whelmed together, and the roar and peal of thunder as though the firmament were enveloped in fatal strife. But above them all—heard as it has been ever heard by the ears which God has attuned—swells the clear melody of a divine song, and the pulsations of music from divine harps.* Indefinite as is the noise of the waters, more indefinite still is the hymn. It has never come to mortal ears. No mortal memory could carry its accents or learn its words. It has been sung, and is I, suppose, a-singing now, and yet man knows it not. For there are heights of spiritual attainment, and knowledge and perception, when the foot, heavy with the plodding toil of the impure under-world, grows faint; and the head, filled only with bills and profits of earth, grows dizzy and reels. It is the pure alone who can learn and sing that song; they that are claimed early for God and bear His impress from youth to age, and feel in the desire for holiness the dominating passion of life. It is they who, through grace, have attained, and who have learnt to sing the unknown song.

The vision broadens yet. Event follows upon the heel of event.† Three angels appear in the midst of heaven. The first is the minister of the Gospel, addressed to every man, in every place, of every kind. The second declares the ruin of sin even when it is upheld by empire and enriched with prosperity and splendour. The third denounces the certainty of judgment which, unmixed, untempered, and unassuaged, will be poured upon all who bend in service or in fear before the world, and before its fascinating influences and seductive shapes. First of God's messengers is the Gospel, last of them is wrath. The Gospel is His own, the wrath lies within the changeless nature of God's law of perfect justice. It is a law as natural and vigorous as the laws which keep the planets in their course. But all this would need a supplement, did not a voice—that is unattached to any person, and seems to issue from the very centre of heaven—declare the eternal blessedness of the saintly dead. Quiet they are, and at rest in Paradise, where cold winds sweep not, nor tempests break; where no sun beats with torrid rays, nor drenching showers fall; where the passions of sin are never heard, the anxieties of earth never touch; but in peace and blessedness they all await the final triumph of the Great Day, the Harvest Day of Christ. For instantly another angel addressed Him whose throne was the sunlit cloud, and bade Him reap the whole of the autumn fields of earth. This is the eternal security of God's children. Every work—every grape, and every standing ear—is gathered in; the weak

* Rev. xiv. 3. † *Ibid.*, xiv 6–10.

ones and the strong, the slow-ripening fields and the hillsides that drank the colour of the golden sun; the scattered stalks under the shadowing trees, and the rich full shocks of the central plain. Oh, never did they reap so gladly the wheat in the fields of Esdraelon; and never did a Joshua or Caleb bear from any earthly Eshcol such clusters of luscious grapes as the angels gathered then.

Is it not to be expected that the plagues of earth are nearing their close; and that while the sad-faced angels which bear them stand in the background, the whole front of the next vision is filled with those who are thus taken home?* They stand not as the Israelite victors stood, upon the verge of a Red Sea that would soon cast upon its beach the dead of horses and men, but in the very midst of a lustrous sea of glass. It was, as now and then is seen upon our English coasts, when every wind is at rest, and the spring tide has borne its burden to the height, while all the time the noon of July pours full upon it, and the light is gleaming, not from dimpled waves, but the wide unbroken sweep of expanded waters, and all their depth is shot with kindly flame: when there is

> "Such a tide as moving seems asleep,
> Too full for sound and foam,
> When that which drew from out the boundless deep
> Turns again home."

So full and deep is the tide upon that other shore; and full and deep is the mighty voice of triumph which bursts from tongue and stricken harp amongst the conquerors.

I. *Who were they that sang?* It is a question of moment for men still. That sea of glory, shall *we* stand upon it? Can we be uplifted above the worry, the shocks, and the struggles of earth to join the saints? Shall we hold in resurrection hand a harp like theirs, and sing with their gladness and joy? On their very front they bear their history; for like ourselves they were once mingled with the temptations and battles of the world. They have come fresh from them. Could we behold their history in God's Book, we should see the account of their sorrows and resistance, their hopes clouded or crushed, and their steadfastness and faith quailing and all but quenched. Man is man the world through, and no temptation or trial has touched us with its polluting finger which did not touch them. The image of the Beast and the varied semblances of sins, had presented themselves to their minds. The stamp of indulged desire, of unrestrained passion, of selfishness and mean thoughts, of untruth and cowardice, of unmanliness and impurity, was heated ready for their brows and backs as it is for ours. The relation of the forms of sin and low spiritual life to the unprotesting or applauding world was a matter to be settled in the arithmetic of their lives too. The number of the Beast† is sometimes a swelling magnitude, always a perfected and enticing product in the computation of earth. Public opinion, now elevated into a moral law as high in authority and terrible in sanction as that of Horeb, had to be counted with and opposed by them as by us. The morals of their age had to be avoided as a test or guide, and they, as we, had to rise higher than material interests, and explode, with the stout breath of earnestness and sincerity, the bubbles which, though hollow and worthless, were radiant under the worldly sun. They had come victorious from the Beast and from his image, and from his mark and from the number of his name.*

The essence of their triumph lay in this—that they had educated themselves to look upon the *permanent* relation of things. The tendency that always tempts us is to see only the confined and narrow relations that are close about us. Hence there are some who never behold the shape of a cloud, or the glory of a sunset. They think only upon the daily occupation of hand and head, and their converse with their friends embraces no greater theme. But the true mind, disciplined by a sanctified will, grows accustomed to think in a wider range, and to conjure to his imagination nobler shapes of life. Beyond the glare of the present, he sees the brightness of another life, and the reality of another world. He feels that this existence is but a fraction of the future—a little pulsation in the long existence of immortality. He is continually applying the standard of eternal life to the fragmentary portions of existence on earth. His soul travails no doubt, but he has a noble reward. For the fool, sated with selfishness and sensuality, grows a heartless, grumbling pessimist—a plague to friends and to himself: but the cultured saint, lofty in ideal, honest and true in thought and action and aim, is one

> "Of those that eye to eye shall look
> On knowledge, under whose command
> Is earth and earth's; and in their hand
> Is nature like an open book."

Such is the *aspiration* of material science and research; and such the *prospect* and assurance of the saint of God.

II. *See, too, the subject and the value of their Song.* Like nearly every hymn in this Book, it tells of the works of God. It is not silent upon the judgments that are seen, nor upon the sorrows and failures of men; but it looks to the One Hand that is powerful, and it asserts that all the works which are done by God are just works and true.

There is a sense in which we can clearly see this ourselves, for we can distinguish between the operation and the result. There is a solvent with God for the issues of human deeds. Man works while God overrules. God's methods or ways are just. However much of unevenness there be amongst us, and apparent injustice—the wicked reaping good, and the good recompensed only with mishap—yet the long sum of no life is yet made up. We cannot judge our own existence by a single day; and we are absolutely helpless when we attempt to judge the existence of others. Centuries of investigation have been heaped upon centuries; books beyond counting have been written: but, notwithstanding, we are still like children gazing curiously at a great machine, and our

* Rev. xiv. 13.

† Rev. xiii. 18: "His number is six hundred threescore and six."

* Rev. xv. 2.

conclusions and theories are like heaps of shifting sand upon a forsaken shore.

III. *Behold the prospect they hold out.* (1) It is a prospect of advancing holiness to themselves. "Thou only art holy," they cry. Let it be assumed that absolute holiness is the goal of sainthood, and that the saints will surely reach it, then it follows from this ascription that there are huge stages of advancement for the saint in paradise to climb even yet. Though enwrapt within eternal blessedness, there are long distances, we will not say of purity, but of attainments, which they may yet tread. Is this an echo of the "many mansions"* of the Gospel of St. John? Is immortality, then, a range and region of perpetual progress? Are we not to lie down in it and sleep, and let the great worlds of a renewed universe wheel round unthought of and unobserved? The whole of the Book says, No. It speaks of endless activity; of mightier attempts and more glorious achievements than we dared to conceive on the earth: of ceaseless efforts towards a glad success. (2) As to the progress of earth. "All nations," they say, "shall come and worship before Thee." Looking back upon many centuries since, and seeing the course of nations that have lived and died, and of those that still survive, we cannot but feel that these words gave a rude shock to those who looked for an immediate return of our Lord; and rebuke our modern readiness to declare that the end of the present order of things is certainly near. Better is it, however, not to speculate upon the unknown, but to turn to that which is indicated here of actual and possible. Out of the present actual world there is constantly springing, hour by hour, another world, which in its turn begets a fresh condition of things; for nothing sleeps, and events are never still. The prophecy in this light is inspired with force and fruit. There is a progress of the nations, and therefore of those who compose the nations, distinctly foretold. For worship is the condition of progress, development, and advancement. The nation, as the man, which has ceased to worship, has ceased to grow. Ideals then are lost or dissolved. The higher is unattained because there is no vision of the Highest. Energy and strength became puerile and decrepit because we lose faith in the Everlasting Strong. But where worship is real, unflagging, and unabused, where nations can *see* the Eternal One that sits upon His throne, and *hear* the hymns that swell from lips of brothers who have fought the good fight of faith, and by the might of Christ have won, there is the guarantee of national principles that will not be cheaply sold, of national stability that challenges and defies assault, and of national progress that expands and strengthens because it has learnt that there is a rhythm and sweetness in the life which has shaped itself to the changeless law, and an articulate gladness and glory which issues from the cross of self-denial and sacrifice. Such, it seems to us, is the burden of the hymn which they sang—the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb.

* μοναὶ πολλαί.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

AUGUST 17TH. THE TEN LEPERS.

To read—St. Luke xvii. 11—19. *Golden Text—Verse* 17.

THE LEPERS' NEED. (11—13.) Remind how St. Luke in this Gospel shows our Lord's human nature, especially in showing sympathy with cases of sickness and suffering. Also of His dealings with those not Jews. So now mentions His blessing to a Samaritan. Who were the Samaritans?

Brought originally from Babylon by the Assyrian kings (2 Kings xvii. 24), intermingled with survivors of Israelites after dispersion of the Ten Tribes. Not allowed to assist Jews in rebuilding the Temple, became their bitter adversaries. (Ezra iv. 1—5.) Enmity kept up to time of Christ. (St. John iv. 9.) Visited by Him, which gained Him the scornful name of Samaritan. (St. John viii. 48.)

Now one of them, a leper, with nine Jewish lepers, meets Christ. Question on leprosy.

It was *infectious.* Lepers must live apart.

It was *progressive*—spread over whole body.

It was *incurable* by ordinary means.

Notice their appeal to Christ. It showed—

Urgency—cried aloud, lest He pass unheeding.

Sense of need—"have mercy on us."

Faith in Christ's power to heal—"Jesus" (*Saviour*).

Point out how typical all this of a sinner's state.

Sin is infectious—"All have sinned." (Rom. iii. 23.)

Sin is progressive—"the whole head sick and the whole heart faint." (Is. i. 5.)

Sin is incurable—"thou hast destroyed thyself." (Hos. xiii. 9.)

And the sinner's prayer must simply be, "Lord, save me, or I perish."

II. THE LEPERS' CURE. (14.) Told to use the appointed means. (Lev. xiii. 2.) They believed, obeyed, and were cured.

"The lifeboat was slowly making her way through the surf to the shore."

"WHAT DAVID LOCKETT DARED."—*p.* 791.

Remind of Naaman told to wash in Jordan. (2 Kings v. 14.)

In both cases cure at once as reward of faith.

How does this apply to the sinner's need?

What means of grace can he use?

By *faith* must believe on Him. (Rom. v. 1.)

By *prayer* must go to Him. (St. Matt. vii. 7.)

By *God's ministers* hear of Him. (Acts xvi. 30.)

By God's Word may read of Him. (Ch. xvi. 31.)

Thus hearing, coming, believing, may be saved.

III. THE LEPER'S GRATITUDE. (15—19.) All cured—one returned thanks. Notice about him—

A Samaritan—imperfectly taught about God.

Showed fullest *faith* by his worship, *humility* by his action, *gratitude* by his words.

Received special blessing from Christ.

Came for bodily cure, received also spiritual.

So Christ gives to believing soul more than he asks.

He healeth all diseases and forgiveth all sins. (Ps. ciii. 3.)

What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits?

Present bodies a living sacrifice. (Rom. xii. 1.)

AUGUST 24TH. PREVAILING PRAYER.

To read—St. Luke xviii. 1—14. *Golden Text—ver.* 14.

I. UNCEASING PRAYER. (1—8.) All Christ's parables taught some special lesson.

Prodigal son taught how prayer for pardon brings forgiveness.

Rich man and Lazarus—that now is the time to seek for mercy.

This parable—not to grow tired of praying.

Two persons to notice—

1. *The widow*—poor, friendless, wronged.

Meets with difficulties, delays, disappointments.

But is patient, persevering, persistent.

2. *The judge*—is unrighteous towards God—not fearing Him.

Unjust towards men—not doing his duty.

Perhaps like Samuel's sons taking bribes.

At last hears the case to save himself from being troubled so often.

What does this parable teach about God?

(*a*) *He is the Judge of the world.*

Sometimes in this life punishes wrong-doing; *e.g.*, Destruction of Sodom. (Gen. xix.)

Sometimes also rewards righteous; *e.g.*, blessings to Abraham. (Gen. xvii. 8.)

Will at last judge all by Christ. (Acts xvii. 31.)

(*b*) *The nature of God's judgment.*

It is *certain*. Delights to hear. (Ps. xxxiv. 15.)

It is *just*. Must always do right. (Gen. xviii. 25.)

It is *helpful*. Will defend cause of His people.

What do we learn for ourselves?

1. *Pray always.* Answer will come though delayed.

2. *Pray earnestly*, as St. Peter's friends did for him in prison. (Acts xii. 5.)

II. HUMBLE PRAYER. (9—14.) 1. *Resemblance between the Pharisee and Publican.*

Both Jews—God's favoured people.

Both used to Temple worship, daily sacrifices.

Both wished to pray—thought were so doing.

Both went away satisfied—one from himself, the other from God.

2. *Contrast the two.*

(*a*) Notice their manner—

The Pharisee—proud in spirit, loud in voice, public in position, prominent before people.

The Publican, humble in mind, lowly in voice, retiring in position.

(*b*) Notice the prayers—

The Pharisee—no prayer at all; simply a boast; a contrast between himself and the publican.

The Publican. All the elements of true prayer. Confession of sin, faith in God, prayer for pardon.

What was the result?

Pharisee came as a sinner—returned the same.

Publican confessed his sin—was pardoned.

LESSONS. 1. Must feel sins, or prayer useless.

2. Must confess sins, or prayer worthless.

3. Our God will abundantly pardon.

AUG. 31ST. ENTERING THE KINGDOM.

To read—St. Luke xviii. 15—30. *Golden Text—verse* 17.

I. CHILDREN BLESSED. (15—17.) A touching scene. Infants brought to Christ by parents. Why?

That He might pray for them. (St. Matt. xix. 13.)

That He might touch them; *i.e.*, put His hands on them in blessing.

Remind of Jacob's blessing his sons. (Gen. xlix.)

Who wanted to keep them back from Christ? Why? Perhaps disciples thought—

Christ too great to be troubled by children—or

Did not like others to come too near their Master.

But what did Christ do?

Stooped to take the children from their parents.

Took them up in His arms of love.

Put His hands upon them in blessing.

Spake loving words of welcome.

Told how such as they shall enter His Kingdom.

Warned those who would keep them from Him.

LESSONS. 1. The blessing of bringing to Christ.

2. The blessing of being brought to Christ.

3. The danger of keeping any back, by bad example or influence.

4. The blessing of a childlike nature—meek, trustful, gentle.

II. A RULER UNBLESSED. (18—30.) Ruler (or lawyer) asks very proper question. Asks question of Christ as Teacher only—calls Him "good." Christ tells him that God alone is good—meaning that he must look to Him as God.

Notice Christ's answer. God's law must be kept.

But he declares he has always done right. What then was wanting?

Has been leading selfish life—living for self—spending his money only for self. What does Christ require him to do?

Sell all his property and give to the poor.

Follow Christ in His poverty and self-denial.

Then should find his treasure reserved in heaven.

Alas! the test too severe—he went away sorrowful and unblessed.

See the lesson which Christ draws—

Riches a snare. He that trusts in his riches shall fall. (Prov. xi. 28.)

Abraham was rich, but remained faithful.

But Judas out of love of money betrayed Christ.

So it is hard but not impossible for rich to be saved.

What makes it possible? Two things—

(*a*) *God's grace* in the present. Examples—

St. Matthew—rich publican—left all to follow Christ. (Ch. v. 28.)

Early Christians sold possessions. (Acts iv. 34.)

Apostles gave up all for Christ.

(*b*) *Hope of glory* in the future. What does Christ promise?

More in this life—as Job, who received double. (Job xlii. 10.)

Everlasting life in the world to come.

LESSONS. 1. Nothing must be allowed to keep back from Christ.

2. Bear the cross, wear the crown.

SEPT. 7TH. JESUS AND ZACCHÆUS THE PUBLICAN.

To read—St. Luke xix. 1—10. *Golden Text—verse* 10.

LAST lesson told of a ruler who could not give up his money to follow Christ. This tells of a publican who could.

I. THE PUBLICAN'S WISH. (1—4.) (*a*) *The place*—Jericho, first city taken by Israelites. Curse pronounced on anyone who should rebuild it. (Josh. vi. 26.) Fulfilled in time of King Ahab. (1 Kings xvi. 34.) Noted for its flourishing palm-trees. Many publicans (or *tax-collectors*) there under Zacchæus the superintendent of taxes.

(*b*) *The occasion*—Christ just healed blind beggar Bartimæus. Vast crowd had assembled—accompanied Christ through the city.

(*c*) *The man*—a publican, hated and despised by the Jews because in the pay of the Romans, their conquerors, and also because of their extortions. Gained their riches by grinding the poor.

Zacchæus—short in stature—climbed up a tree (Egyptian fig-tree, with broad, spreading branches). Why did he do so? Perhaps out of curiosity to see this wonderful Man.

II. THE PUBLICAN'S VOW. (5—10.) What happened?

Christ drew near and unexpectedly stopped.

Christ saw him, and called to him to come down.

Christ proposed a visit to his house.

How did Zacchæus take the proposal?

Eagerly—made haste to come down and receive Him.

Joyfully—he gave Him a hearty welcome.

Openly—so that all knew what he was doing.

Hospitably—gave Him the best he could.

But others were present—what did they think? Murmured against Christ. Why? Because He who professed to be so holy went as guest to a man notorious for wrong-doing. Did not understand Christ's mission to sinners.

The feast went on—Christ taught as usual.

Now a strange and unexpected thing happens.

Zacchæus stands and makes confession. Notice—

It is public—because his sin has been notorious.

It is thorough—tells of his sins of commission—injustice, and of omission of duty to the poor.

It is practical—he will restore fourfold for what he has done wrong.

It is sincere—accepted by Christ, who knew secrets of all hearts. What is the result?

Zacchæus the publican is converted.

Salvation has come to him and his house.

Christ is shown to all as a Saviour of the lost.

LESSONS. 1. The manliness of true repentance. A changed life should be seen and known by all.

2. True faith is shown by its works.

SEPT. 14TH. PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

To read—St. Luke xix. 11—27. *Golden Text—verse* 26.

I. THE OCCASION. (Verse 11.) Christ on His way to Jerusalem. Number of His followers increasing. Rich publican just joined His service. Many mistakes as to nature of His Kingdom. Some thought He would now at once show Himself openly as a King—rescue Jerusalem from the Romans—restore the kingdom to Israel. (Acts i. 6.)

Therefore this parable spoken to show that—

1. His Kingdom was a heavenly and not an earthly one.

2. His Kingdom would not be manifested at present.

3. Much to be done first by His subjects.

II. THE PARABLE. (12—24). A nobleman with many servants.

Leaves servants while goes to receive a kingdom.

Promises to return at future but uncertain time.

Gives servants money to trade with during his absence.

Notice about this trading—

(*a*) All received equal amount.

(*b*) All expected to make profit of what they had.

(*c*) All knew that an account would be required.

For some reason his fellow-citizens hated him.

Refused to submit to him when he should return.

At last came back—having received the kingdom.

The reckoning-day comes—each has to give account.

(*a*) One has gained ten pounds—shall be ruler over ten cities.

(*b*) One has gained five—shall rule five.

(*c*) A third has done nothing—made no effort—gained nothing.

What is his excuse? The King demands what is not his. Any gain they may choose to win is theirs, not his.

What is the King's answer? The money *is* his—ought to have been placed out at profit. Must now be forfeited altogether, and given to the faithful one.

No honour to this wicked and slothful servant.

His enemies also to be utterly destroyed.

III. THE MEANING. The nobleman is Christ.

He gives gifts to His servants to use.

Some gifts given to all equally. What are they?

Hands to work for Christ.

Time to use, and *influence* to exert for Christ.

These to be used, improved upon, during His absence.

He has gone to be crowned with many crowns.

His return certain, but time of it uncertain.

Each must then give account of his own works.

What shall we have to show?

A life spent, like St. Paul's, in His service?

Or time, money, influence, all wasted?

No doubt as to what the end must be. *Either*—Joy, happiness, honour and glory for ever: *or*—"Depart from me; I never knew you."

Which shall it be for us?

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

RIPE for the harvest, fair and still
Beneath the brooding light,
Far over valley, plain, and hill,
The fields lie broad and white.

Lord, for the seed Thy love has sown,
What harvest ready stands!
We would not offer Thee alone
Our empty hearts and hands!

Hands filled with happy toil for Thee—
Hearts where sweet graces bloom,
With inward purity to see
Thy face, and make Thee room—

This living harvest we would bring,
For all Thy mercies given,
Fit for the holy gathering
And harvest-home of Heaven!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

THE OTHER SON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NOT ALL IN VAIN."

CHAPTER V.

A DAY AT RAYLINGTON.

"May is come, and in her hand
All the blossoms of the land!"—S. BROOKE.



WHEN the whole land was gay with cowslips and buttercups, and laburnums and lilacs overhung all the sweet country paths, away to the very heart of the summer beauty Mr. Dobson carried in his great roomy wagonette the whole Ansley brigade, with Theodora. Of course, the boys were off to the river the first thing after dinner, and Alice with them. Maggie and Polly indulged their romantic propensities by stealing away to gaze afar off at the Castle glories. The entrances were closed and the windows shut, but their vivid imaginations were more than equal to the task of peopling the silent terraces, where the peacocks strutted in the empty sunshine, with noble lords and ladies gay. Maud went on her rounds with a willing dairymaid. And Theodora, having left Beth quite comfortably settled under the charge of a kindly farm-maiden, strayed away alone, feeling an almost rapturous delight in every leaf and flower, and the wealth of long lush grass which foretold the meadow and the hayfield. She came to a small plantation where the path wound in amongst the trees amidst tangled ivy trails. The wee blue speedwell peeped up gaily amongst the dark shining ivy leaves, great clumps of the brilliant nightshade made vivid spots of colour in the undergrowth, and presently she came upon a stretch of wood-anemones in full blossom—belated flowers these, with their lovely frond-like foliage green upon the sturdy pink stems. Then a belt of blue-bells reaching to the very bank where the plantation ended, and Theodora came out above a narrow valley, where a tiny brook ran purling over the stones below. Little arrow-like white clouds went drifting across the radiant blue of the sky, and the gorse upon the hillside beneath her was one glowing mass of scent and colour, bracken ferns pushing up their pale green curled fronds underneath its sheltering thorns. A wild apple-tree down by the brookside was pink with blossom, showing out richly against the dull foliage of a belt of pines. To the right the vivid green of beeches mingled with the yet bare stems of



"'Why are you here alone, Theodora?'"—*p.* 767.

an oak plantation. Everywhere the birds sang with the full rapture of the early summer in their song: a lark overhead, lost in the blue; a thrush swaying upon the topmost branches of the crab-tree half-way down the slope; a wood-pigeon away in the cool depths of the wood; a willow-wren out of sight in the bushes by the brook. Theodora sank down in restful happiness upon a mossy trunk. Presently she took a letter from her pocket and read it. It was long and closely written:—

"My Dear Theodora.—

"It just occurred to me to-day that your birthday comes some time in April or May. I was not sure which; but upon reference to your father's letters I was shocked to realise that you are now twenty-five. You left me and my home in the most self-willed way when you were only eighteen. I never supposed your obstinacy would have lasted all these years. May I ask what you are doing? How have you wasted these, the very best years of a woman's life? My affection and entreaties availed nothing, because when a child you had made some ridiculous promise to your father. Your mother knows as well as any woman I ever met how to take care of herself. However, into that subject I shall not enter, as it is, and has always been, to me a thoroughly distasteful one."

The letter fell from the girl's hands while she remembered just how that promise had been made. A Sunday evening in drear, dark November, when the bells were ringing for evening service, and the

straight cold rain kept falling, falling into the street. She was at the window looking out; there was nothing to see save the cabs rolling past beyond the glimmering pavement, and the people hurrying by under the dim glare of the gas-lamps, when someone came, and led her to her father. She remembered—it was one of the life-pictures which she never could forget—the wan white face upon the pillow, and the worn hands stretched to her, and the low tender voice that whispered, "You will always be mamma's own brave little daughter, and help her, and love her. And you will take care of Harold, too: he is such a little fellow, Theo." He knew—child as she was—that he could trust her, and that she would keep the charge he gave her. The next day a low damp fog had shrouded all the city, and they told the child that her father was dead. Even now she remembered the choking anguish which she could tell to none. Had he indeed gone so far away that her sorrow might not reach him?

"Have you had enough of your present existence in your stepfather's tumble-down towers? I cannot imagine it a very congenial life to one brought up as you have been. If so, my house is open, as it always has been, to my brother's child. I am a proud woman, as perhaps you know, and it costs me a good deal to ask you to return when at your own desire you chose to leave me. I am fond of you, Theodora, and I am lonelier and older than when you left me. It is a downright sin for you to bury yourself as you are doing in that village. If you like, I shall engage the services of some competent woman to attend upon the little crippled girl you tell me of. You know that I can do nothing for you after my death, as my money reverts to my husband's family, and anything I possess I intend to bequeath to Harold to make up to him for the losses he has sustained during his unprotected minority, poor lad! But a home I will give you, and all that you can possibly desire. I purpose passing the summer in Germany, and the winter in Algiers. If you will accompany me, please come to town at once, and let us see about your outfit.—Your affectionate aunt, "FLORENCE D'ALBERT."

Some years before, Mrs. Ansley had been seriously ill, and then it had been that Theodora had decided to come home to live. Her mother was long in recovering, and then, when the sad discovery about little Beth's helpless state was made, Theodora felt that here and now was the time to fulfil her promise to her father—one of the baby twins always crowing and laughing and stretching its rosy limbs, and the other always white and silent and motionless. Out of the girl's great pity for the small helpless life had grown a great love, and she could not leave the child to certain misery and neglect. The struggle had been sore, and Mrs. D'Albert angered beyond the power of words to soothe, while no one but Theodora knew the long days of heartsick revolt against her own decision she had come through. She looked round her now; the visible world before her seemed thrilling and pulsing with hope. How blue the sky, and how faint and far-off the silvery fleet of clouds, how golden the gorse, how sweet the song of the streamlet! Should she stay, or should she go? Having put her hand to the plough, should she look back? Her aunt's letter had roused again the old strife between self and duty.

The lark had gone far out of sight into the blue, a soft breeze clustered all the gorse together into a cloud of gold; on a distant road a heavy cart rolled, the sound of its wheels mingling with the wood-pigeon's contented murmur. No—she could not leave the child. No earthly scene would be bright if between her and it came the memory of Beth's suffering, questioning eyes. "Did you then leave me, Theodora, just to go away and be happy yourself, when you knew I had nothing but you in all this world?"

Far down the valley by the brookside her eyes fell upon a moving figure. At first she supposed it was Mr. Dobson, then saw it was a much younger man. As he came into sight from under the trees, she perceived that this was no farm-labourer or country yokel—a tall, athletic figure, dressed in a light summer suit. A tourist, perhaps, only tourists never came here. Not a visitor at the Castle, for it was closed. Presently he crossed the stream, and began to climb up the slanting path worn by the cattle in the soft earth of the hillside as they went down to the water in the evening.

Theodora's colour began to come and go strangely, as she watched him come up the hill. She should know him among a thousand, as he came on with free and steady stride. Had the hands of the dial gone back? Was this an Alpine slope, where forget-me-nots and oxlips blossomed thickly? Would he know her? Had he long since forgotten her very existence? Was she so changed that, looking on her, he should not recognise her? He was near enough now to see her. "Theodora!" he said, and sprang to her with outstretched hands.

Theodora rose and silently put her hands in his. Neither of them spoke one word.

How is it the world can hold such happiness and still roll on? How could the lark sing so rapturous a song, and not grow faint and fall to earth? The soft wind kissed the pink apple-bloom, the wide sweet wings of the summer had opened, and upon them had come this perfect joy.

"Theodora," he said, and held her hands as if never could he let them go again. The girl's face flushed and paled, and presently her brown eyes drooped beneath his gaze, and she drew away her hands from the close clasp in which he held them.

"You have not forgotten me, Theodora?" he said softly. "I remember the day I saw you last. It was a day just like to-day. I remember how blue the lake was as I went up the hill to say good-bye to you. It seems now as if I had died, and that this is the new world where I have found you. Oh, Theodora! how happy I am to look upon your face again! . . .

"Have you been happy in the years since then?" he asked her, after they had stood lost in a long silence which spoke more than many words. "You have suffered, I can see; has the world been hard to you? I used to dream that nothing hard or sad could ever come near you. Are you married?" he asked,

with an abrupt change of manner, turning towards her.

"No," she said quietly, seating herself again upon the mossy tree-trunk.

"And your aunt—is she dead?"

"No."

He came and sat down near her. "Then why are you here alone, Theodora? and why do your eyes look so sad? and why is your dress like this?" and he touched the coarse homespun gown that she wore.

"Nothing is as it used to be," she said gently. "I live at Drueling, with my mother."

"At Drueling!" he repeated in evident amazement. You live at Drueling! Why, Theodora, is it possible?"

"Yes," she said, smiling. "What is so strange in that, Mr. Sarsfeld?"

Before he could reply the voices and laughter of the children came to them. They were calling Theodora. Sarsfeld jumped to his feet.

"Who are these?" he asked hastily.

"My sisters, looking for me. We are spending the day at the Home Farm. Will you not join us at tea? Mr. Dobson will be delighted to see any friend of mine."

"Dobson! The duke's steward!"

"Yes."

"They must none of them see me. Please do not say to anyone you met me," he exclaimed hurriedly. "Where shall I see you again?"

"Our house is in the village. Anyone will show it you: it is directly opposite Dr. Harden's, and everyone knows where he lives."

He stared at her an instant; then, without a word, he turned and ran lightly down the hill-side, and gained the shelter of the plantation before the girls caught sight of Theodora's grey gown, and bore down upon her. Alice flung her arms round Theodora's neck, and kissed her as if they had been parted for years.

"Tea is ready," said Maggie, "and we've been looking for you this long time. What a pity you hadn't sweet William to keep you company in this romantic spot."

"It's all nonsense," said Alice, who loved to constitute herself her sister's defender, "to go on at Theo about that William man. I asked him the other day did he really want to marry her, and he only sniffed and looked silly, so I am sure he doesn't, so now!"

A diversion was created by Maud's sharp eyes discovering a pocket-book lying in the grass. Maud was the member of the family who always did see everything, and prided herself on the faculty.

"Give me that at once!" cried Theodora, seizing it from her without any more dignity than if she were a school-girl like themselves.

"Do come along. Tea will be cold. And Vincent fell into the river, and Alfred had to fish him out, and they 're both as wet as wet," cried Polly, breathlessly. "I expect they 'll die."

"Oh, I do not think they will," said Theodora, laughing.

CHAPTER VI.

OTHER DAYS.

"When on the sunlight fell a sudden gloom,
As when a cloud arises full of rain."—CAVAZZA.

ALMOST at dawn the next morning Theodora rose, and dressed noiselessly. When she drew back the blind from the little casement, the garden lay before her, wan in the early light; the fruit-trees, thick with blossom, looked cold and pale. There was absolute silence within the house. Beth lay sleeping peacefully in her small bed, the dark lashes lying heavily upon the waxen pallor of her face. The awakening birds under the eaves were making a feeble little chirping outside.

Was it not then a dream? Had she indeed met him again after these long years? He was hardly changed. Somewhat graver and more manly he looked, but on the whole the years had touched him lightly. Still the same frank fearless bearing, the radiant laughter-loving eyes. He had spoken to her, and held her hands in his strong true clasp. It had been like an hour snatched from out of the old life, when she had known him long ago. She had been only seventeen when first she met him in Germany. Mrs. D'Albert had been taken by his pleasant ways and bright handsome presence, and it pleased her to have the tall, good-looking young Englishman in constant attendance upon her. The long, happy days of that summer had passed in the Black Forest, and then Mrs. D'Albert went to Switzerland. She and her niece had not been very long at Montreux when Mr. Sarsfeld appeared there also, a visitor at the same *pension*. Mrs. D'Albert was wont laughingly to declare that she had come to that age when life upon the level suited her best, and so nothing could tempt her to a greater effort than to sit by the lake-side, listening to the bands which played there in the sunny afternoons. But she was quite willing that Theodora should go about and see all there was to see. Excursions on the lake, and up the hills and valleys close by, were of frequent occurrence in the *pension* life. Mrs. D'Albert would stand at the *pension* doors and see the party off, apparently unobservant of the fact that wherever Theodora came, Mr. Sarsfeld was pretty sure to appear in close attendance. But happy days must end, and life is not entirely made up of moonlit sails upon placid lakes, or long talks in the drowsy sweetness of sunshiny *pension* gardens, where the flowers straggle about as they will—blue lupins, flaming marigolds, all in wild sweet disorder; and with the close of autumn Theodora's happy days ended. Mrs. D'Albert fell seriously ill. Then it was that Mr. Sarsfeld proved himself a friend in need. Day and night he devoted himself to their service, until Theodora often wondered what she should have done without him and his many acts of chivalrous kindness, and of thoughtful provision for their comfort and help. Spring found them still at Montreux, although they had hoped to winter in Italy.

In May there was an excursion to Chillon made by some of the visitors at the *pension*. Mrs. D'Albert insisted upon Theodora leaving her, and taking the afternoon's holiday and recreation. She appealed to

Mr Sarsfeld to enforce obedience to her wishes, telling him to look at the girl's white face, and decide if she did not require a little change from her constant attendance in the sick-room. Theodora went, and as they walked along by the wide expanse of fair blue water, the colour came back to her cheek, and the elasticity to her step.

"You don't want," said Sarsfeld, as they followed the party over the Castle bridge: "you don't want to 'do' Chillon, surely? You know as much about the *oubliettes* as if you had lived down there. And you know more about the dungeons than did poor old Bonnivard. Come, let us go up-stairs to the Chamber of the Duchess, and look at the lake and the Dent-du-Midi."

Theodora laughingly consented, and they went up the stairs together. She went straight across the dusty floor to the narrow aperture in the deep stone wall which had served the Duchess for a window in those good old days, when air and sunshine were nothing accounted of. The rippling waters of the lake sent little arcs of golden light quivering upward over her white gown and fair face, and the feathery gold of her hair. She took off the wide black hat she wore, and held it in her hand, leaning against the wall, with her eyes seeking the farther shore, where Meillerie's white houses shone out against the dark wooded background, above which the hill outlines melted softly against the vague brightness of the yellow sky.

"Is it not peaceful and lovely?" she said presently, unconscious of Sarsfeld's intent gaze, as he stayed within the shadowy chamber. "I wonder, used the Duchess to look out here often? It must have made up to her for much, this lovely lake, and that calm silver mountain there."

"I am sure she was as happy as possible. She had no more serious troubles probably than the proper shading of her maidens' tapestry," he said, smiling at the sudden gravity which had descended upon her.

"Happy! with those dungeons and that torture chamber so near. How could she ever be happy?"

"She did not trouble herself with these matters. They were in the Duke's province, not hers."

"If I had been the Duchess——" she began dreamily; then stopped to watch a noisy little lake-boat go puffing past, breaking the calm waters into tiny wavelets, that rose and rolled towards the castle walls.

"If you had been the Duchess?" he said questioningly, as she was still silent. But she still leaned from the window, looking out. "If you had been the Duchess," he said, coming a step forward, "then I should wish that I had been the Duke."

Theodora glanced at him, then looked down. She grew a little pale as she toyed nervously with a slender silver bracelet upon her wrist. The sunshine enveloped her in a flood of light, streaming past her in narrow dusty bars into the sombre emptiness of the room. The young man's eyes were very bright and tender, and a happy smile parted his lips.

"If I had been the Duke," he went on softly, "and disgrace befallen me, what would the Duchess have done?"

"I do not know," she said, as he paused.

"What do you think she would have done?"

"I suppose," the girl replied, still with down-bent gaze: "I suppose, being the Duchess, she must have borne the disgrace."

Sarsfeld looked at her keenly; the colour rose to his face.

"'Being the Duchess,'" he said. "Yes, I see what you mean. Having cast in her lot with the Duke, she would have to accept whatever came, weal or woe. But if she had known before she became the Duchess that there was disgrace attaching to the Duke's name, what would she have done?"

He leaned towards her, resting one elbow on the whitened wall, half-shielding his face with his hand, but with a very eager, intent light in his blue eyes.

"She would never have become the Duchess in that case," said Theodora proudly.

The light faded rapidly from his young face.

"Be it so," he said listlessly; and then the rest of the party joined them.

The next afternoon Theodora went out alone. She was restless, and not happy. She wanted to get far away, deep into the wood silences, where the fragrant valley-lilies grew. She went up the white dusty road, pausing on the bridge to look over at the noisy little mountain torrent underneath, whirling and surging about its boulders. The sky was radiantly blue and high, the trees wore still the vivid green of spring. Three children in blue blouses, with close-cropped hair and sunburnt faces, passed on their way home from school, and stolidly stared at the young English lady in her fresh pretty gown. They responded with nothing more genial than a vacant frown to her smile and greeting, like true sons of Helvetia. By the forge a gush of hot air rushed out into the dusty warmth of the road; then she turned aside into a narrow strip of pasture, and so on into the filtered sunshine of the woods overhanging the lake. The path she took soon brought her out high up upon the hill-side, and she found a mossy bank whereon to rest. She gathered all the forget-me-nots within reach, and with them loosely spread upon her lap, began to think, what she had never ceased to think since yesterday, what she could have said to offend Mr. Sarsfeld. Then she raised her eyes and saw him coming up the hillside towards her.

"I came to look for you, Miss Holbrook," he said, without any sort of preamble whatever. He looked pale and resolute. "I did not like to leave Montreux without saying good-bye."

Theodora grew very white, but when she spoke her voice was cool and clear as a bell.

"That is very kind of you. We shall miss you. I am sorry you are leaving. Do you go soon?"

"Now—immediately—to-day," he said. He folded his arms, and looked down at her, as with down-cast eyes she toyed with her blue flowers.

"Have you nothing to say?" he asked wistfully.

What could she say to him, if he said nought to her? Being a woman, she must needs hold her peace. It is man's inalienable prerogative to ask for what he has a mind to have. A woman must fold her hands, and smile, and say something cool, and well-bred, and graceful, and indifferent. The very sunshine grew

dim to Theodora as she sat, with throbbing pulses, and knew that he had come to say farewell.

"Are you going to England?" she asked politely, feeling that the silence must be broken somehow.



"Was this, then, how he thought of her?"—*p.* 770.

"Yes," he said. There was an expression of utter wretchedness upon his young, handsome face. "I must go. It is best that I should go. But I could not go without saying good-bye."

He put out his hand.

"Will you give me those little flowers?" he said. She handed them to him in silence. She did not dare to look up.

"Good-bye," he said. An instant he held her hand—the next he was gone. From that moment Theodora had never seen his face until she met him upon the hill-slope at Raylington. But in the years that followed she had never doubted him. She felt in her inmost heart that he loved her, and loved her truly, with a love which neither time nor absence nor silence could alter.

She left her room, and went down-stairs. In the dining-room, bottles and glasses, cards, and a strong odour of stale tobacco, told how Mr. Ansley and a "few friends" had spent the previous evening. Theodora threw open the window to let the fresh air in. The Hardens' house looked so delightfully prim and neat and fast asleep all the muslin blinds with their blue belts in an orderly line. In the village

street not even a dog was stirring. Then she heard a footstep, and looking out, she saw the strong, straight, graceful figure she knew so well: the proudly carried head, the loose, vigorous walk, the bronzed hands hanging so ready to do anything that need might arise to do. The morning light fell full upon his face, but he was not looking towards her tumble-down, disreputable abode. He stood in the roadway, and gazed at the doctor's house, then pulled his straw hat forward over his face, and passed from sight out into the open country. It seemed to Theodora that all her life she stood and watched him going away from her—going in unexplained silence—out into space, for all she knew, but always going, and always leaving her behind.

Presently the family woke up, and the daily disorder began. Mrs. Ansley sent down word that she had a headache, and would have breakfast in her room. Mr. Ansley appeared, looking so savage that no one dared to address him. Vincent fell down-stairs and cut his forehead open. Alice shrieked when she saw the wound, and Maudie slapped her soundly for doing so. Alfred scolded Gerald vigorously for losing the penknife he had lent him at Raylington.

After breakfast, when she had set the children their tasks, and dressed Beth, and interviewed Mary upon the burning question of dinner, her mother sent for Theodora.

"Just think," said Mrs. Ansley, as she entered the room: "these stupid shop people have sent the wrong plush; it does not match my silk the least bit in the world. Mine is a warm golden brown; theirs is cold and hard; and look at these circulars about summer dresses. I never saw such cheap sprigged muslins, and quite pretty."

"Yes," said Theodora.

"Why do you say 'Yes' in that senseless, stupid way? Can you really take no interest in anything, Theodora?"

"Yes, mother, certainly. I like pretty dresses as well as anyone, but I do not see much use in looking at them and wishing for them when we cannot afford to buy them."

"But we must buy them if we have them at all. A London house will not give us credit."

"But the baker has done so, mother, and the butcher; and the coal-bill is not paid. And what else we owe I am afraid to inquire, when I cannot follow up such inquiries by a prompt payment."

"Really, Theodora, you are very inconsiderate. Why you cannot manage things a little better than you do, I cannot imagine; I really cannot be worried by all these money details, and my heart in the nervous state it is. Can't you settle with these people? There is nothing vulgarer than to have tradespeople clamouring for money. Pay them, and let them go."

"I have no money, mother."

"Well, in that case let them wait; but now about this plush. Plush is positively the only thing one can trim silk with, and you know my brown silk won't do another season as it is. Such a good silk too: it would be a thousand pities, for the sake of a few shillings, to do it up with anything mean. I want plush enough for a panel and *revers*, but this man's plush is a fright; I will not have it. I want you to go over to Hinkley and get some that will do; Meade and Younge have in a new stock of plushes and brocades. Take a piece of the silk with you; you are always very clever at matching things."

"Have you any money, mamma?"

"How you do tease, Theodora! Don't you know I have an account at Meade and Younge's?"

That settled the matter, apparently, and Theodora, hoping that some day Meade and Younge's account would likewise be settled, left the room.

"There is a letter for you, Miss Holbrook," cried the postmistress, who was sunning herself at the door as Theodora went down the village street on her way to Hinkley. After some searching in pigeon-holes the letter was produced, and Theodora put it in her pocket.

As she passed the rectory, laughter and merry voices and the tap-tap of tennis-balls floated out over the high wall to her ears. She knew very well her letter was from Sarsfeld, although she had never seen his writing in her life.

"DEAR MISS HOLBROOK,—I cannot call to see you; but if you would do me an inestimable favour, dare I hope to see you this afternoon near the Ivy Bridge? I shall wait till seven.—Yours very faithfully,

"J. SARSFELD."

Was this, then, how he thought of her? Did he esteem her so lightly? Why could he not come openly to her mother's house if he desired to see and speak with her? There was a rather angry light in Theodora's brown eyes as she went on her way to shop in Hinkley. On her homeward way she remembered suddenly that his pocket-book was in her possession. Glancing at her watch, she saw it was nearly half-past six. The Ivy Bridge was twenty minutes the other side of the village. She must go; and he would understand that nothing less than having his property in her possession, and not knowing his address, had brought her. She hastened on with a certain eager gladness in her heart. The road at the Ivy Bridge rose gradually to span the sluggish waters of the canal, and a few fir-trees crowned the summit. The crimson of the eastern sky was melting into rosy grey, and the twilight had already begun to gather over the fields, when she saw him coming down the road from the bridge. He was walking slowly, with his head down-bent, and his hands thrust deep in his pockets.

Evidently he had waited until seven, and then given up all hope of seeing her.

She stepped into the roadway as he passed.

"Here I am," she said simply.

His face lit up.

"Were you indeed coming to me, Theodora?" he asked.

"This is the reason that I came, Mr. Sarsfeld," she said, rather stiffly, proffering him the pocket-book.

"You are angry with me?" he said, with a wistful look in his eyes.

"Why, if you wanted to see me, could you not come to my home?" she asked, with simple directness, her brown eyes somewhat troubled.

"Where is your home?" he asked her, looking down at her with sad haggard eyes, as she still stood with his pocket-book in her hand.

"With my stepfather, Mr. Ansley."

"Ansley!" he cried, "your stepfather?"

"Yes," she said, wondering at the strangeness of his manner. Then smiling faintly, she added, "You seem to like mysteries, Mr. Sarsfeld. I don't."

"Neither do I," he said bitterly.

"Then why make them?" she asked.

"I meant to tell you all to-day," he said: "everything right away from the beginning. But this makes it quite impossible."

"Still mysteries," she said, trying to speak lightly. "Why not tell me?"

"Because I cannot, Miss Holbrook."

"What do you know of my stepfather?" she asked, looking up earnestly at him.

"Much," he said curtly: "too much—and yet, alas! not quite enough."

"I do not understand," she said wearily. "Will you not take your pocket-book, Mr. Sarsfeld? One of my sisters found it yesterday at Raylington Park."

"Thank you," he said, accepting it. "I spent the morning at the Home Farm looking for it. You are angry with me, I fear. You think I have failed in respect to you by asking you to meet me at the bridge yonder. Could you not grant me even half an hour? There is much I want to say to you, although I cannot tell you all."

"You will not come to the house?" she said.

"I cannot."

She was silent.

"If I meet you in your walk to-morrow, will you permit me to accompany you?" he said, after a few moments' reflection.

"I cannot," said Theodora in her turn.

And her voice was to the full as decided as his own.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"What profits life without the simple faith
Of souls made one in perfect sympathy?"
W. HENDERSON.

THE plush did not match the silk. Very happily Theodora had had doubts upon the subject, and only brought home a pattern with her from Hinkley. So Mrs. Ansley decided that she must send over to Raylington, and see what the shops there could do. To get to Raylington, it was necessary to go to Hinkley first, and from thence take train to the little market town across the plain.

Theodora went over after breakfast to ask for a seat in the doctor's gig, if perchance he was going to Hinkley. She found it a great and solemn day in the Harden household; for, by a rule as of the Medes and Persians, summer began there upon the 15th of May. There might be a biting easterly wind, or even snow on the ground—though this latter was certainly unusual—but the fires disappeared, and wonderful flowing crimped arrangements of green and pink curled papers protruded from every grate in the house. After the customary morning occupations had been performed upon this great day, there was a solemn procession up the stairs, of Mrs. Harden, and Anne, and Peter the boy. Johnson and his hand-ladder were requisitioned; every woollen curtain was taken down, shaken, and brushed, and folded up in tissue-papers, with camphor laid between the folds to keep away moths. Stiff clean muslin draperies with frills were put up in the stead of these. Slippery grey covers were laid down over the stairs; fresh muslin half-blinds were let into the windows, and tied about with pink ribbons for variety's sake. Then from tall oaken presses, sweetly smelling, Anne and her mistress drew forth summer raiment for the household, and into the wardrobes went the warm winter things, not to reappear till the 15th of October, when forth they would surely come, though the weather were absolutely tropical.

Theodora could hardly gain Mrs. Harden's attention, calling as she did in the very midst of this tremendous function. But Peter, who, as usual, was in full possession of all his various and varied wits, informed Miss Holbrook that master had ordered the gig for half-past ten, and that his destination was Hinkley. Would Miss Holbrook wait in the dining-room? and should he, Peter, fetch Mr. William from the waiting-room? Theodora decidedly negatived this thoughtful suggestion, and sat down to wait for the doctor.

As she sat and listened to the duet between the water-clock and the canary, she wondered if Dr. Harden had ever said anything about the removal of the curtain from his son's picture. The little lad stood by his mother, smiling gaily. She was looking intently at the painting, when the doctor came bustling into the room.

"A worthless fellow!" he said, with a frown.

"He does not look worthless," said Theodora dreamily, as she stood looking up into the boy's radiant face, with her hands loosely clasped before her.

"What do you know about it?" said the old man, rather testily.

"Nothing; and less than nothing. But he was your son."

"Was? Is he dead?" he asked sharply.

"I don't know," she replied, in utter surprise.

"Come," he said abruptly, "we shall not do more than catch your train at Hinkley."

He hardly spoke again until he put her down at the station.

"There will be showers this afternoon," he said then, as he drove away.

Raylington was not very much of a place, although it thought pretty well of itself. There was one narrow street where the shops were gathered together, and a little square where a jubilee drinking-fountain had been put up with much civic flourishing and trumpeting; a provincial bank at one side of the square, a club at the other, and in one corner a picturesque archway which led to the post-office. The gloomy old church, which had once been a cathedral, was away down by the banks of the sluggish river.

After considerable waste of time and exercise of patience, Theodora matched the plush. Then she went to a modest restaurant in a back street and had

some tea; came back to the High Street, and gazed in at a print- and bookseller's window. She had a couple of hours to wait before she could get a train back to Hinkley. She wandered on and into the market place to buy some trifles for the children—sweets and apples, and a few cheap toys. As she came out from the market she stood an instant at the entrance, looking along the street, wet and shining after one of the showers which the doctor had prognosticated. A heavy grey cloud hung like a curtain across the vista of the street, the edges glowing bright silver. As she stood on the wet cold pavement, a vision of Italy came to her. It had been some gala day at Florence. She remembered how in the morning she had wandered about the streets looking at the flowers, and flowers, and yet again flowers—heaped and piled everywhere, masses of colour and perfume—scarlet arum lilies; irises—white, and yellow, and purple; tulips—scarlet, and gold, and striped; and roses—roses in baskets, roses in heaps on the ground, roses in mountains and avalanches — every hue, every shape, every scent — roses everywhere — and heavy-headed carnations, with the dew upon them, and timid valley-lilies, and flaming azaleas; and she from all had chosen and carried home a great bunch of white lilac, because, forsooth, it reminded her of English lanes. And over all the sky had been so blue, and the day and its delights so long and fair; and in the evening they had gone out to see the illuminations. She saw again the Palazzo Vecchio, with its campanile outlined with flickering lights against the soft warmth of the rapidly darkening sky. The grim prison of Savonarola had looked like a fairy palace built up of gems, with a transient glow which seemed as though it might melt and vanish while one looked.

She raised her umbrella, and walked down the street, wondering what in this damp little country town had struck the chord of memory which brought back beautiful flower-filled Florence to her mind. It had been May then, and she was young. Now it was May again, but she felt old and sad. She turned in at the church gate—for she had still an hour—and sat down in the gloomy porch. From a stone-yard across the river came the metallic clinking of a mason's hammer—a train to London rushed shrieking along the line in the distance—a group of children played quietly in a corner of the churchyard. Presently she wandered down to the low wall overlooking the river. The water crawled along sullenly, banked by coarse wild grasses; and all the fields were vacant and dull and bare. As she leaned upon the wall, Sarsfeld's tall figure came swinging down the river-path. When he saw her he ran lightly up the slope, and leaped the little wall. He came to her with an eager smile on his face and with outstretched hand.

"I may speak to you now?" he asked; "this is purely accidental."

She smiled, and held out her hand.

"Are you aware that it is raining?" he asked, taking her umbrella and opening it. "Why do you not take better care of yourself?" he asked reproachfully. "I don't like how you are looking at all; you are much paler and thinner than you used to be."

"You forget that I am eight years older," she said.

"No, I do not forget," he said quietly. "I forget nothing about you."

She was not pale now, but he was not looking at her. There was a puzzled frown upon his face, as though he had much to say, and did not quite know how to begin.

"May I ask you a few questions?" he said, after a short silence. "And will you promise not to think them impertinent? I know I have no right to question you, but I do want to know a little of what your life is, and if you are happy."

"Is anyone happy?" she asked. "I think not."

"You used to be. I remember how I used to think you had the very brightest and happiest face I ever saw."

"But I was young then," she said; "and life teaches us many hard lessons as we grow old."

"Is your life, then, hard?" he asked tenderly.

"Does it matter what our life is?" she asked, looking up at him wistfully. "Hard or not, we must live it the best way we can. You are not happy yourself," she said, boldly carrying the war into the enemy's camp after a fleeting glance into his sunburnt face.

"Is it of any consequence whether I am or not?" he said sharply. "I am thinking about you. It surprised me very much the other day to learn that you have a number of sisters and brothers, and that your mother is living. I always thought you were an orphan, and that Mrs. D'Albert had adopted you."

"Since that time my mother has lost her health, and I am needed at home with the children."

"And your aunt?"

"Is very angry with me, and hurt. Only this week she wrote asking me to go back to her."

"And you refused?"

"I refused."

"You had a brother you used to talk to me about. Where is he—Harold?"

"Poor Harold! he is still in Australia. I often fear he is only wasting his time there. I wish he would come home."

"So do I, if he would take care of you. To live in the house with Mr. Ansley can be no fit life for you."

"What do you know of my stepfather?" she asked. "Will you not tell me?"

"I cannot tell you," he said wearily. "I want—I want to tell you, but somehow I cannot see that it would be the right thing to do. Perhaps, too, it is best for us all that I should keep silence."

"I wish you would not speak in riddles," she said; "it wearies me so. Things are quite bad enough without the knowledge that there are all sorts of pitfalls about one's path."

"I wish you were back with your aunt. Do you never get a holiday?"

"I do not want one."

"Theodora, are you poor?" His voice was very low.

"Yes."

He glanced at her plain worn gown and mended gloves, and sighed perplexedly.

"It used to be all so different," he said. "If you had money, would you go away?"

"No." And she looked him frankly in the face. She was nearly as tall as he was, and he knew what the look in her brown eyes meant; he knew, as indeed he had known all along, that it was impossible that she should take money from him. "I will never leave little Beth. She is one of my little sisters; she is a cripple: always has been since her birth, and she has no one but me, you understand."

"I understand," he said; and his eyes rested on her face with a very tender light in them. "Has anything been done for the child?"

"Dr. Harden has done all he can, and he says there is no hope she will ever grow better; and William Harden, his son, has made me a little chair on wheels, in which I can take her out every fine day."

"I am a doctor, you know," he said musingly. "I wish I could see her. Perhaps I could do something for her."

"I do not think anyone can help little Beth," she said sorrowfully.

"And so this is the life you live now, Theodora?" he said gently. "So widely, strangely different from what I pictured. I remember so well the first evening I ever saw you: it was at Wurtzfeld; do you remember? We were all waiting for the carriages to take us back from a picnic in the Black Forest to our respective hotels and inns, and I had only just joined the party; and you came from under the trees towards where we waited, with your hat in your hand; your face was toward the sunset, and in your hands you carried long trails of scarlet vine. I have many pictures of you, Theodora, in my mind-gallery. Another evening I called to take you to a concert, and I remember you slowly coming down the stairs, running one hand along the balustrades, with a very thoughtful look upon your face. You were dressed in some filmy grey stuff that floated about you like a cloud, and you had purple passion-flowers at your throat. Then again I see you at Chillon, in the Duchess's room, leaning by the window, with the sunlight on your white gown and golden hair. And the day I went up the hill to say good-bye: that was a hard day for me, Theodora, and a bitter one. Life can hold no worse. I thought in how small a space would you forget the man who loved you better than his life. I have those forget-me-nots still, Theodora: those you gave me that day." And opening his pocket-book, he showed the little faded blossoms inside. Theodora stood motionless, her hands resting on the cold grey stone. Would he not speak again? It was not for her to tell him that she loved him when he did not ask. The mason across the river was still energetically chiselling away. Someone was playing the organ in the church, and the deep tones came faintly rolling out to them where they stood. The children had gone home, and the churchyard was as silent as though only the dead were there.

Theodora knew that she had only to turn to him, and lift her eyes to his face, and put her hand into his. He was waiting for her. She felt his eager gaze fixed upon her—and then she thought of little Beth.

"I must not miss the train," she said.

The light faded swiftly from Sarsfeld's face. She turned to go, and he followed her in silence.

"Let me carry these," he said, taking the sundry little packages from her. "Let me at least do for you what I can while I can!"

At the gate she paused, and said to him, with downcast eyes, and very brokenly, "Do not think worse of me than you can help."

But he made no answer.

In silence they went along the narrow lane leading to the station. He walked with moody, downcast face; she with her gaze fixed straight before her, seeing nothing.

On the platform the collector stopped Theodora roughly as she was passing the barrier forgetful of her ticket. Sarsfeld's face flushed when he saw that it was for the third class. He strode away to the office, and came back with a first-class ticket. It was only a matter of a few pence, and yet it was all he could do, or dared to do, for the woman he loved. Theodora did not mind how she travelled, but his care of her touched her—she was so unused now to anyone taking care of her. She little dreamed that never would he part with that tiny morsel of green pasteboard, just because she had carried it about with her all that long afternoon.

"Good-bye," he said, taking her hand in farewell, as the train rolled into the station. "But I may be your friend? You will let me help you in any way I can?"

"Yes," she said, forcing herself to smile. "You are very good to me—but you understand?"

"Yes; I understand," he said gravely.

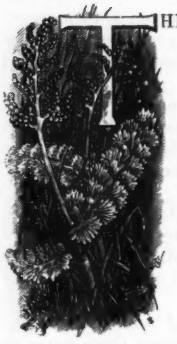
Then she was gone; and he stood looking after the train as long as the least vestige of it was in sight.

(To be continued.)



WHY THE PEAR-TREE FRUITED.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A.



THERE is a certain corner plot of ground on a road which I have occasionally to pass. That piece of ground I describe by the adjective "uncanny." True, no love-lorn cats, wearied of existence, have selected it as the spot on which to breathe out in sighs the last remnants of disappointed life; no antagonistic dogs have there laid down their animosity, and stretched themselves beside their feline enemies in peace, acting up to the principle that there should be no hatreds in death. But, all the same, it is an uncanny corner plot, and will continue to be so, I expect, until some enterprising builder takes it in hand, and erects on it "most desirable property" of some kind. As it stands at the present moment, it is "ripe for development" of this kind; and I must say that the sooner it is developed, the better.

The present tenants of this uncanny spot are pieces of brickbat, small heaps of sand, and pieces of rubbish of various kinds. There is no wall about it, so that it looks like "nobody's land;" for which, indeed, it might pass unless one were prompted either by curiosity or business to ask "how much it was per foot?" He would then come away thoroughly satisfied in his own mind that somebody owned it, and valued it too.

But that piece of ground, with all the miserablenesses on it, has one object of attraction to me. This is a pear-tree—a pear-tree that no one cares to prune, but that stands there, living, blossoming, fruiting, in spite of its uncongenial and melancholy surroundings.

That bit of ground is a remnant of a market-garden; in other enclosed plots its sister trees are to be seen here and there, made much of in the little gardens in which they stand; but in this outcast spot no one cares for this outcast tree.

But though I am only a passer-by from time to time, this tree has a certain interest for me; it suggests to me a question and answer which, running into daily life, does me some good. I say to myself, "Why does this tree fruit amid these dismal surroundings, and under these unfavourable circumstances?"

The answer is, "Because it has a principle of life within it—and not only of life, but of pear-life; and because of this, despite brickbats and rubbish, it brings forth pears. Cut down that tree, and it would soon be a piece of mere rotting wood—an addition to the other pieces of rubbish around; but as it is, life differentiates it from them, and enables it to go on leafing, blossoming, fruiting, as the season for each of these functions comes on it."

"Pear-tree," I say to myself, "why is it thus with you?"

Then it says, "I live; and my life is independent of all these things which disfigure the surface of the ground on which I grow. I am continually performing life functions; my business is to put forth the life that is in myself, and not to give heed to the death that there is in them.

"All these lie on the surface of the ground; they have nought to do with what is beneath it, or what is overhead. I draw my sustenance from both. I could not live on the surface; I am made with roots, and roots must go below. I am made with leaves and branches; and they have to do with what is above. I must assimilate. I must make my own the nourishment in earth-juices, which my roots can assimilate—and that in oxygen, and dews, and sunlight, on which my leaves feed. In me there is the law of life—of growth, of flower, of fruit; by that law I am enabled to be what I am. Development is a necessity of my being; my life craves it, my life compels it; what I shall produce is a pear, for my life is pear-life. I have life in common with all vegetation, but pear-life is my particular life; and I live it, to work it out, no matter what are my surroundings. My roots go under all this rubbish—it stands in no relation to me; if there were a thousand times as much, I should pursue the even tenor of my life—my one idea is to fruit."

I don't know which to praise most—the courage, or the endurance, or the good principle and conscientiousness—if I might so speak, or the philosophy of my roadside friend. They are all conspicuous so far as they may be credited to a tree.

I cannot but think that there are many persons who are placed in very much the same circumstances as this tree. They get into a region of isolation—brickbats—some place or sphere in which everything is uncongenial to them—foreign to them—in which they have to live the life that is in them, and to bring forth the fruit that belongs to them, without any help from surroundings.

My pear-tree says to me, "Be yourself in spite of what is around you. With that you have nothing to do. You cannot help the rubbish being near—you cannot help a great deal more coming; for all you know, something equivalent to the dead cat or dog may come next; if you heed the external—that with which you, with your own individual life, have nothing to do—you will never perform your own functions, work out your own destiny."

We have to try to live the beautiful amid the ugly—the Christian amid the ungodly—the sensitive amid the irresponsive; we have to be living amid what is dead—and that, alone, without affinity with, or sympathy from, surroundings; the life that is in us must do it; and by God's blessing and help I hope it will.

I have observed that my friend the pear-tree was not now standing in garden ground; but it had not always been thus with it. The spot on which it

stood had once been part of a garden; and now standing in smaller gardens (left in their places when the ground was cut up into building plots) were many of its former companion trees.

Its lot was very different from theirs. They belonged to someone—they were cared for, talked about; they formed almost as it were parts of the family who dwelt in the house to which their garden belonged; and if pear-trees have any memories, mine must have often thought of former days of happiness and privilege; and some might have thought it would have been warranted in saying, "As I am not in garden ground, no one can expect anything of me now."

We too are in like case. Circumstances cut some people off from former associates, former helps, former positions of privilege; the Christian lives no longer amongst Christian friends, nor perhaps even in a Christian community; the refined person who had a home replete with taste, the rich person who dwelt amid all the ease of wealth, are now obliged to have near them the rude and vulgar; are straitened and have a tendency to be strangled in all generous impulse, by the narrowness of poverty; but if, like my friend the pear-tree, we have our own life within us, we shall fruit according to our opportunity all the same. We cannot alter our position; we cannot hedge ourselves round again with garden wall; we cannot tell what is going to become of us; but we can say, "I am myself, my living self; as that pear-tree is as much a pear-tree as it was before its position was changed, so am I my living self as much now as ever; and I will bring forth my own proper fruit. I draw my sustenance from what is below—this rubbish is above it; I cannot turn bricks and stones into pears, but they shall not turn me into them."

That pear-tree, with those uncongenial and incongruous surroundings, might have said if it had a voice: "There are none here to understand me—none to sympathise with me—none bent on the same end as I am." All that would have been quite true. But unless my friend committed suicide, and got rid of its pear-life, it must by the very law of its being go on leafing, budding, fruiting, in spite of this.

There are plenty who are circumstanced like the pear-tree in the corner plot. In churches, in families, they seem to stand alone. Many a young man in a warehouse, or counting-house, or shop, has to live a true Christian life which is unappreciated, not understood. They find none like-minded with themselves; they must fruit alone, or not at all. Where they make a mistake is, in expecting from brick and stone what brick and stone or anything else out of affinity with them cannot give. They must be content to be, as the Scotch say, "self-contained." But they need not be in the least discouraged—the roots of the pear-tree were in sympathy with the earth-juices to which they had access; and the leaves were in sympathy with what I may call the heaven-juices to which they had access; and so the tree was fed. No one saw any of these, though everyone could see the brickbats and the rubbish—and if the suicide cat had been there they could have seen him grim or sentimental-looking, as the case might have been, in death; and none can see the life-food of many a solitary one—but they do feed and live.

Remember how it is that many a disadvantageously placed one still lives and fruits. He does not draw his sustenance from his surroundings. He does draw from beneath, and from above, from what is invisible. He has the principle of life in himself, and that life is one of which fruiting is the natural end.

It may be that someone more acute than I have been, as I have rambled along about my tree, may say: "Ah, but, my friend, you have forgotten——"

"What!"

"Why, that your tree stands in a corner plot, and is to be bought any day by a builder; when, as sure as ever it has a leaf above, or a root below, down it must come, and nobody can tell how soon."

"Thank you, my friend, for reminding me; for I will tell you something that may do you a great deal of good about that.

There is no fixity of tenure for any of us in this world. We are here to-day, and we may be gone to-morrow. We must live by the day, and do the day's work in the day; otherwise, while we are waiting for the impossible certainty, nothing will be done. We may not have an autumn-time in which to fruit; enough for us if, during the spring-time which we have had, we budded—that was life's proper output for that time—and should autumn come, what would it avail if there had been no life output in spring?

My pear-tree lives by the day; and if it have to give place to a house before its fruit ripens, the history of its life—not, indeed, of a 'life,' but of *its* life—will have been complete.

Remember, you are not, perhaps, destined to be the model of a fruiting life, but you are required, in order to fulfil *your* true destiny, to put forth season-tokens of the reality of *your* life.

And now, my worthy tree, I thank you for all you have taught me. I shall often pass you again, and, as I look at you, try and put in practice some of what you have taught me, and, I hope, others also through me.

Sometimes I have unpleasant surroundings, mentally and physically; but I shall try to bring forth some good fruit, despite the brickbats and that possible cat.

I must not trouble myself in life so much about my surroundings as myself. Let me but have the life which fruits to good here, and hereafter. I cannot remove surroundings, but I can live and perform *my* mission and functions in life, in spite of them.

I must not spend my energies in thinking that if I were in some more favoured sphere I could do something, whereas I can do nothing now. Individual life, independent of all surroundings, should ever be going onwards towards fruit.

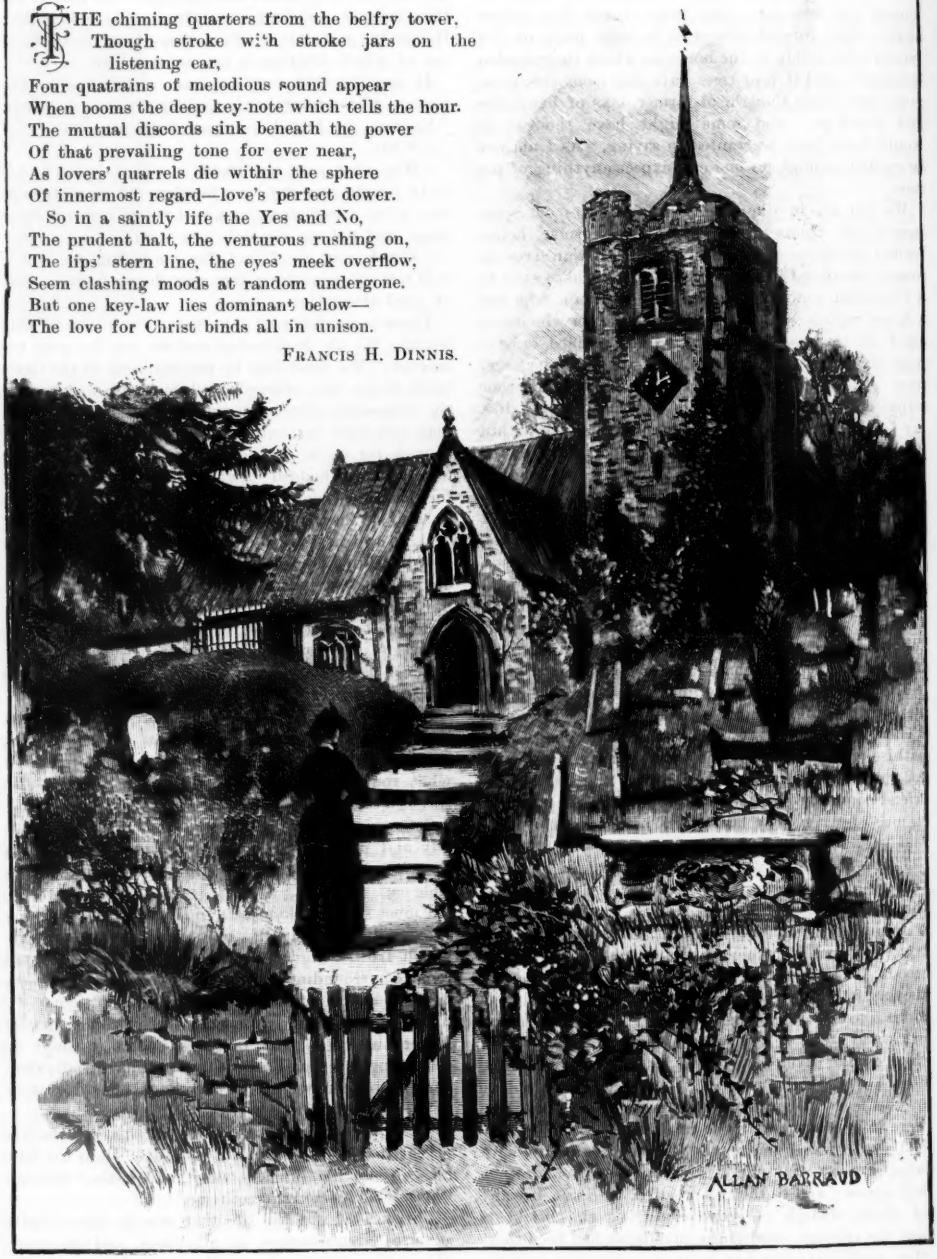
Reader, not thine own life for all this, but the life of Christ that is in thee. He is *the* life, He is thy life. "I can do all things," said the Apostle, "through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Christ lived out the life that was in Him, despite adverse circumstances, at all times, and in every place; that life in thee will enable thee to do the same.

A SONNET.

THE chiming quarters from the belfry tower.
Though stroke with stroke jars on the listening ear,
Four quatrains of melodious sound appear
When booms the deep key-note which tells the hour.
The mutual discords sink beneath the power
Of that prevailing tone for ever near,
As lovers' quarrels die within the sphere
Of innermost regard—love's perfect dower.
So in a saintly life the Yes and No,
The prudent halt, the venturous rushing on,
The lips' stern line, the eyes' meek overflow,
Seem clashing moods at random undergone.
But one key-law lies dominant below—
The love for Christ binds all in unison.

FRANCIS H. DINNIS.



"COMING HOME TO ROOST."

"KATE, are you really thinking seriously of that John Hally? This makes the third time he has been here within ten days."

Kate stood at the window, watching the said John Hally trudging down the street. His face was not visible at that distance, but his back was—short and thick-set, with an overcoat that had assuredly never emanated from any artist in the craft. She looked round with a faint shrug.

"I couldn't help thinking seriously of any man in a coat like that, Aunt Greig. One must have something to pass the time; he's better than nothing."

"You might find something less dangerous, I'm thinking, Kate. Attend to your work, and leave the man alone till you want one in earnest. I don't hold with trifling about things of that kind."

There were many other things beside lovers that Aunt Greig did not "hold with," thought Kate, taking up her work rather scornfully; but if Miss Greig had to sit at a machine all day, and had twenty years deducted from her calendar and the wrinkles from her face—well, possibly she might look at things from a different standpoint.

Kate stitched on at her binding. Her professional calling was in the upholstering line, and very stiff stitching it often was. Miss Greig toasted two chops before the fire, transferred them to a small dish—"ashet" in the household dialect—and carried them away into another room. She had apparently forgotten all about Kate's delinquencies when she returned; a more important subject was looming on the horizon.

"Kate, I wonder if Mrs. McCallum has got any person in her rooms yet. Mr. Ford says he expects a nephew from London next week. He's an engineer, and got something to do on this new railway, and he's able to pay well. I wish I could have taken him in myself."

"You can't turn Mr. Ford off," remarked Kate doubtfully.

"Of course I can't. He's a permanency, if he's no a very big one, and the other's but for a few months at outside. Still, it's a pity I've no another room."

"Is the nephew's name Ford too?" asked Kate, by way of diversion.

"No; Holt—Philip Holt. Mr. Ford showed me his name in the newspaper. He seems to think a lot of him, for he's no one to say much."

Miss Greig put on her bonnet forthwith, and went off to interview Mrs. McCallum about the expected arrival. Kate half-enviously wished that she were a man, and able to go about the country whenever she thought fit. Then her thoughts travelled back to John Hally. He was not handsome nor rich; still, he was a man, and he liked her. She glanced down at the tiny bunch of violets at her breast with a thrill of satisfaction. "Better be married to ony thing than no to be married at all;" and it counted for something to know that she had the choice in her own hands.

"I must have something to help me through the time," she said to herself, with a wrathful tug at an obstinate piece of binding; "and if—if anyone better *should* turn up—though there's little chance of it—well, I could easily tell him I had changed my mind. I know he means to ask me the first chance."

Kate's countenance cleared up considerably after she had arrived at that decision. She was not naturally an ill-tempered person, and took her work and small worries philosophically, on the whole. But one of her companions in the work-room had lately attained to the dignity of an engagement—with a student at the University too!—and Kate had been feeling strongly since that it behoved her also to achieve something in that line; and, alas! for John Hally's peace of mind, he was the only eligible person of her acquaintance.

He did ask her the very next evening. It was Saturday, and they were sauntering round the base of the Crags, watching the soldiers practising at the targets up the hillside.

Kate cast down her eyes after the orthodox manner, and tried conscientiously to feel the rapture due to the occasion.

"You see, I have not much to offer you," he wound up. "There's too many clerks in the field for any of us to have much chance to get rich, but it's steady; and I think we might be very comfortable if you would only try; and—and I love you, Kate."

Kate rather neglected this last remark. She was deep in a calculation of how far the income he referred to, would go in a joint concern. It would be a little better than the upholstery, but very little; and, with all her efforts, she could not call up any enthusiasm to make up for the inevitable deficiencies. It was exceedingly discouraging.

"I'll tell you what we might do, John," she said presently, when he begged anxiously for some answer. This silent deliberation was hardly a hopeful sign. "There's no need to think of getting married for long enough. I don't want to be hurried over it, but you can come and take me out when you like, and bring me flowers, and that will do just as well."

"But what is the good of being engaged if we are not to think of getting married?" objected John, not viewing the arrangement in quite the same light.

"I didn't say we were never to think of it, only there's no hurry; but if you don't like it that way, we needn't say any more about it."

"But surely you like me a little, Kate?" pleaded the unfortunate lover.

"Like you! of course I like you!"

A sudden misgiving that her captive might take

flight and leave her all forlorn made Kate smile up in his face and press the ill-fitting coat-sleeve, till John—small blame to him—took her hesitation for maidenly shyness, and humbled himself still lower in the dust to think that she was willing even to tolerate him: Kate, with her bonnie face that would grace any position in the land: it was a crying shame that she should be earning her daily bread at that coarse machine work.

"Yes, I quite meant to be a governess," agreed Kate composedly, when he expressed something of his indignation on this head, "and I advertised once for weeks, but there was only one answer, and the lady wanted such a lot of things I had never heard about, that I was afraid to try any more. Governesses are expected to teach everything nowadays."

"You could have taught quite as much as she had any right to expect," was Mr. Hally's response; and he thoroughly believed it.

And so Kate went home an hour later, vested with all the honours of an engaged person. She told her aunt about it across the small supper-table.

"Well, he 's no much to look at," was that lady's candid expression of opinion; "and I doubt he 's no much siller to keep it up, but it 's your ain look-out, and I hope you 've made up your mind to bide by it. A promise is a promise, to my thinking."

Kate was perfectly conscious of those two very serious defects in her betrothed—had been from the first—but she reflected upon them with a curious sinking of heart that night. If this was the beginning of the blissful height that poets write about, it seemed to her the flattest plain she had travelled yet.

A week went by. Kate settled down to make the most of her new position—a daily penny bunch of spring violets, that gave quite an air to her trim black gown; a pair or two of gloves, a small volume of poetry, which she never opened—the poets were out of favour at present—and someone to take her into the park or round the links on fine evenings, and explain the mysteries of golf, which was a game that did not interest her in the slightest degree.

Sometimes they would encounter some of her workroom acquaintances during these promenades, and Kate would hold up her head, and wish fervently that John was a few inches taller, and more impressive in appearance. However, that couldn't be helped now, and he was certainly useful in many ways, if only he would be a little more amusing, and less tragic and sentimental in his conversation.

She dismissed him abruptly at the end of her own street one evening in the very middle of a dissertation on the rapture of "two hearts with but a single thought, two souls that beat as one." She had borne it for a full hour, and felt as if she had heard enough of "twin souls" for the rest of her days. Why couldn't he talk of sensible things, like other people? she wondered, as she marched up the stairs to the second "flat," and there came into violent collision with some person standing in the obscurity of the landing at her aunt's door.

"I beg your pardon," said someone in a quick, clear voice. "I have knocked twice, and can't make anyone hear. I want to see Mr. Ford."

"I have a key in my pocket," said Kate, rather out of breath with the stairs and the surprise; "perhaps Aunt Greig has gone on some message."

She produced it as she spoke. It was quietly taken out of her hand, and the door promptly opened. The stranger drew back with a bow to allow her to enter. Kate led the way into Mr. Ford's sitting-room. The fire burnt cheerfully on the hearth, a loaf and a fragment of cheese, preparations for the day's final feast, stood on the table, but the big leather chair and slippers were empty.

"He will not be very long, if you don't mind waiting," said Kate, lighting the lamp on the mantelpiece. "He always goes out for an hour in the evening; he says it is good for digestion."

"Thank you, I will wait," said the visitor, taking possession of Mr. Ford's own chair.

Kate decamped to the kitchen, where her first proceeding was to survey the state of her hair in the hanging-glass. "That must be the nephew, Mr. Philip Holt," she decided. "I should not have thought Mr. Ford had anyone so grand belonging to him. I hope he did not take me for the servant."

Kate might have been quite at ease. Mr. Holt had not taken her for anything at all. By the time the door had closed behind her, he was deep in his newspaper. The lamp was not particularly brilliant, and he moved it impatiently to the table, close to his elbow, where he paid no more attention to it until a hasty movement of his chair capsized it entirely, and a sudden sheet of blazing liquid came streaming down his garments.

The crash brought Kate upon the scene of action in an instant; it was the first time in her whole career she had had any chance of distinguishing herself, and she was proud to remember after that she had risen to the occasion.

Miss Greig's best Paisley shawl was lying on the lobby-table; she caught it up without a thought of the owner's feelings, and smothered it over the flaming oil, following up with the hearthrug. Two minutes, and all danger was over, and she and Mr. Holt stood in the midst of the wreckage, by no means as calm and composed as they ought to have been, according to all the annals of heroism.

"I 've done it now, and no mistake!" groaned the young man. "Are you much damaged?"

"No; Aunt Greig's shawl is the worst," returned Kate ruefully; "and that is her oldest lamp."

"So I should imagine. Is there any doctor about here?"

"Doctor?" echoed Kate; "are you badly burnt?"

"I don't know about the badness: my leg feels as if that horrible oil were blazing inside it still. There 's my uncle at last."

Mr. Ford's countenance, when he understood what had taken place, expressed the strongest amazement and disapprobation of the whole proceeding. He was a man who liked to pursue an even, unbroken track from January to December; and to find his sitting-room partly wrecked, and in possession of an almost unknown nephew and his landlady's niece, was upsetting, to say the least. Kate slipped away in the midst of his ejaculations to the nearest doctor: he was

just setting out somewhere, and came back with her at once. Miss Greig had also arrived by this time, and was rapidly reducing the establishment to order again.

As far as was practicable; for it was speedily made known that whether that extra room were forthcoming or not, Mr. Philip Holt would have to be a lodger at Miss Greig's for some time to come. The doctor peremptorily forbade him to even think of moving for a fortnight, and it might be more; an impromptu bedstead had to be erected in Mr. Ford's sitting-room, which further interfered with its symmetry, and the visitor very unwillingly took up his quarters therein.

"My Paisley shawl!" moaned Miss Greig over the remains that night. "My Paisley shawl! Nine years I've had it this very month, and as good as the day it was bought. I'm not saying you did wrong, Kate, when it was maybe the life of a fellow-creature at stake; but if you could have taken the ironing blanket instead, I'd have been better pleased. It was close at hand, and no an expensive one."

The doctor was not far wrong in his premisses: it was a full fortnight before his patient limped down the stairs and went back to that new railway—a fortnight of ill-concealed discomfort for Mr. Ford, of active service for Miss Greig, the shortest, happiest fortnight for Kate that she had ever known. She had found a hero at last: it did not matter in the least that he was swathed in bandages, and hard to please in the matter of attention; she did not speculate about his income, or the impression he would make upon her acquaintances; she did not even ask if he were likely to give her one kindly thought in return; she only knew that something had changed the whole round world, and that the days were all sunshine.

Mr. Hally derived little outward and visible consolation from his betrothed in these days; he only saw her once, and then she was far too busy to talk to him. Walks! how could he suggest such a thing when there was so much to be done, with sickness in the house? Come to see her! he must not think of it. Aunt Greig and she had not a moment to spare for visitors.

"But it's not Aunt Greig I want to see," pleaded the luckless lover. "Kate, if the days were half as long to you, I think you would contrive to slip out for a minute or two now and again. I walked up and down your street for hours last night, for the chance of seeing you at the window."

"Then I hope you won't do so any more," returned his lady-love, with some asperity. "What on earth would people think if they caught sight of you? If I were a man, I'd find something better to do than go dancing after anyone in that fashion."

"Very well, Kate; I'll not come again; but it's rather hard on me. I had some flowers for you too—will you take them now?"

Kate took them—a limp bunch of narcissus. Naturally they were not as fresh as they would have been the night before, but she picked out the best, and took them into Mr. Ford's sitting-room when that gentleman had gone out for his evening constitutional.

Mr. Holt was lying on the sofa in a Turkish wrapper; his face cleared wonderfully at Kate's entrance.

"I was wondering what had become of you," he said, holding out his left hand; his right was still in a sling. "I hope you are not going to run off again now that you have come."

"No, there is nothing very special to be done to-night," returned Kate, sitting down in Mr. Ford's big chair. "I didn't know you wanted me."

"No, you thought I preferred my uncle's society. Oh, Miss Kate!"

Kate blushed scarlet. "It's a lovely evening," she remarked, with great appropriateness; "quite like summer."

"Really! Well, less than a week, and I shall be able to trot about again, and ascertain that fact for myself. You ought to feel rejoiced to be so nearly quit of me, Miss Kate."

Kate turned a little towards the window; she made no response.

"Don't you?" persisted the invalid.

Kate faced round upon him indignantly. "You know better, Mr. Holt. I wish you could have been months getting well, instead of going away and forgetting all about it."

"How do you know that I shall go away and forget all about it?" demanded Mr. Philip, leaning forward to get a nearer view of Kate's face. "If I come back at the end of the three months, will you be glad to see me, Kate?"

Kate sat perfectly still. Philip put out his hand, and held hers tightly for a brief moment, and then a silence fell upon the room. Kate could not have spoken; all her hopes and girlish visions were widening out into something deeper, stronger; her shallow, ignorant theories withering up at the first breath of real feeling. Whether she ever entered into this new Paradise or not, she would be none the worse for the grand possibilities that came surging up in that hushed silence.

"Now, Miss Kate, I'll trouble you for my chair, if you please," broke in Mr. Ford's gruff voice; "and if you will ask your aunt to make me a little gruel, I'll take it instead of the cheese to-night."

Kate delivered the message verbatim, and slipped away to her own room in a state of rapt exaltation. "Are ye no for any supper the night?" called Miss Greig to her, half an hour later.

Supper! Kate had forgotten there was such a meal. She sat opposite her aunt with such an absent face, that it caught even that lady's attention at last.

"What ails ye the night? you're no like yoursel' at all!"

"Nothing, Aunt. I am perfectly well."

"Have you been falling out with John Hally, then?"

Kate laughed. "It wouldn't be hard to put that right, if I had."

"More 's the pity. You 'd think better of him if he treated you more after your own fashion."

Kate pushed back her chair. She did not want to think of John Hally: there was no room for outsiders in her thoughts to-night. It was Philip, Philip,



"Sometimes they would encounter some of her workroom acquaintances."– *p.* 778.

Philip—the very name was music. She said it over and over again to herself. What did it matter about money now? She neither knew nor cared if he were rich or poor—better to go on stitching to the end of her days, if needs be, than share a palace with any other man.

After a storm, a calm; a day or two more, and Mr. Philip Holt had gone back to his own quarters at Mrs. McCallum's, and peace and order reigned in Mr. Ford's sitting-room. A handsome new shawl lay shrouded in silver paper in Miss Greig's drawer, ready to enter upon a long career of unworn, unspotted respectability; and a shawl will stand a good many years of such reposeful service, provided always that moths do not creep in and corrupt its integrity.

The same messenger who brought the shawl brought also a note that the postman had given him at the foot of the stairs for Kate—a loving, rather despondent note from her betrothed.

"I hope you will not think I am neglecting you," he wrote. "You know well I will never do that; but I shall not be able to come and see you for a few weeks. Our chief has got something to do with the plans for this new railway, and I have to go and assist. You may be certain I shall come back to you the first moment I can. Don't forget me, dear; nobody will ever love you half as well."

Kate put it in the fire as unconcernedly as if it had been a business circular. She would have to tell him there must be an end of the agreement, but it could stand over till he came back. She would not write to him. It was curious he should be mixed up in this railway too. Kate went about for the next few weeks with a feeling of great relief that he was not likely to appear at any of the street turnings; she was astonished at herself, now, that she had ever borne his presence for an hour.

Spring days deepened into full summer, violet and narcissus faded out of the shop windows, and sheaves of spicy pinks and moon-faced pansies took their place. None of them came Kate's way; in truth, she hardly saw them. She went through her work in a kind of waking dream. The only item of news that interested her in the papers was the course of the new railway, and she could have passed a stiff examination with credit upon any of the details connected with it.

Short-sighted Kate! She was brought down abruptly to the ordinary level of mankind again on one of those bright June Sundays. She and Miss Greig were coming home from afternoon church, and turning into their own street, they came upon Mr. Philip Holt. He shook hands with them—rather coldly, it seemed to Kate, whose whole face had lighted up as John Hally had never once seen it.

"I am glad to have met you," he said, turning to Miss Greig. "I have been knocking at your door this last five minutes. I am going back to London to-morrow, and wanted to finally thank you for your kindness in my catastrophe."

"It 's a good thing it ended no worse," returned Miss Greig. "Have you done with the railway now?"

"Almost. By the way, Miss Kate, I made acquaintance with a friend of yours out there—Mr. John Hally. Allow me to congratulate you."

The colour died out of Kate's face as suddenly as it had come. For the first time it dawned upon her, the meaning that arrangement might bear to Philip Holt.

It had been such an unimportant, easily set aside detail to her, but how was she to explain that? She could only look up at him in dumb consternation. Her aunt filled up the pause.

"Aye, he's a decent like lad enough, though he's maybe no much to look at. Any way, Kate was set on having him, and it's no the best-looking men that make the best husbands."

"So they say," remarked Mr. Holt, looking at his watch. "Well, I have to thank you also, Miss Kate, for your attentions in my tribulation. There is nothing better than a pleasant companion for helping to pass the time."

What could Kate say? Had she not encouraged John Hally for precisely the same reason? Truly her chickens had come home to roost, and she must take them in with what welcome she might.

It was all ended and done with now. She stood at her room window, looking down into the sunny street and slant shadows. There was nothing to look forward to, nothing to wait for; that good-bye shut out light and hope like a dense curtain.

"I wonder if John Hally will feel like that about me!" she said to herself, half aloud. "I hope not, for I did not understand what I was doing. Oh! why, why did I ever let him think of it for one minute?"

"Kate, Kate, are you gone to sleep in there?" cried her aunt sharply at the door. "Come here at once; there's a visitor for you."

Kate sprang up, a wild hope flashing into her mind. Could he have come back? She did not wait to look in the glass or to consider the probabilities of the case. She went straight into the kitchen, to find a big bunch of pansies on the table, and John Hally standing by the hearth, talking to Miss Greig and watching the door.

He was not endowed with keen perceptive powers, but he could hardly fail to see how her face fell at the sight of him.

"Why, Kate, you don't look as though you were particularly glad to see me," he said, in a rather hurt tone.

"I—I wasn't expecting you yet," she stammered; she was feeling quite faint and sick with the disappointment. "When did you come?"

"Late last night. I meant to have been up this morning, but I had to go off with some papers to the other side of the town."

Kate had got through the ceremony of shaking hands by this, and retreated behind the square table again. Her aunt looked at her in some surprise. Kate was not usually troubled with shyness. However, there was no accounting for the ways of young folk, and she had no desire to be ill-natured to them, so she took a small tray from the drawer, and signified her intention of going to see after Mr. Ford's tea.

"Kate, have you nothing to say to me?" asked her lover, coming round to the corner where she had entrenched herself.



"'I am glad to have met you,' he said."—*p.* 780.

Kate got up then, and plunged into it.

"Yes, I had something, John, that I ought to have said long ago, but I didn't rightly think what I was doing. I made a great mistake when I said I would be engaged. You must not think of me any more."

John fell back a step.

"What have I been doing wrong, Kate?" he asked, huskily.

"Nothing; it's nothing of that kind. Can't you understand? It was my fault all through for letting it ever begin. Don't think worse of me than you can help. I am so sorry."

John Hally walked away to the window, and stood looking down into the sunny street much as Kate had done a little before.

"How is it you have contrived to find this out now?" he asked presently, without looking round. "You promised you would try to like me."

"And I meant to, then, but that sort of thing doesn't come with trying, I think It's no use: I should just end in hating you," she said, half under her breath.

The young man turned back from the window. It seemed to Kate that he had suddenly grown taller, more manly-looking; certainly the awkward diffidence had vanished from his manner.

"In that case there is nothing more to be said. I am very sorry I have been so much trouble to you."

He took up his hat as he spoke. Kate went and stood before him very humbly.

"Will you forgive me, John? I was not half good enough for you. There are lots of girls I know who would be only——"

"That will do," he interrupted, with some dignity. "It was not other girls I wanted."

"And you'll try to forgive me, John?"

"I would forgive you more than that. Kate, I loved you."

Kate asked no more questions. He went away without another word, letting himself out at the front door. Mrs. Greig put her head out of Mr. Ford's room at the sound.

"Why, Kate, is he off already? You've very soon said all your say. I thought you would have asked him to tea, at least."

"He's not coming any more, Aunt," said Kate, in a choked voice. "It's all been a mistake from first to last, and now it's over."

Miss Greig set down her tray beside the forgotten flowers on the table, and looked keenly at Kate's woe-begone face.

"Well, it's your ain affair, Kate, but it seems to me you've made a bonnie mess of it both for him and yoursel'," she observed, sweeping up the pansies, and packing them solidly into a tumbler of water.

Poor flowers, they were the last that came Kate's way for many a day—indeed, for a time she felt as if she never wished to see another. They had been the one bit of sentiment connected with her first love tale, and something of the reproach of it seemed to cling about them ever afterwards.

That was not a cheerful summer or autumn with her. The blue bright days went by, but the blueness and brightness were not for her. She was almost glad when the winter rains and frosts set in, and the last chrysanthemums showed their pure pale faces in the flower-shops. Those flower-shops kept equal step with the march of the seasons. When she was a child, Kate had been wont to wonder how the unfortunate people who lived in the country knew anything about flowers. They might have to search far enough to find one, whereas in town they were in abundance, ready to hand whenever they were wanted.

"Kate, I'm no given to compliments, but it strikes me you've grown a deal more of a woman of late," remarked Miss Greig one night as the year was closing in.

Kate was constructing a Sunday cap for that lady, and carefully pinned a bow in position before she spoke.

"I am growing older, you see, Aunt Greig."

"Aye, but it's no the oldest ones that are aye the most thoughtful. You're no so flighty and excitable as you used to be. Mr. Ford was saying as much the other day, too. That nephew of his is coming back next week. I hope he'll no set fire to the place this time."

"Did Mr. Ford say he was coming?" asked Kate, stooping to hunt for something on the carpet. Not excitable! why, her heart was beating till she thought her aunt must hear it.

"Aye, but he's no going to make any stay. Mrs. McCallum won't be any the richer by him, just for one day and awa."

"Just for one day." Kate counted the hours to it through every one of the week between; but when the time really came, she felt more like hiding herself away out of sight. She lingered over the walk home that evening in quite a new fashion. She knew he had come as she came down the street—knew it by the brilliant light in Mr. Ford's window, by the fluttering at her throat. She slipped into the house as silently as a ghost, and into the kitchen. Miss Greig was there, in specially good spirits.

"You're late the night, Kate," she said, looking up from the pan she was stirring; "and I wanted you to order some things for me. Mr. Holt's here."

"Is he?"

"Yes; I had a famous crack with him before Mr. Ford came in. He was surprised you were not married. I told him you were no a giddy lass now, ready to tak' up with anyone that offered. You ought to go in and speak to him."

"Oh, no," said Kate, shrinking back. "I could not walk into Mr. Ford's room like that!"

"It wadna be the first time. Well, I must take this gruel in; he thinks he's got a chill again."

"He has had two chills every week on an average since he came," observed Kate. "I believe it's just an excuse for getting gruel instead of bread and cheese."

Miss Greig disappeared with the basin. Kate sat perfectly still, looking at the fire. She heard the voices in the next room distinctly, the rattle of the gruel basin, and then she heard a quick step across the lobby that was neither her aunt's nor Mr. Ford's, and Philip Holt came into the kitchen.

Kate looked up at him, but she did not stir from her seat,

"So you are Kate still?" he said, standing right facing her.

"Yes," very briefly.

"I never meant to see your face again when I went away," he said; "but your aunt said something about you an hour or two since that has made me think perhaps I was too hasty. Kate, I have come back. Are you sorry to see me?"

And then somehow Kate took courage, and sobbed out the whole dismal story.

A good deal of the newly acquired sobriety had vanished from her face by the time Miss Greig came back with the empty basin, and Mr. Holt was looking much more at home in the kitchen than in his uncle's orderly room.

"Kate has been telling me about her difficulties, Miss Greig," he said, as she came up beside them, "and I shall make it my particular business henceforth to see that she gets into no more, either by way of passing the time or for any other reason."

SARAH PITT.

THE STONE BEFORE JOSHUA.

(PREACHED IN BEHALF OF THE JEWISH MISSION.)

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

"For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."—ZECH. iii. 9.

THIS whole chapter is full of delightful truth. It is one of those rich pictures hung up in the Old Testament gallery under which we love to linger, and discover each time we gaze on it some fresh inner beauty. Rather, like the whole prophecy of Zechariah, it forms a gorgeous Gospel diorama; scene following scene in rapid succession: Christ, the great central figure, reproduced in them all. In one discourse, we can only take a very cursory survey.

The opening representation is striking. We are transported in thought to Jerusalem. Not Jerusalem as it was in the magnificent days of Solomon, when a gorgeous Temple crowned the summits of Zion. Nor in the days of Herod, when that Temple was rebuilt in more than pristine splendour. But it is in times of darkness and humiliation, when old Jews are seen moving amid the ruins with burning tears. Joshua the High Priest, and Zerubbabel, had just returned with a feeble band from Babylon to undertake the restoration of these dismantled walls. It is into the midst of the scene of busy workmen this vision ushers us. Amid the dust and rubbish of Zion's desolation, that handful of patriots are rearing their Temple afresh. Not only the people, but priests and High Priest too, "have a mind to work." See that man of dignified mien and serene look, wearing the remnants of sacred attire, moving from place to place amid the ring of hammers and iron tools, directing the removal of the *débris* of the old Temple to prepare for a new foundation. How humiliating the sight to those among whom he worked and laboured! We can form little idea *how* humiliating. The law of God had imposed the most stringent injunctions with regard to the personal purity (the purity of the very garments) of the High Priest. To have a spot or stain upon them rendered him, for the time, ceremonially unclean. What must have been their feelings, then, in seeing Joshua moving from place to place, with dress torn, bespattered with mud, his hands rough with labour, his face bronzed with the glow of an Oriental sun? It must have proved to them a sore discouragement at the very moment they most needed Divine strength and succour, through the appointed medium of an Intercessor. As they saw him pass and repass, we may imagine them saying one to another in plaintive sorrow—"Woe are we! Zion is shorn of her glory. He cannot appear in the presence of God for us!"

But let us proceed to the next picture in the succession of visions. The busy, bustling Temple-scene has changed. We see three figures standing before us. We have Joshua, still with his begrimed robes, his defiled, torn garments. We have an angel called "the Angel of the Lord" (or, rather, the Angel, the Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ) standing by him, as if his protector, defender, guardian. At his other side is one of dark and looming visage—Satan, or "the Adversary," perhaps in the first instance referring to Sanballat, the Moabitish chief who headed the hostile Samaritans. These, we know, at this moment, impelled by the old national hatred, were doing all they could to arrest the work of rebuilding, and to insult the captive remnant. In the background of the picture there is a group of common priests ready to obey any commands that might be addressed to them. This Almighty Angel—Jehovah—gazing on His servant, gives the direction to these attendants—"Take the filthy garments from him!" In a moment he is stripped. The vile raiment is cast aside. They clothe him in a new and shining priestly suit, from the purple robe up to

the fair mitre set on his head, on which glitter afresh the words, "Holiness to the Lord!" Behold him standing robed in new hierarchal beauty! every remnant of ceremonial defilement swept away. The same Jehovah-Angel further utters the cheering word, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee."

What a glorious Gospel reality was under this typical framework! Joshua! Satan! Christ! The panel at the bar; the public prosecutor; the great Advocate and Defender. Satan standing to condemn; the Angel-Jehovah stripping the sinner of his vile raiment, and attiring him in robes of spotless purity!

Once more the diorama moves on. The scene of turmoil and confusion has passed; the picture of the three figures and the solemn reattiring of the priest—that has passed too. It is a farther scene in the historic drama. A crowd are seen gathered around the site of the new Temple. The old rubbish is removed; the new foundation is levelled and prepared. The great foundation-stone is about to be laid, and there stands Joshua in his fresh garments, with the crowds of workmen gathered round him, awaiting the august ceremony. Amid a hush of solemn silence, the God of the Temple speaks, as the carved block of hewn masonry is laid in its socket: "Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."

Brethren, we need not inquire who that Stone was. Peter's exposition, in presence of Jewish rulers, of the striking parallel passage in Isaiah (xxviii. 16) settles the point: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation-stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." *That Stone was Christ.* When we think of the surpassing greatness of the theme, need we wonder that the Divine Speaker should arrest the attention of a world to this announcement: "Behold, behold THE STONE"!

Let us take the several clauses of this verse in succession.

I. "*Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua.*" "Every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God." He built the Temple of Nature. He laid the beams of its chambers in the waters; He reared the everlasting mountains as its pillars, and spangled its roof with stars. But more august and glorious far is the Temple spoken of here. Its foundation-stone was laid by God Himself in Zion. He laid it in the heavenly Zion before He had formed the earth or given the sea its decree. He laid it in the earthly Zion by types and significant prefigurations. He laid it when the great Antitype Himself came and gave His life a ransom for many. He laid it anew, in the Zion above, when Christ was exalted on His mediatorial and priestly throne, a name given Him that is above every name. He shall finally consecrate and glorify it as the "Head Stone of the corner," on the Great Day, in presence of the Church triumphant; when the elect are gathered in from the four quarters of the earth; when the whole building, fitly framed together, stands forth in perfect symmetry and beauty "a holy Temple in the Lord;" when angels, archangels, and the ingathered Church of the Redeemed, bring forth the top stone with shouting, and the cry shall be, "Grace, grace unto it!"

II. "*Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.*" Observe, it is "*one* stone." There is "*one* Mediator." "By *one* offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Not as some Churches would have it, with their crowds of canonised saints and intercessors and angels, detracting from the glory of the one all-sufficient work and sacrifice.

Come, see that "one stone laid by the Divine Builder!" "Neither is there salvation in any other." The sun needs no glimmering taper to add to its light; the ocean needs no tiny drop to add to its volume. Let the giant deed of Christ's doing and dying stand forth in all its peerless, solitary grandeur. On this true Eliakim, this one "nail fastened in a sure place," this one golden support in the Heavenly Temple, "they shall hang upon HIM all the glory of His Father's House" (Isaiah xxii. 23, 24).

But, "*Upon one stone there shall be seven eyes.*" What means this? The number seven is arbitrary. It was a sacred number among the Jews, probably from being first associated with the seven days of Creation. Hence we have frequent reference to the same in Scripture: seven altars, seven trumpets, seven weeks, seven churches, seven spirits, seven stars, seven lamps, seven seals, seven angels, seven vials.

It would seem intended to denote (1) Christ's *fulness* or *perfection*. In this sense how applicable to Him "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"! The Platonists and Gnostics, in their philosophy, groped in the dark for this "PLEROMA," this ideal *perfection*. But it was never discovered, and never would be discovered, till mankind were permitted to behold His glory, "the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." On that *one* stone there were seven eyes: the eye of omnipotence, the eye of wisdom, the eye of omniscience, the eye of unchangeableness, the eye of holiness, the eye of sympathy, the eye of love. "He of God was made unto each of us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "Out of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

The "seven eyes" point (2) to Christ's providential government of the Church and the world. The Apostle John, in the opening vision of the redeemed in Patmos, beheld "His eyes as a flame of fire." "They run to and fro through the whole earth." What a blessed truth is this universal, constant

sovereignty of Jesus! that the roll in which are inscribed the world's destinies is in His hands: that when the nations are fretted with fury, mad as ever on the arbitrament of the sword—the grievousness of war, "the sea and the waves roaring and men's hearts failing them for fear"—there is One who holds the stars in His right hand, who can rock these waves to rest and say, "Peace, be still"! More comforting still is it to think of Christ's *individual* providence, the care He takes of each separate member of His Church. This stone, with its seven eyes, has an eye for each. Penitent sinner, smitten with the pangs of conviction, mourning with anguished heart over thy guilty departures, He has an eye for *thee!* Sick one, in thy secluded chamber, in thy days of tossing and nights of weariness, He has an eye for *thee!* Solitary one, friends forsaken, thy family scattered, the grave closed over others, He has an eye for *thee!* Bereaved one, thy heart-strings broken with sorrows too deep for utterance, He has an eye for *thee!* Dying one, thy foot on the threshold of the grave, the gloom of the valley around thee, thine own eye dimmed with the haze of death, He has an eye for *thee!* Behold, the eyes of this Saviour-God "are on them that fear Him, on them that hope in His mercy."



"Old Jews are seen moving amid the ruins."—*p.* 783.

But these words, "seven eyes," may admit of the rendering "seven fountains." The "eye" among Orientals, as you know, is often the metaphor for the well-spring. The Arabs call *the fountain* to this day "the eye of the desert." Shall we render it, then, thus?—"Upon one stone shall be seven fountains"? This one stone, this Rock of Ages, was smitten by the rod of Justice, and lo! seven fountain-streams flow from its cleft side. There is the fountain of pardon, the fountain of righteousness, the fountain of peace, the fountain of sanctification, the fountain of comfort, the fountain of grace here, the fountain of life and glory hereafter. Mark, however, all these streams, all these fountains, are from one source. "There is *a* river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." Oh! the infinite fulness treasured up in Jesus! It is "grace for grace." Grace for a living, grace for a dying hour; grace suited for all the diversities of human circumstances, and want, and trial, and sorrow; for young and old, for rich and poor, for learned and unlearned. He who has unlocked these welling fountains of mercy in Zion is Himself this hour calling with a loud voice and saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

III. Let us pass to the next clause, "*Behold, I will engrave the engraving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts.*" Engravings or carvings on stone were frequent in ancient times. We know, from the excavations in Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, and elsewhere, that engraving was the old method of inscribing a nation's annals. Their iron graving tools took the

place of our types and printing-presses; aye, and while their other records, written on papyrus and similar fragile textures, have perished in the lapse of ages, these "stone libraries" are dug up fresh as they were chiselled and entombed many thousand years ago. Or, to take one other example, let me refer to the "written rocks" in the Mekkateb valley of the Arabian desert. Though we may reject the theory of an Israelite origin, there they are, of undoubted ancient date, uninjured by atmospheric influences, and uneffaced by the hand of man.

In connection with this same Sinai desert, there are two engravings on stone of sacred association, which will naturally suggest themselves. On the top of that mountain, curtained in flame and cloud, Moses receives two monoliths, fashioned with no tool of man, fresh from the mint and mould of Heaven, carved by the Being who was shrouded in mysterious and unrevealed splendour on its summits.



"He built the Temple of Nature. . . . He reared the everlasting mountains as its pillars, and spangled its roof with stars."—*p.* 784.

Again, on the breast of the High Priest, the predecessor of the Joshua in our text, there were set twelve precious stones. Each separate stone is *engraved*. There is carved on it the name of a tribe of Israel: twelve in all on the breastplate and shoulders of the Ephod. These two engravings, the stone tables and the High Priest's breastplate, are significant. We may take them as symbolic of the *Law* and the *Gospel*: the old covenant and the new: God, by the carved stones of the law-giving, saying, "Do this and live;" but which stones were broken. God, by His blood-sprinkling and blood-besprinkled Priest—God, by the Intercessor of His Israel, telling of the imperishable engraving of His Church and people on a Heart from which they never could be effaced.

Believers! what an honour to be thus set in enduring memorial in the breastplate of our great High Priest! Aaron's oracular breastplate, with the Urim and the Thummim, has long ago perished. When the eagles of Assyria or of Rome swept over the devoted Temple, they laid their talons on it—tore in sacrilegious rage the gems from their sockets. But not so these deathless brilliants, set beyond the reach of corroding time and human vengeance. Once engraven on that Heart of love, you are on His heart for ever. You will be able, amid flaming worlds, to utter the challenge, "Who shall separate me from the heart and from the love of Christ?"

But as we have given an alternative figurative meaning to the former clause, "Upon one stone shall be Seven Fountains," so (to carry out the metaphor) the present clause also may be similarly rendered, "I will open the openings thereof." "I," says God, "will unlock the fountains in that sealed stone, that the waters of salvation may gush forth." He opens the fountains every time His glorious Gospel is proclaimed. He is opening them to-day, as His ambassadors are privileged in their Master's name anew to proclaim, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." He opens the fountains as He sends forth His servants with the rod of power to heathen nations. He has done so amid the effeminate tribes of Asia, the dreary wastes of Africa. The murmur of the living stream is heard amid Australasian pastures and the woods and prairies of the far West. Degraded hordes, bloodthirsty no more, gather around, and with joy draw water out of the Wells of Salvation. And He will go on unlocking these glorious wells and reservoirs until the lofty poetry of Isaiah takes vivid shape and fulfilment: "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water!"

IV. We have one other clause: "*And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.*"

This doubtless points onwards to the Day of Days, for which patriarchs and prophets in Old Testament times longed, when the Messiah (in accordance with the predicted words of Daniel) would "*finish* transgression." In the Mosaic and ceremonial dispensation of the Jews, iniquity was typically removed. Year after year, by a touching and significant rite, the iniquities of the land were laid on the head of the scapegoat, and carried away into the wilds above the Dead Sea—a desert of oblivion. But all was a shadow till the true Antitypical Surety and Scapegoat Himself came to remove iniquity "in one day" by having the sins of His people laid on His guiltless head. It was a momentous "one day," the day waited for by all time. All the sacrifices of previous ages, the streaming blood of ten thousand victims that had crimsoned the Temple courts, would have been utterly unavailing but for the One Offering. The stone was smitten, the fountain was unsealed. He cried, "It is finished"—the iniquity of a guilty land and guilty thousands was on that one day of Crucifixion on Calvary removed for ever! Zechariah, as in other parts of his glowing prophecies, is pointing to the *Jewish* future. It is of the land to which the captives from Babylon have returned; it is of the land of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob he now specially speaks: the restoration of the Jews in the latter ages, their penitence, their faith, their embracing of the Messiah their fathers crucified.



"The sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear."—*p.* 785.

Shall we go a few chapters onwards in this same prophecy for an interpretation of the "one day" spoken of in our text? "And it shall come to pass in *that* day that I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced; they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for a firstborn." "In *that* day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." And then it is immediately added: "In THAT day there shall be a *fountain* opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

Is that day near? Is it far off? Are there any symptoms of these supplications of Israel, these anguished repentings, these bitter mournings? "O Lord God, thou knowest." To man there is not. The curse of unbelief seems still on the wandering people. Few tears are yet seen in these dull eyes. The Christian Church has awoke indeed to a sense of her debt towards the Jew; but still do her efforts seem spurned and her missionaries duped. "Behold, they are very many and very dry." Shall we despond? Shall we lock our missionary treasury, disband our dispirited agents, pronounce the Mission of all missions hopeless, and consign Zion to the dust and ashes of perpetual desolation? No, no. Never (despite of all discouraging symptoms), never was promise fuller or fulfilment surer than that Jerusalem shall awake from her slumber, put on her beautiful garments, and hail on her mountains the feet of Him that bringeth Gospel tidings.

At the close of the sublime figurations in the Book of Revelation, after God's judgments have been poured out on the Gentile nations, a new word, a new note of praise, strikes on the ear. What is it? It is a Hebrew word, a keynote borrowed from the old language of Israel. The Gentile "Hosannah" gives place to the old Hebrew "Alleluia." It is a Jewish anthem chanted by Jewish voices, and repeated five times in the six opening verses of the same chapter. "After these things," says John, "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia. I heard the voice of a great multitude, and the sound of many waters, and the noise of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia."

Few bones in that prophet's valley of vision we have spoken of may be stirring, few skeletons moving; but there is, too, a trembling fretfulness among

the Jewish people, as if the tuning of the instruments before the full burst of this "Hallelujah Chorus." The Jews! they may be despised still, as they have been despised for eighteen hundred years; extortion, perjury, deceit, circumvention, may still brand not a few of them with obloquy; yet "All Israel shall be saved:" the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The Gentile Church will have its part in the Millennial song, and its share in the Millennial glory; but the leaders in that mighty orchestra, the "precentors" to the holy priesthood of a renovated earth, are to be the nation of Israel, the nation "born in a day." It is the children of Zion who are to be joyful in their King.



"The murmur of the living streams is heard amid Australian pastures."—*p.* 786.

There is a familiar tradition of Joshua and his fellow-builders, in completing the second Temple on Zion, that when they were looking around amid the collected blocks for a suitable corner-stone, they could find none. At last, amid the *débris* and fragments, they espied one that had been tossed aside as worthless and unshapely. They tried it. It was just what they required. That top stone was brought forth with shoutings, and set in the place of honour on the Temple summit. So shall it be with the Jewish nation. Their predicted song of Christian Jubilee is found in one of their own Psalms: "I will praise Thee, for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." Church of the living God! rise to your solemn responsibilities in hastening the time when the curse and scorn of centuries is to terminate, and the world's aristocracy are to resume their disinherited coronets and their ancestral land. What is your duty as you muse on this glorious future? Let the prophet reply. It is the call to a solemn mingling of importunate prayer with indefatigable missionary effort: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise on the earth."

WHAT DAVID LOCKETT DARED.

"FATHER! here's Davie Lockett, and he has brought us some anemones!" It was an eager voice that proclaimed the wonderful news; for those were the days of Gosse and Kingsley, and "Things on the Sea-shore," when in every family there was at least one ardent naturalist, with a glass globe full of slimy interest and moribund marine zoology; and Rychurch beach was a terribly disappointing place for such. Its ever-grinding shingle and smooth sands yielded scanty harvest.

"And who is the obliging Davie?" I asked. "Whom have you been beguiling from his proper calling this time?"

"Oh father!" reprovingly, "you know the sailor-boy that always goes with us in the boat;" and there was introduced a shambling lad of twelve or thirteen, with smooth red hair, and a pudding face powdered with freckles, whom I recognised as the apprentice of the fisherman whose boat was the children's paradise. His eyebrows were bleached with sun and wind, and as he blinked furtively, with overwhelming shyness, his looks were none of the pleasantest. He wore a pair of fisher's boots, several sizes too large, at which he glanced now and then with conscious pride, but apart from them he did not seem at all satisfied with himself. We extracted, with some difficulty, the information that the boat had run down that night towards Folkestone, where are shelving rocks running under water, and other proper features of the seaside that Lucy sighed after in vain at Rychurch, and hence he had brought for the young lady the treasures that she had described to him. He yielded them up as if unwillingly; received with much apparent misery an outpouring of thanks, and went off down the street, one hand in pocket, and the other striking carefully at every shutter and gatepost, whistling for courage, but dreadfully conscious of his back. The little girls, however, did not look afer him, being lost in rapture, and elbow-deep in sea-water.

Rychurch is not at all romantic or picturesque. It straggles along three or four lanes behind the great sea-wall which is said to date from the Roman times. There are few trees, and they flourish only in the shelter of the houses. The east wind bites them off sharply if they try to rise. Landward there stretches the long level of the Marsh, dotted with farms, each marked by a small cluster of trees. Here and there are the great churches, with grey towers and moss-grown tiles, that bear witness to the crowded population that flourished here in the great days of the Cinque Ports. Long lines of ditches—sewers they call them—intersect the level, from which you may rouse a heron, or where you may see the moor-fowl hurrying into shelter. On a clear day the blue line of hills may be seen where Winchelsea stands, and the nearer cliffs of Folkestone are always in sight. Long-sighted people stand on the sea-wall and point with superior airs to the shore of France. There is not much that is attractive. Someone has lately discovered that the sand-hills stretching towards Romney afford some admirable difficulties for golf, and troops of enthusiasts gather to the links; but five-and-twenty years ago golf was a mystery to the Southron. We came there first because there were broad sands for the children and absolute rest for jaded nerves. We returned again and again for the same reason, and because our old friends the Henshaws were settled there. It happened thus that I saw Davie of the anemones grow up into a stalwart lad. He lost no part of his shyness. Once in his boat, he was alert and skilful to the last degree. There was not a current of tide nor a trick of the wind that he did not know. His master, old William Harper, left everything to him, and the *Rosemary*, cared for mainly by a boy of fifteen, was the smartest boat along the Rychurch beach. But away from his boat the brightness all died out of him. He would wander about the village alone; he would spend hours on the sea-wall, leaning on the guard-rail, looking out half wistfully, half sullenly, over the sea. Our children for a time were always clamouring for him. There was no more demand, indeed, for anemones, the aquarium having yielded to new interests, but there were sand-castles to defend or invest, lines to prepare, yachts to be carved and rigged, wonderful and impossible voyages to plan. He was always ready to help, but with an ungracious, clumsy shyness, that gradually alienated the children. He went back to his lonely walks and watching of the sea. I found him once looking down wistfully on our children playing in the sand. I tried to talk to him, but he shut himself up in a grim silence, and awkwardly drew himself away.

It was a fine thing for Henshaw, after fighting disease, and almost succumbing to it, in steaming courts and alleys, to move into this keen air and wide open sky. He soon lost the irritability that is born of noisy streets, recovered the burly form and exuberant manners that I had known in bygone years, drove or rode miles every day on the winding Marsh roads to see his scattered patients, was thrown from his dog-cart at frequent intervals and boasted of his bruises, talked of turnips and fish-lines, lambs and mackerel, with equal positiveness, and brought health into a sick-chamber by his very aspect. He was not exactly a sympathetic man, but he was full of a good-humoured curiosity that made him interested in everyone's affairs, and thus the troubles and hopes of the whole neighbourhood passed into his ears and over his tongue. In a short time I seemed to know the place as well as if I had lived there myself. To a close observer who is able to take an interest in men and women, the quietest of country villages is full of incident. No people are altogether commonplace when they are really known.

I found out something of David Lockett's history. He lived with his mother in a two-room cottage,

standing apart in a wind-swept field about half a mile beyond the eastern end of the village. The footpath to the Longstone coastguard station passed by it, but there was no other traffic. The isolation of their dwelling answered curiously to the loneliness of their lives. They held neither with the fisher-folk nor with the farm-folk—the two great groups into which Rychurch society was perpendicularly divided. David's costume marked him off sufficiently from the farm-folk, and a sort of mutual avoidance kept him apart from the fisher-folk to whom he belonged. His mother seldom left her own door. There was something wrong about his father. Rychurch, and especially Rychurch beach, was always conscious of this, but not too ready to speak of it.

David was a good, steady lad, and would make a first-rate boatman; there was some respect felt for him. His mother was a quiet woman who minded her own business, and there was no call to cast up anything at her. Such was the general feeling, and it was some time before Henshaw's persistent curiosity found that Lockett was a convict, transported for life for an offence which filled seafaring folk with a peculiar horror. He had been concerned in the wrecking of some ship which was lost by foul play; and this was not the worst, for some of the crew had perished, and the black crime of scuttling a ship was dashed with a darker stain of murder.

The rage of the men of Deal, when the truth came out, had nearly sent him to join his victims in Mid-Channel; but the law had rescued him, and sparing his life on some technical count, had sent him to wear out his days among the ruffians of Norfolk Island. Scoundrel in purpose, and murderer in fact, the man had, by a not unfamiliar contradiction, been tender and kind at home; and his wife, a broken-hearted woman, when she had seen him for the last time on board the convict-ship, came with her baby, barely a month old, to settle in that lonely cottage facing the bleak sea-wall of Rychurch. She might have gone far from the hateful sea, moaning as if for its dead; but some fascination perhaps held her to it.

No one knew how she lived; it was supposed to be on the bounty of the villains whom her husband had served, and who escaped all punishment. All along the Kentish coast the crime was known, and the seafaring men, and still more their wives, shrunk with a sort of horror from the wife of the man who had sent sailors to their death. Still she held by the sea, and persistently brought up her boy to regard it as his element, persuading old Will Harper, who was very silent about the matter, to take him as apprentice. He grew up, as the lads of the Marsh do, tall and strong, but moody, shy, and almost sullen. The shadow of his father's shame lay darkly on him. No one could guess how much he knew of it himself, but it was commonly supposed that his mother had no secrets from him; and had she kept silence, there were bitter tongues enough in Rychurch to wag at the poor boy, in moments of anger, and reveal to him the secrets of his mother's sorrow.

Rychurch is bright in the hot summer months, and bright on a clear winter's day. In autumn the ague creeps over the Marsh, and in spring the withering east wind sweeps under a bright sky, where the sun mocks you with rays that seem to be nipped off before they reach the earth. Nevertheless, in this fierce spring weather there is tonic for nerves and brain, and I was glad one March to go and rest awhile with Henshaw. It was cruel work driving about with him, every bone of one's head aching under the blows of the wind; but this was what I had come for. One day as we were dashing, in the teeth of the wind, along the hills towards Hythe (whither some business or other took us), the wind suddenly shifted from a little north to a little south of east, and in a few moments a dark mist began to spread over the distant sea, and the long level of the Marsh that lay below us.

There was a squall coming, said Henshaw. It was a squall, and something more. Before we reached the level, a blinding snow was driving along horizontally before a gale that almost swept the dog-cart from the road. As we drew near to the village we came into a comparative lull. It was, I suppose, about the centre of the storm; but here, too, the snow was falling fast. Henshaw pulled up at a gate, and told me that he must go across the field to see Mrs. Lockett, who was ailing badly. He would not keep the horse standing on such a day, but the groom should drive me straight home, and he would walk on afterwards. I thought I would like to accompany him and see the mother and son, in whom I had learnt to feel a strong interest. He saw no objection, and we tramped together through the wet snow to the lonely cottage.

We entered the house-place, roomy and tidy, with a small bed in one corner. David sat by the window in a listless attitude, wearing his oilskins and fisher-boots, as if he had just come from the beach. He gazed out through the falling snow, as if closely attentive for something, but without eagerness, with a look of sad, almost hopeless, expectation. He had the build of a man, but he was only about sixteen years old, and his face was the same shapeless field of freckles that I had known so long, and the old yearning look had been gradually becoming fixed.

It was no wonder he was sad, for his mother, by Henshaw's account, was failing fast, and he knew it. Always lonely, he would soon be lost in a gulf of loneliness beyond all that he had known.

Henshaw passed into the little inner chamber, and I began to talk to David; but he was impregnable in his silence, or answered only with a scarcely articulate "Ay" or "No." I spoke of my children away in their Yorkshire home, and a flicker of interest crossed his face, but no more. I spoke of the storm, and he only gazed into it more intently. The wind began moaning again, shifted slightly, and presently burst upon the house with renewed violence, driving the sleet furiously before it. The look of expectation on his face grew more intent. Henshaw was a long time with his patient, and we in the outer room lapsed into absolute silence, listening to the storm.

Presently there came a hasty step past the cottage. I have said that the path to the Longstone coast-

guard station passed the door. Someone was hurrying that way. David rose and went to the door, through which the wind burst fiercely as he opened it. A moment later there came other steps, and there were loud cries, which I could not distinguish, as a small group of men, with several women, ran past the window. David returned from the door with his weak boy's face set like steel, and passed without a word into his mother's room. I heard eager voices, and Henshaw came out with his jolly face pursed up inscrutably. As he opened the door I heard the woman say, "You must go, my boy; and the Lord go with you. Maybe the time is come; He knows." Then David came out and left the cottage without a word to us.

"There 's a wreck," said Henshaw, "and he 's going down to the coastguard to see if he can be of any use in getting the lifeboat out. I think I shall go too; there 's no telling whether I mayn't be wanted. Will you go home?" And the doctor, who had had no lunch (it being now past three o'clock), went down to wait perhaps two or three hours on the beach on the chance of being useful.

A light seemed to break in on me as I heard those words from the sick-bed and remembered the woman's story. Curiosity or sympathy—I hardly know which—impelled me to go in to her. She started very much as I entered, and I blundered out some explanation of my being there as Mr. Henshaw's friend. "Oh, ay, sir," she said; "you 're the gentleman as was kind to David, and your little girls, sir—I know you. Sit down, sir; you 're welcome. It isn't many——" and then she lapsed into a silence as like as possible to her son's. But she kept muttering to herself; and as I began to speak again, she interrupted me. "You 're a minister, sir, aren't you? Would you say a prayer for them as is in danger at sea? I think too much o' one when I try myself." I knelt down in great awe, and spoke a few stammering words. My mind was full of what I knew and what I guessed. My thoughts, like hers, went out rather with the rescuers than to the rescued. I asked for help in the sacred work of saving life. My words must have struck full on the chords of her life, for she roused herself, her eyes flashing, and cried, "Ay, Lord! that 's what I want. I want my David to bring back a life from the deep. I brought him into the world for that, and I 've bred him up for that, and I want to see it with my own eyes." She spoke wildly, and I knew from Henshaw that she had a good deal of fever; so I tried to calm and at the same time to encourage her. As was natural, perhaps, I stumbled again upon the story of her life, and she turned on me sharply, saying, "Ay! you know all about it! Of course you know; they all know, and they all talk." And she shut her lips hard. The wind shrieked round the house, and we both kept silence. Presently she began again more quietly: "I 've hardly spoken to a minister, sir, these sixteen years, but I 've read it in the Book, over and over again, 'The sins of the father upon the children.' And Davy was born to it. I wished he might never come into the world, for I knew how it would lay on him. But he was born, and his father saw him once, just afore he went away, and he was proud of him like, though he knew he should never see him again. And then I didn't want him to die any more; and while I was wondering how it would be, it came to me as the boy might some day bring back some lives from the sea—do you see, sir?"—I nodded—"and that 's why I brought him up to it."

I suppose she had never said so much to anyone in all those years, and she said it now to me, perhaps, only because my children had found their way into David's lonely heart. I made some sort of reply, and then, after another spell of silence, she said, "Thank you, sir, for speaking so kindly"—I had said hardly a word—"but now, if you don't mind, I 'd rather be left by myself till my boy comes back."

I left the cottage, and walked on to Longstone. The snow had ceased; the wind had worked round to the south-west, driving the black mass of cloud before it, and it was already brightening over Dungeness. The tide was high on the beach, and just below the huts of the coastguard was the small crowd clustering on one of the groynes. The lifeboat was slowly making her way through the surf to shore. Henshaw was there ready for work. The wreck was so near that practised eyes had made out through the glass what the rescuers had done. Someone on the ship was badly hurt, for they had got him down with great difficulty, and one of the lifeboat's crew had scrambled on board to help. For some reason or other, which I could not follow, this man was supposed to have shown remarkable daring, and singular disregard of danger, and there were many speculations as to which of the crew it was. Jem Hardcastle, it was thought, was the only one equal to it, and Jem's wife was standing on the groyne, her hair blowing about her dark handsome face, straining her eyes proudly to greet the man who, she knew, would flinch from no peril. It had been a terrible moment on the beach when the boat had parted from the wreck, leaving this man standing there alone. It seemed to be done purposely, for the coxswain signalled to him, and he then leaped into the sea, and old Sam Taylor, whose steady glass had never left his eye, declared that he was hauled safely into the boat.

I got hold of Henshaw and asked him where was David. He was in the boat. The call was a hurried one; the regular crew were not all at hand, and volunteers were wanted. Boy as he was, the coxswain knew his worth in a boat, and David was allowed to go out for his first piece of lifeboat work. I thought I could see his hard-set face, as he gripped the oar—the face with which he had come from his mother's room.

The boat ran on to the beach; there was the usual struggle to secure it; and they handed out first a man with a frightfully broken limb, whom Henshaw promptly took charge of. Two more were landed. Jem Hardcastle jumped over the gunwale, and kissed his wife, who was waist-deep in the water alongside. Where was David Lockett? Gently and slowly they raised him from the floor of the boat, bore him to the beach, and laid him down on the shingle under the shelter of the groyne.

It was he who had gone up to the wreck, who had

dared what Jem Hardcastle modestly said he wouldn't have tried, who had cast loose the lifeboat from her dangerous entanglement with the wreck, and had then leaped for a bare chance of life. A piece of wreck had struck him full on the chest, just above the cork jacket, and it was his scarcely breathing form that old Taylor had seen hauled into the boat.

We gathered round him. One woman—a rough, coarse creature—stooped and kissed his forehead. Henshaw, who was improvising a splint for the fractured leg, came and looked at him, gave some hurried directions, and went back to his more hopeful case.

Who was to tell the mother? After what had passed, I could have no doubt. They were glad to let me go, and promised to bear him slowly to the house after me. I found Mrs. Lockett fully dressed, and in the house-place. She met me with a keen feverish glance; but her face was set like marble. I went to her and took one of her hot hands. "Your son," I said, "has brought back three lives from the sea." She moved not a muscle, but stood waiting to hear more. I spoke of his daring, his skill, his venturing his life for others, his doing what none else would have tried. She stood still waiting, and I stopped. "And himself?" she said, in a low voice. "He will soon be here," I replied, with a miserable attempt at hopefulness. "I know, I know," she cried, her voice rising into a wail; "I knew it must be so." She tottered,



"David sat by the window in a listless attitude."—*p.* 790.

and I put out a hand to hold her, crying, "No, no, it is not so;" and hope seemed to gather in me at the sight of her agony, and I went on, "You shall nurse him back to life; you shall see him brave and strong again, and you'll know that you haven't lived all these years in vain——" I do not know what reckless promises I should have gone on to make, but she steadied herself under my hand, and turning to me, said gravely, "Is my son alive, sir?"—"Yes," I said, wondering to myself if at the moment it was true; "but he is very badly hurt."—"They are bringing him here?"—"Yes."—"Then I must get things ready for him!"—She went into the inner room, and methodically set about her preparations, while I marvelled at her calmness.

They bore him into the cottage, and laid him on the bed that she had so lately left. A new strength of motherhood seemed to have come over her. I could see that she wanted to have him to herself; she seemed jealous of every hand that touched him. "The young 'un has a rare pluck; he'll pull through all right," cried careless Jem Hardcastle; but she took no heed of him. The men went out rather sulkily. I could hardly persuade her to allow one of the women to stay with her. Henshaw soon came and did his part, and we went home together to get the food and rest that we greatly needed.

It was more than two years before I was again at Rychurch. The children, of course, tore down to the beach at once, and their first greetings were for a red-haired fisher-lad, strong and hearty, in whose boat they claimed immediate rights. He was just as shy as ever, and almost as silent; but there was no furtive or sullen look clouding his broad, honest face. Old Harper now enjoyed his well-earned leisure, and the *Rosemary* was practically David's. He moved among the fisher-folk in simple manliness, neither shunning nor shunned. I soon made my way to the cottage in the wind-swept field. I reminded the feeble but cheerful woman whom I found there, how I had promised she should nurse her boy back to life and strength. "I nursed him all the time he was a baby, sir," she said, "just to have him ready when the time came; and then it was like nursing him over again for the beginning of a new life."

HENRY MALPAS.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

109. Why did the ten lepers who came to Christ to be healed stand "afar off"?

110. Why was it that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans?

111. Which of the prophets represents sin under the similitude of leprosy?

112. What does Our Lord design to teach us in the parable of the Importunate Widow?

113. In what spirit must all true prayer be offered up?

114. What three things are set forth in the brief prayer of the Publican which mark the reality of his true repentance?

115. What lesson do we learn from Our Lord's dealings with little children who were brought to Him?

116. In what words does Jesus show that riches are a great hindrance to the spiritual life?

117. What is the great sin attendant upon the possession of riches?

118. What is God's promise to mankind concerning His gifts of this world's possessions?

119. What great lesson did Jesus teach at the house of Zacchæus, the chief publican?

120. In the "Parable of the Pounds," what very important teaching does Our Blessed Lord set forth?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 720.

97. That nothing on earth is to be allowed to interfere with our duty to God. (St. Luke xiv. 26.)

98. The example of Abraham, who gave up home and kindred for God, and also offered up his only son Isaac at God's command. (Gen. xii. 1—4; xxii. 2—12.)

99. To count the cost of bearing their cross with Him, which He illustrates by the Parable of Building a Tower. (St. Luke xiv. 28—33.)

100. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (St. Luke xv. 10.)

101. The Psalmist says, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." (Ps. cxix. 176.)

102. In his proneness to wander, and his inability to find his way back again. (Isa. liii. 6.)

103. That it was a wasteful life—time, opportunities, wealth, all lost. (St. Luke xv. 13.)

104. "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in Thy sight." (St. Luke xv. 21.)

105. That, like a coin, we bear the image and superscription of the great King, and thus we should do nothing to deface that image. (Gen. i. 26; St. Luke xx. 24.)

106. Abraham's words to the rich man: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." (St. Luke xvi. 26.)

107. They tempt us to be wasteful and proud. (St. Luke xvi. 1; Prov. xxx. 9.)

108. The duty of using our wealth while we live in this world so as to help us the better to serve God. (St. Luke xvi. 9, 25.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

GRATITUDE DOES NOT EASILY FORGET.

IT is related of Mr. Lindsay, who rose from a cabin-boy to the position of a merchant prince and M.P., that he signally repaid a debt of assistance after long years. He had been ten years at sea, and had gained the rank of midshipman; but he returned home with a broken leg. The owner of young Lindsay's ship came to inspect the vessel, and discovered the lad and his plight. Moved by kindness, he carried Lindsay off in his own carriage to the great surgeon, Sir Astley Cooper, brought him back in the same style, and made the youth a present in addition of a five-pound note. Time went on, and brought its usual strange chances and changes. The great merchant became a comparatively poor man, through the decadence of the West Indian trade. Mr. Lindsay had reached fortune and position. It was twenty-five years after the incident of the broken leg. One day Mr. Lindsay received a visit from the old shipowner, and he knew him at once. He had come to ask that he might have possession of the cargo of a ship previous to the payment of dock dues, so that by a sale he might discharge these liabilities. He had not the money to release his vessel first. Mr. Lindsay, as representing the authorities, refused. But he astonished his visitor by the offer to lend him privately the sum he required. Soon the key to this mysterious generosity was forthcoming. It was gratitude that could not easily forget. The merchant got his cargo, by this timely aid turned the corner, and once more became wealthy. A story like this is as full of instruction as of interest. It pays to do kindly deeds; and not the mere words, "I thank you," are the proof of genuine thankfulness, but the memory that can hold fast the favour until there is a chance to return it in kind.

ONLY A QUARTER OF AN HOUR.

"At the battle of Montebello," said Napoleon, "I ordered Kellermann to attack with 800 horse, and with these he separated the very eyes of the Austrian cavalry. The body of 6,000 Hungarian grenadiers before the cavalry, was half a league off, and required a quarter of an hour to arrive on the field of action; and I have observed that it is always these quarters of an hour that decide the fate of a battle." Was the Emperor thinking of this event when, visiting his old school, he thus spoke: "Boys, remember that every hour wasted at school means a chance of misfortune in future life"?

A SCHOOL FOR SERVANTS.

One sometimes hears the lament that good servants belong to the past, though the "QUIVER Order of Honourable Service" has entirely disproved that idea. A good servant is without doubt a household jewel, to be thankfully prized and held in high esteem. St. John's School, Westbourne Park, seems likely to polish many such domestic treasures, to make the family circle well content in future years. A moderate yearly payment provides the scholars with a careful education and training in domestic work, too often omitted from the curriculum of growing girls whose parents speak proudly of their "book-learning," and whose mothers do all the family work themselves. Swedish drill is taught, and great attention is paid to the children's health. The inspector speaks highly of the tone and discipline of this school, of which the late Lord Kinnaird was treasurer for more than forty years. The girls hold meetings to work for missionary and charitable objects, dressing dolls, etc., for prizes for little scholars in India. When we mention that the young folks make their own clothes, knit their stockings, and prepare their



THE LATE LORD KINNAIRD.
(From a Photograph by Messrs. Mault & Fox.)

outfits, it will be seen they are not growing up to join the "Army of Do-Nothings," but bid fair to prove of real help in the home where their lot will be cast.

ALWAYS READY TO RESCUE.

Johnson has a saying that "he who wants to do a great deal of good at once will never do any." The converse of this is just as true. He who uses every chance to help and uplift others will bless more souls than he can dare to hope. An illustration occurs in the case of Bishop Asbury, one of the first organisers of the Methodist Church in America. Riding out one day, he saw a negro of bad character sitting on the bank of a creek, fishing. The man was quite alone. It was just possible that he might be willing to talk, and that precious seed might be dropped. The good old minister stopped his horse, tied it to a tree, and sat down beside the negro. At first sheer surprise sealed the poor slave's lips; but as his new friend spoke, the kindness of the tone and the brotherliness, free from any mark of conscious condescension, melted the man's heart. He listened as if the story of the love of Jesus at last seemed real. Tears came to his eyes as Asbury besought him to forsake his evil life and seek God's forgiveness. But whether there was any resolve underneath the emotion, Asbury could not soon discover. He left the district, and did not see the negro again for twenty years. But he was ultimately sought out by an old coloured Christian, who had journeyed seventy miles to have an interview, and to tell of harvest following seed-time. The visitor was the negro found once with his rod by the stream, and by earnest appeals won for the Saviour. This man had since been the instrument of leading many others into the light. Greater is the worker's reward than all his expectations, if, in season and out of season, he is ready to rescue.



FLOWER GIRLS AT WORK.

WATERCRESS GIRLS.

The society for befriending watercress and flower girls has many a record of encouragement, as it patiently endeavours to help and uplift those whose burdens of beauty adorn our streets, and whose lives are so often hard and struggling. A club-room at Covent Garden, a loan fund, the loving efforts of the missionary and Biblewomen—all these unite for the benefit of the girls, while those who would do better if removed from the streets altogether are offered the help of a thorough industrial education. Religious services are held in connection with this movement, and we read: "The adult Bible-classes prove that the Word has lost none of its power or attractivenesss for the people generally, if proper means are taken to press its truths upon their acceptance."

WIDENING CHANNELS.

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to wear one's self out with anxiety." Such is the glad witness of a Christian worker, rejoiced by help dispensed by Miss Mason, of the House of Rest. Our readers will



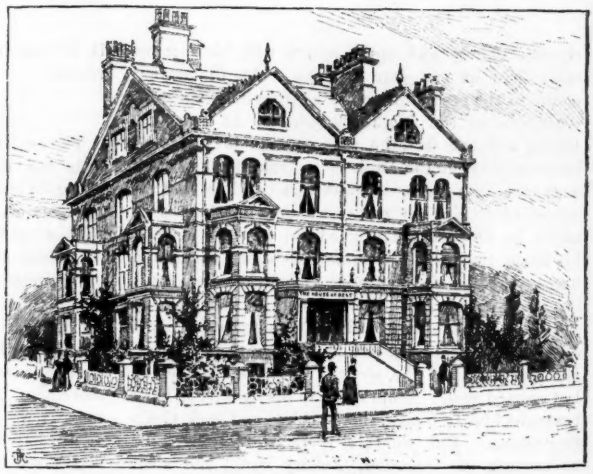
MISS MASON.
(From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.)

be interested in hearing that the channels of Miss Mason's care are widening, an "Aged Workers' Home" being her new project, for the benefit of such as have borne the burden and heat of the day, and now need a happy and peaceful haven of rest. The Home at Eastbourne has enabled many a faithful labourer to gather new stores of health and strength while drinking in the breezes of ocean, and here, as at Kilburn, spiritual good has been linked with physical; and residents have gone forth to pass on the help they have received in heart-communion. Such will doubtless be the case when the aged ones, who have given their strength and youth to the Master, meet in their own special Home: the place will be a means of blessing, a help by the way to those still in the noontide heat of the vineyard. God has a work for each and all of His white-haired pilgrims yet, while He leaves them in our midst. Many a storm have they weathered, triumphant through Christ, and they can draw on many rich stores of experience. While strengthened by their "Ebenezers," let us deal very gently with those becoming bowed down by reason of years, knowing that ere very long they will "see the King in His beauty."

THE BOOK OF NATURE.

No reader of THE QUIVER can fail to understand this phrase. We hear much of the march of science, and of its conquest of the natural world and secrets formerly supposed to be for ever sealed to man. And we are sometimes told that this increase of our scientific knowledge should carry with it a decrease of our faith, and a weakening of our trust in the Father, who gave alike the world, and the intellect wherewith to understand its mysterious processes. But there is a higher science that seeks to lay its laurels of research at the feet of the Great Creator, and point us back through nature up to nature's God. Here, for instance, is a new work by our contributor the Rev. W. J. Spiers, whose papers on "The Flowers of the Bible" must be fresh in the memory of all our readers. His volume is entitled "Rambles and Reveries of a Naturalist," and is published at the Wesleyan Methodist Book Room. Mr. Spiers seems to take us in his rambles over almost every field of nature—seaweeds, snake-stones, pond-marvels, and stars, all coming in turn under observation. And while each is described with the full knowledge of a keen scientific student, and advantage is taken of all that science can teach such a trained student as Mr. Spiers, the lesson he conveys to his readers is still the old one—

> "I hear it in the rushing breeze;
> The hills that have for ages stood,
> The echoing sky and roaring seas,
> All swell the chorus, 'God is Good.'"



HOUSE OF REST, EASTBOURNE.

All honour to the men who thus consecrate their learning to God's service. A few more such works as this useful and interesting volume of Mr. Spiers', and we shall hear no more of the fancied antagonism between science and Christianity, that has been so long and loudly proclaimed. Turning to another book, we are reminded that of all God's works in creation, man is the highest and noblest; so while we speak of the reverent study of God's works, let us not overlook the help and encouragement to be derived from the history of a rightly spent life. The British Women's Temperance Association sends us a tastefully got up little memorial of their late President, Mrs. Margaret Bright Lucas, a sister of the distinguished Christian statesman, John Bright. It is a simple record of earnest, honest, unassuming labour in a good cause, and should act as a stimulus to all lady workers. From Messrs. Nisbet we have received the first volume of "The Regent Square Pulpit," containing a series of the eloquent sermons preached by the Rev. J. McNeill from the pulpit of the Regent Square church. The volume is issued in so handy and readable a form, and at so moderate a price, that we hope it will be eagerly welcomed by pastors and evangelists; especially to those who wish to reach "the masses" should it be helpful. Canon George Rawlinson is the author of the latest volume in Messrs. Nisbet's "Men of the Bible" series, bringing his great historical knowledge to bear on the story of "Isaac and Jacob, their Lives and Times." There is much to be said for this plan of taking more than a single life in a volume, as the contrast serves to throw up the distinguishing characteristics of the Bible heroes. Certainly this is the case in the present work, which is one that might well serve as a guide for a series of attractive Bible-class lessons; though, like all the volumes of this series, it should be most useful also to preachers. Mr. Herbert Cloudesley's new book, published by Mr. Elliot Stock, is well named "Passing Thoughts of a Working Man." Some of the thoughts are not very deep, perhaps, but all are good, and they are distinguished by a practical common sense and directness that alone would entitle them to a hearing in this day of "fancies" and "fads." From the same publisher we have received "Songs of Siluria," issued anonymously. We are glad to see these poem-pictures of a charming country-side, and if all are as true as those we can ourselves recognise, they are sure to be popular among those who love the "Marches of Wales." "Nunnery Life in the Church of England" (Hodder and Stoughton) is the record of a misguided attempt to find spiritual peace in the "cloister" on the part of one who happily realised her mistake, and has placed her experiences before the public as a warning to others. This is a most interesting and useful book; and its circulation should be widely promoted at the present time.



SMYRNA.
(*From a Photograph by Messrs. F. Frith & Co., Reigate.*)

SOLVING THE "EASTERN QUESTION."

The Turkish Missions Aid Society, which is entirely undenominational in its character and aims, has for more than thirty years been solving "the Eastern Question" by earnest Gospel work in a widening field. It now carries on evangelistic labours in Greece, European Turkey, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Persia, Eastern Turkey, Syria, and Egypt; it commenced from the circumstance of an English minister coming into contact, while travelling, with American missionaries labouring among

Armenians, and thus feeling inspired towards supporting Christian efforts on behalf of races long sitting in shadow. In the Society's organ, the *Star in the East*, we read of great blessing attending the "Smyrna Rest," which has proved the means of many a bright conversion and many a change of life. "Many ships have left us," say the friends at Smyrna, "with quite a little band of those evidencing the new life within." "I came to Smyrna thinking I was all right," said an engineer who was there influenced for good, "but I saw I was all wrong. I'm glad I've got the light now—I know I'm saved and on the road for heaven." A man who had run away from home fifteen years before was pleaded with at Smyrna; it seemed in vain, but while praying in his cabin he passed from death unto life, and immediately he got to England he went home to see his old mother. As to his former mates, their past ringleader in sin wrote to Smyrna, "What pleasure it would be now to be their ringleader for Christ!" From Ordoo, on the northern coast of Asia Minor, comes a letter recording great spiritual progress, united religious meetings of Greeks and Armenians, and the outpouring of the Divine Spirit upon young and old. Some of the converts are under great persecution, "but *He* is strong," says the pastor, and those who have consecrated themselves to the Master will never be left friendless and forsaken. From St. Paul's Institute at Tarsus, which includes a Y.M.C.A, and Sunday-school, come tidings of eager listening to Gospel truth, two converts who were leaders in the Catholic Church, and a children's service at which twenty-two, between ten and fourteen years old, rose to their feet in token of decision and desiring prayer on their behalf. May such raindrops be tokens of showers of grace and blessing yet in store!

"THE MIND IS ITS OWN PLACE."

When Hamlet says the world is "a goodly prison; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst," and Rosencrantz differs from him, he rejoins wisely, "Why, then, 'tis none to you: for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." St. Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, was perhaps the happiest man in the world at the time when Nero on his throne was the most miserable.

"THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME."

A good minister told once of an aged saint of his acquaintance whose faculties were failing fast. She could not remember her pastor's name, but at the mention of Jesus, the Rock on which she built, her Comfort and her Hope, there seemed light across those dim mental powers. The old Christian woman was able to say--

"Jesus, my Lord, I know His name;
His name is all my trust."

We asked a young invalid concerning her pain, her weakness, the medical report, and there was not much of cheer to tell; but at the name of Jesus her face grew bright and glad as morn, as she tried to tell how she had never been happier than while laid aside, seeing He was her Strength and her ever-present Friend. The Name that is above every name held miraculous power of old; not less is its power in these latter days to dispel the shadow, breathe hope to the hopeless, and heal the broken-hearted. A wounded soldier of Buonaparte's said to the surgeon probing for the bullet, "Go deeper, deeper, and you will find the Emperor." Buonaparte was shrined, that soldier felt, within his heart. Are we less fervent in our loyalty to the Leader Whose name is Love? Are we so lukewarm that there may be some doubt lingering in the minds of others concerning our discipleship, our highest, most precious choice? Written deeply within our hearts does the Master see Mammon, the love of money, the worship of self, or His own holy name? If Christian souls were as devoted in their zeal for the Lord as was that poor wounded Frenchman for the Emperor, the strongholds of evil would fall as before invincible warriors, and the Name that is above every name would be more manifestly exalted, adored, and glorified.

SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS.

In a spirit of love, and not of controversy, the "Scripture Readers' Society for Ireland" is gathering a bright and glorious harvest for the heavenly Reaping Day. Christian men well versed in the Scriptures go about the country, visiting, and reading the Bible, and, when required, Irish-speaking readers are sent to Irish-speaking neighbourhoods. In this verdant "isle of the ocean," where hearts are warm and sympathies ardent, there is an open door to the Scripture reader, and he is looked upon as a welcome guest. Testimonies from many a parish show that the agents of the Society are valued and earnest helpers, attending to the sick and aged, opposing infidelity by word and life, and faithfully sowing around the seed of God's own Word. Two of the readers, who travelled on a mission tour, tell of kind receptions, opportunities for declaring the Gospel, and hearers listening with delight. A clergyman working in Ireland testifies that the sister isle could well do with three times the number of readers at present engaged. Itinerant labours have been carried on in the far west, and this branch of the Society's work grows in importance year by year. Cheering accounts are given of visits to coastguards and boatmen, and families in outlying districts. Homely incidents are often used to illustrate eternal truth, as was the case when a poor woman offered food to the reader, saying, "We will not charge you anything for all the potatoes in the *skillen*, if you can eat them!" She and her neighbours were badly off, but her generosity opened the way for speaking of His love Who delights to give largely,

and for an explanation of the fulness and freeness of Divine salvation.

LOGICAL!

When we wish to do a thing, we can generally get someone (especially if we give a handsome fee) to persuade us that it is what we ought to do. A physician said to a man, "You ought to take a little champagne."—"Why?" he asked.—"Well, you are very tall, and you are very bald, and the top of your head is necessarily cold, and you need some stimulus to send the blood to the top of your head!"

THE RIGHT HAND FOR THE RIGHT KING.

There is a suggestive legend of a man who, when travellers were few, wandered from one petty principality to another. He was received with courtesy and kindness, but came to be considered a churl who repaid these things indifferently. It was in this wise:—His hosts had a monarch whom they highly esteemed and reverenced, and who was often in and out amongst his people. The stranger encountered him again and again, and it was noticed that while the men of the land invariably saluted the royal *cortège* with the right hand, the visitor as constantly made his obeisance with the left. Wonder was succeeded by resentment. It seemed a wanton slight to king and subjects; and at last the daring one was challenged to account for his conduct. He made a simple defence. "You forget that I have a king," he said; "and my first duty is to him. I can admit no rivalry if I would remain my own monarch's man; and though I honour your king, and am willing to show it, there must be no chance of error. The left hand for any other lord; the right hand for the right king." The interrogators withdrew and consulted, and resolved that it was a good and sufficient answer. Their guest was absolved from blame. What of the subjects of the thorn-crowned One? Many claims are made on their regard. Fashion, finance, learning, politics, are the world's princes who pass on the crowded highway. Wisdom, and propriety, and even duty, may bid that we salute one or more of these; but the Christian worker has his own Lord, and will not fail to make the fact plain. The right King must have the best service.

REGRETS.

Ragged Urchin (weeping): "Oh, oh—oh, dear!"—Benevolent Gentleman: "What is the matter, my boy?"—"I 've lost [sob] my penny! Oh!" (Howl.)—"Never mind! here is another."—Urchin sets up another howl as he pockets the coin.—"What is the matter now?"—"Oh, sir, if I hadn't lost the other one, I 'd have two now." Are there not children of a larger growth who resemble this boy? They have allowed the habit of regretting to take such hold upon them, that they may be said not to live in the present, but only in the past. They draw pictures of what their lives would be now if only they had done or left undone this or that thing. And yet they never can be sure that the consequences which they think would have followed from a different course of action would have followed. Indeed, the things that they think were mistakes may have been blessings in disguise, and the indirect causes of what was best and happiest in their lives. If the boy in the incident related had not lost the first penny, he would not have been given a second. If we had taken a different line of action, while avoiding the mistakes we made, might we not have made at least as great mistakes of a different kind? When, on a particular occasion, we did what seemed to be best, we should not blame ourselves afterwards, when we come to know more, for not having acted differently. Had we known then as much as now, no doubt we should have acted differently; but we did not. Let us put away from us this sort of unhealthy introspective egotism. We should take one good look at our mistakes, so as to learn from them what to do or not to do for the future, and then cease altogether to think about them; "write them off," as tradesmen do a bad debt. Our mistakes give us experience; and the proverb, "If a man never has been a fool, he never will be wise," is as true as it is comforting.

THE LATE DR. NEESIMA OF KIOTO.

When the secretary of the American Y.M.C.A. Central Committee visited Japan, as noticed among the "Short Arrows" in our March number, he was much struck with the missionary spirit of the Christian youths at the Doshisha College in Kioto. Dr. Neesima, the founder and principal of this College, has since then been called to his rest. He was in many respects a notable man. Born in the year 1844 within a hundred miles of Tokio, he was brought up in the ordinary beliefs of his people. But, without being unsettled by intercourse with Christian people or Christian literature, he seems to have had a restless dissatisfaction with his Pagan creed, and an indefinable longing for something it could not afford him. A friend becoming possessed of a book written by a missionary in China, showed it to him as a curiosity. He read it, and found a knowledge of the God he had been seeking. Soon after, he read an account of America, and determined (though at that time either to profess Christianity or to leave the country was a capital offence in Japan) to visit the great Western Republic. After some trouble, he managed to get to Shanghai, whence he shipped himself as a seaman on board a vessel bound for Boston. His story, as told by his captain, exciting the interest of an American citizen, he was enabled to enter one of the colleges. At the completion of his course, he passed through that of a theological seminary, and

was ordained to the Christian ministry in the year 1874. The Japanese attitude in regard to foreigners had in the meantime been greatly changed, and Mr. Neesima, instead of being threatened with the extreme penalty of the law, was now invited to join a Japanese deputation appointed to visit and report upon the educational systems of the United States and the various European kingdoms. The experience gained while on this mission determined him to devote himself to the cause of Christian education in Japan. As he now stood in favour with his own Government, and had also many friends among American men of influence, he enjoyed exceptional advantages for the initiating of his scheme. In 1876 a training-school was opened at Kioto, with sixty-five pupils; but so steadily did the undertaking prosper, that at the time of Dr. Neesima's death the Doshisha College seemed ready for final development into a completely furnished university. It already included a preparatory course, a course in English, a theological course, a girls' school, hospital, and nurses' school. There were in it about three dozen teachers, with two dozen assistants, close upon a thousand pupils, while its list of graduates had already exceeded three hundred. Great hopes centred in the Christian scholar who had achieved so much, and his death is mourned as a national loss.

"BEHOLD THE FOWLS OF THE AIR"

It has been said by an old writer, "He that feeds His ravens will never starve His saints;" there is comfort for us in the myriad notes that fill the woods with music and flow from poet-hearts endowed with wings. The thrush and linnet and skylark, the nightingale heard in the twilight quietude, the humblest brown birds that twitter a song of praise, have for us a message of help and cheer—we are in God's hands, and He is able to provide for His children by ways and means beyond our human thought. Why is it that the far-off cry of the cuckoo, the lark's hymn echoed from the blue, fill our hearts with such gladness, vague indeed, but potent enough to be medicine for weariness, despair, and doubt? Is it not that the Christian, listening to the birds of heaven, is assured of the goodness of their Creator and their Guide, who protects and directs those tiny wings, and at last "is by the sparrow's dying bed"? for no little helper's life drops to the ground forgotten by the King. Shall He not much more care for His people, His redeemed, His Israel? When we know not whether to turn to the right hand or the left, let us cast ourself upon His guidance Who shows the swallows the track to their desired haven; when our best energies seem spent in vain, and barn and storehouse no longer smile with plenty, let us remember that the Giver of every good gift is He who heareth the cry of the young ravens and He who never sent away a supplicant unfriended, unaided. The busy little tenants of the tree-tops search industriously for food, as well we know who sow seeds and cultivate orchards! and we must unite work with prayer and faithfully labour in the calling appointed by God. But through no



"THE FOWLS OF THE AIR."

fault of his own, the Christian is face to face with difficulty sometimes; his only rest must then be on His providence who feeds the birds, Who sent the manna, Who provided a table for the multitude in the desert when the day was far spent. Many a child of God has found that in the sense of providential help, Divine remembrance, Fatherly bounty, the age of miracles is with us yet.

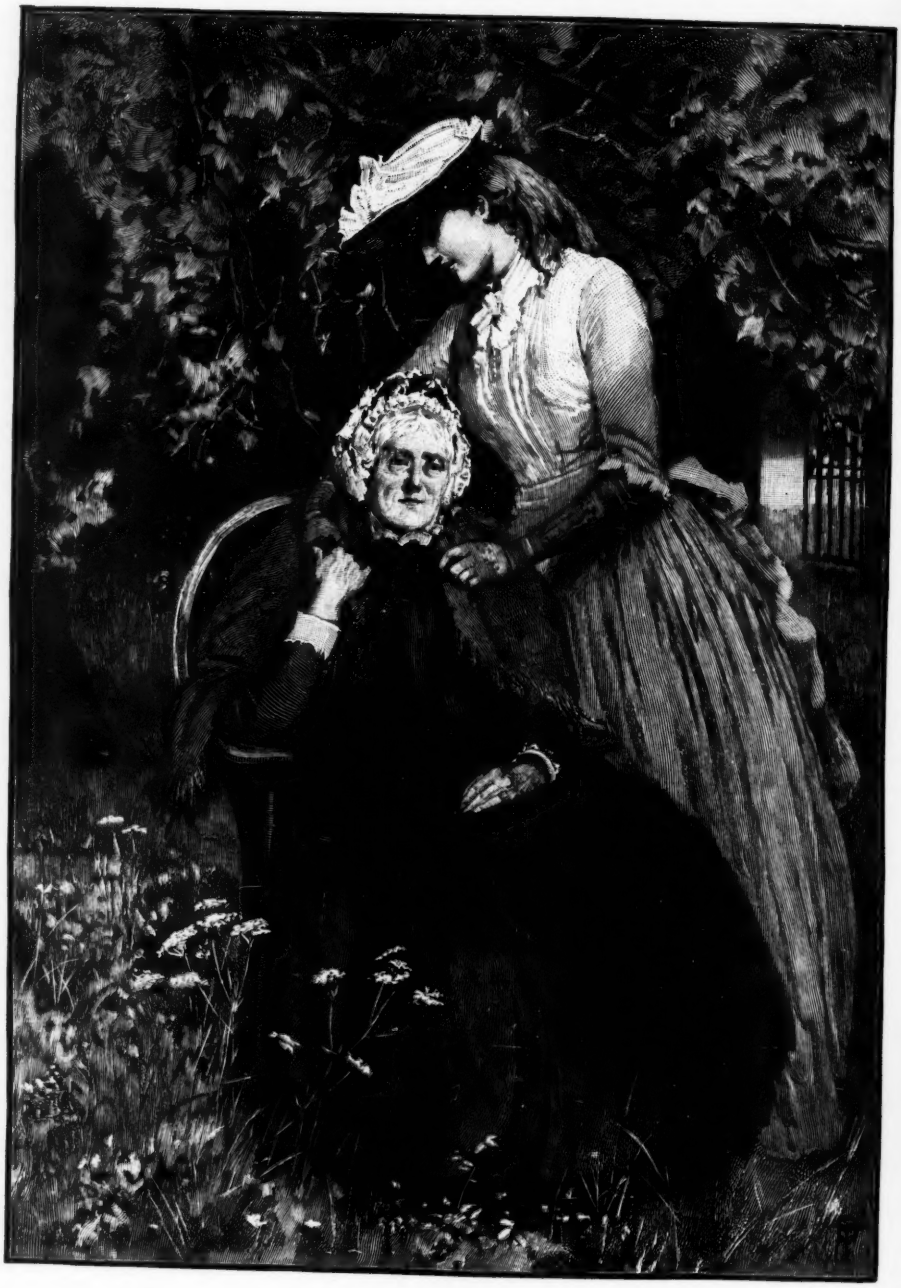
THE "QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from May 24th, 1890, up to and including June 18th, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs Fund:* M. Sallowfield, Berlin, 5s.; G. H., Bristol, £2; A Glasgow Worker, 2s.; An Old Subscriber, £1; J. J. E., Govan (32nd donation), 5s.

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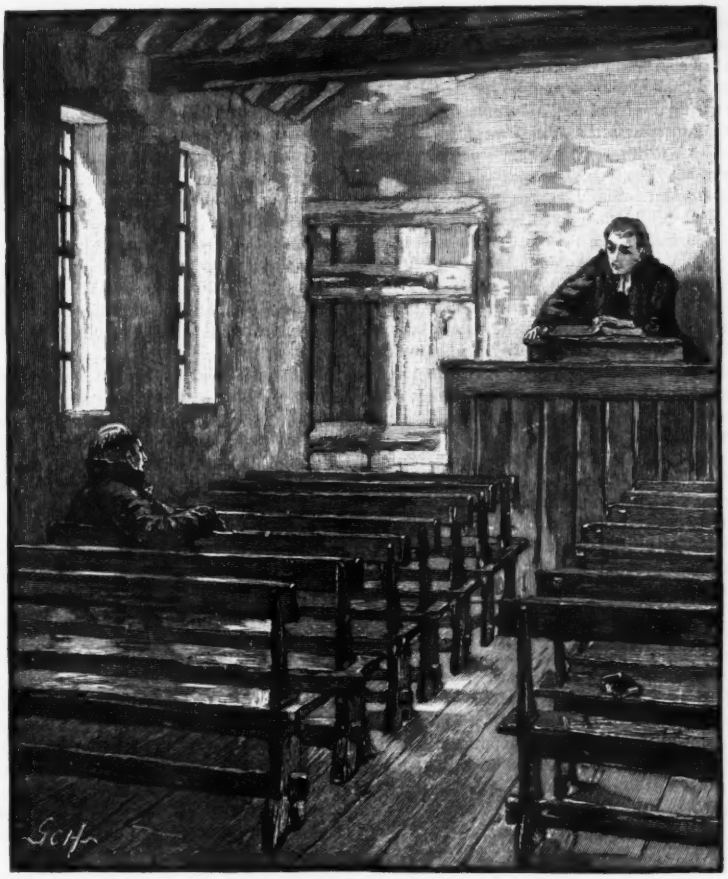
*** *The Editor will be glad to receive, and to forward to the institutions concerned, the contributions of any of his readers who desire to help movements referred to in the pages of this Magazine. Amounts of 5s. and upwards will be acknowledged in* THE QUIVER *when desired.*



YOUTH AND AGE.

(*See p.* 871.)

MEN WHO HAVE STUCK TO THEIR POSTS.



A CONGREGATION OF ONE.

MANY chapters in the uncompleted history of heroism tell the stories of men whom neither persuasion nor menace, derision nor even threat of death, could cause to relinquish their duty. It is good to read the records. The heart beats the faster, and the eye is moist, and some faint reflection from these shining souls rests upon our own commonplace lives. Such bright examples as the soldiers, of the doomed *Birkenhead* who perished obeying orders to the last, of Gordon at Khartoum, or of Chatham coming to his last debate on a day when England's fortunes seemed to him in sad eclipse, and falling in the act of addressing his peers: these are precious to the people, amongst whom they quicken the virtues of fidelity, fortitude, and high patriotism.

But sticking to one's post is an affair of choice or obligation to those who never win the praise of the press, and who have no notion of anything heroic in what they do. It is a part of the presentment of every day. There is a sense in which it is essential to the world's progress, and even to the preservation of the fabric of society. While any person selected at haphazard may at pleasure be a truant from his place in "the sounding labour-house vast," without apparently stopping more than a single insignificant wheel, no conspicuous group can escape; or if they do, there is difficulty and disorganisation in equal degree. We cannot help having a real, if despised, interest in forwarding the general business of our age. A

neighbour's deserted duty puts a heavier load on our shoulders, and tasks that we neglect are injuries to our fellows which have a trick of ultimate recoil.

Perhaps there is not only stimulus, but consolation, in the thought. Many an obscure worker is oppressed by a terrible sense of isolation. He is lonely in a crowd. The thunder of the endless procession is in his ears, and it suggests the nothingness of the unit. He is hemmed in by a noisy indifference, and in a spirit of revolt he determines to become a fugitive from his post, to resign the situation, to try a new departure. Yes, but the world's truest benefactors are the unknown, unpraised men of routine. They are absolutely necessary. The monarch on the throne, the politician at St. Stephen's, the leader of fashion, the director of finance, are all debtors of the men who repeat to-day the work of yesterday, and will plod the same round to-morrow.

The counsel to a grave contentment sounds humdrum. The question may be a subtle snare, but it will come—"Are we in the right place? Is there not a possibility of better things?" It is hard to see the philanthropy of toiling on year after year at the old bench in the old workshop, or at the familiar desk in the familiar counting-house. To serve our race is certainly a grand aim, and it should be ours if the fates were propitious, if our feet found the broad thoroughfare of recognised endeavour, if only we had the opportunity of "doing something"—this last phrase standing, of course, for labour on high levels and of striking sort. But a well-known writer says well, "The only way to regenerate the world is to do the duty which lies *nearest*, and not to hunt after grand far-fetched ones." Or, in other words, we aid and better the times when, in the absence of a clear leading therefrom, we stick to our post, fulfil every obligation faithfully, and wear withal the ornament of a tranquil spirit. Over-restless ambition is an enemy to usefulness as well as to happiness. Men and women are blessings to the circles in which they move when they elect to regard life as—

> "A simple art
> Of duties to be done."

The choice brings no private loss, no foregoing of lofty aspirations. The meek inherit the earth. To these willing servants "great thoughts, great feelings," often come—

> "Like instincts unawares:
> Blending their souls' sublimest needs
> With tasks of every day."

There is a time in many a career which especially tries soul-serenity. It is when the dreams of youth finally fade, when the rose-tints of promise die from the horizon, when it can no longer be disguised from the consciousness that unless there happens some wonderful and unlikely turn of Fortune's wheel the present will become perpetual, and that nothing be left but filling the old office in the old way. Here is the hard-working country minister who has hoped year after year for preferment—and not from any selfish motive, but because a wider sphere must surely mean wider influence for good. And the decades have gone on, and he has been forgotten, until he feels that remembrance now would come too late. He is rooted in his remote corner of the great vineyard, and change would perplex him; but the resignation of the dear wish is none the less a grief.

Here is a painter who has a limited range of success, and, by methodical industry, can even hold his own under the fierce stress of competition, and make a tolerable income. He has had his fancy, and has been slow to write it down impossible on the tablets of his thought. Over and over again he has exhibited, with strong expectation of achieving fame and fortune at a blow. But although the critics grant that he paints conscientiously and well, they deny him the touch of genius. Others are voted in as members and associates of the Academy; he is left outside. With the sun at high noon he sees the truth. His powers are at their best, and they do not entitle him to higher honours than he has earned already. With this knowledge it is hard still to handle the brush cheerily, still to face the dealers, still to send in canvases to the picture shows.

Once more. Here is the barrister who welcomed his first brief—long ago—with a joy at the heart of which was a secret assurance of gaining by-and-bye the judge's bench, if not positively the woolsack; and the hope of a great position has been persistently harboured in spite of tardy progress and repeated disappointments. Now, a certain standing is secure while health and keenness stay. But the golden dream of the young adventurer vanishes, never to return, one dull day in a stuffy court, when he, the elder—with threads of silver in his hair—is actually called as junior in a big case, and is led by a stripling (as he says, with a queer half-angry sigh) whose father was in the same form with himself at Eton.

In each and every such case there is a touch of inevitable pathos about the decision to stick to one's post to the very end. When there is no more chance of the advancement that first fired the eye, and gave zest to labour, it is doubly hard to be reconciled to monotony. Yet the patent of a better greatness may be won precisely at this point by a brave and magnanimous accepting of duties that have lost their gilding, by a steadfast refusal to be envious of more fortunate rivals, and by disdaining to be made morose or irritable through disappointment.

On the mission field, in the slums of great cities, in lonely hamlets where men are few and their ambitions mean, it is no small test of sincerity and fortitude to work on year after year, and have no gathered sheaves to prove to the common eye that harvest follows seed-time. When the clouds of ignorance, vice, and misery seem to lighten not at all, it is hard to remain a volunteer. Nevertheless, the history of Christian and philanthropic enterprise in all lands shows that perseverance conquers. Many times deserts deemed the most barren have blossomed like the rose, and a glad recompense has been made for weary waiting. Consider such an example as that of the Teloogoo Mission in India, where the most zealous and indefatigable labours seemed hopelessly wasted, and the cry was, "We are spending our strength for nought." After long trial and no result, it was almost determined to give it

up. But one missionary pleaded to be allowed to stick to his post. His sphere of apparently thankless toil was named the "Lone Star Mission," but he was permitted to stay and preach and teach still; and the heroic endurance and high faith reaped a signal reward. The heathen left their idols, and to-day the converts of Teloogoo number many thousands. It was worth while to refuse to despair.

There are times when the test of entire faithfulness takes a different shape. In the Life of Dr. Lyman Beecher it is related that one wild winter's day the good doctor was promised to preach at a little out-of-the-way country church in America. Not wishing to fail in an engagement, he cheerfully faced the situation, and, after a disagreeable journey, got to his destination. But it seemed that he was given up. Instead of a thronged building, there was a congregation of one. Lyman Beecher preached to the one, and being forced to be personal, wished to shake hands and speak a word on his hearer's own level afterwards. Of this, however, there was no chance, for the man was gone. Many years went by, and in a great city a stranger touched one day the doctor's arm, and introduced himself as the single listener in the tiny church long ago—an impressed listener, who had thought over what he had heard, and acted thereupon. He was now himself a preacher of the Gospel, with a church gathered around him numbering a thousand adherents. Lyman Beecher had resisted the temptation to let the service go by default, and sticking to his post, had been instrumental in bringing about these wonderful results.

Home is a place where fidelity and devotion obtain many opportunities of rising into heroism. Here are often shown the courage and love that win their way to an alienated heart by persistent service. How many wives, mothers, sisters have by a disinterested adherence to duty in a dark and evil hour saved a dear one from despair, death, or shame! To keep husband or brother in the path of honour and rectitude is a task that scores of women wrestle with, hoping, fearing, sighing, praying, through the days that should be their best and brightest, and one which they only resign with life.

Loyal sympathy at home has been a mainstay of many an eminent worker. Francis Huber, the clever and persevering naturalist of Geneva, author of "New Observations upon Bees"—a work full of interest and novelty in its day—met with a terrible disaster. Losing his way on a winter's night, the intense cold of the Swiss mountain-side cost him his eyesight. He became totally blind. Was he henceforth a waif of circumstance? By no means; a brave and loving woman became eyes to him. With his wife as amanuensis, unremitting in solace and obedient attention, Huber was still able to carry on his researches and to communicate his discoveries and theories to the world. Happiness came back to him through these patient ministrations, and he lived and laboured a quarter of a century after his great loss.

It is a touching story, illustrating love clinging to its post to the very end, which is related of the last days of the wife of the great German historian, Barthold Georg Niebuhr. This devoted woman lived for her husband and her husband's work. Niebuhr was warned that he would shortly lose her, and holding her tenderly in his arms, he inquired if there was no pleasure he could give her, nothing that he could do or attempt for her sake. The answer came with a look of intense affection: "You shall finish your *History* whether I live or die."

It cannot be doubted that in home life also there is rich repayment for an intrepid and a faithful sticking to one's post. In the pitiful instance where a prodigal drifts upon the breakers in spite of utmost solicitude, it is some solace to know that the last effort at rescue was made. And in happier and more frequent cases, where the loving tendance has availed in ultimate turnings of desperate corners, or in the quiet ministries which have helped a dear one upward and onward, it is a deep joy to watch the development of events. There is no spring of earthly happiness so pure and deep as that of witnessing a rise or reformation which willing self-sacrifice has bought.

FELIX FERRY.

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.

LORD, for the bounties of Thy hand,
For harvests safely stored,
In sweet thanksgivings through the land
Thy praises are outpoured.

Not simply in the anthem's sound,
Where music bears its part,
The tribute of our praise is found,
But in each grateful heart.

For all Thy boundless mercy shown
Shall we not thankful be,
And bow before Thy gracious throne,
Who owe our all to Thee?

We throng Thy courts with hearts sincere
The harvest song to raise,
Assured Thou art well pleased to hear
The children's hymn of praise.

J. R. EASTWOOD.

THE OTHER SON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NOT ALL IN VAIN."

CHAPTER VIII.

HAROLD'S HOME-COMING.

"O! bliss to cross once more the foaming brine."
JEAN INGELOW.

THEODORA sat under the great old chestnut in the garden behind the house. Beth was sleeping close by, sheltered from the June sunshine which fell with such warm light on Theodora's feathery golden hair. There was a piled-up work-basket on the bench beside the girl, but she was not sewing. She was bending over a letter in her hand, with an amused smile upon her face. Within its pages Mr. William Harden made, in stiff and pompous language, the offer of his hand and heart to Miss Theodora Holbrook. Theodora did not feel herself blameworthy; she had never given the young man the least encouragement, and she was quite unaware that her brethren had given him a good deal. They were wont to waylay him as he took his walks abroad; for in the abundant good-nature of his heart, he often bestowed upon them pennies for peppermints, and then, by way of reward, they would tell him many very astonishing facts about Theodora: such as how she said one day he had a beautiful heart, and that she liked him very much. William generally went home from these interviews harassed, but happy.

Theodora smiled as she drew a mental little picture of herself becoming a member of the "Clockwork Family" by the acceptance of William's heart and hand. He would call, dressed in his best, and Mrs. Ansley would put on her prettiest cap, and smile bewitchingly upon her prospective son-in-law. He would take her out for a daily walk, Theodora supposed; just a measured length along one of the roads, then back again. And the wedding breakfast and the *trousseau*, where would they come from? She thought of the Ansley *ménage* and the cracked plates and dishes, and nothing ever used for its original purpose—of her own coarse worn gown, and her one good best black frock. Then she thought of Julia Morley, and how patently she adored the very ground under William's large feet. Why did he not turn his attentions thither, where they would be so welcome? She thought of the "Clockwork" honeymoon. William and she would go to some commonplace haunt of brides and bridegrooms, and do everything at precisely the same hour every day—breakfast at eight, lunch at one, dine at seven, spend the evening on the pier saying "Oh!" when hideous glaring fireworks went off, hissing and spoiling the calmness of the summer twilight. They would return at a precise, fixed date to Drueling; they would live with his parents, presumably, until William had some visible means of support. On entering the house, she would be requested to remember the mat, as though it were an object of charity; and she felt sure that, as William's wife, Anne would reprove her at table with the same asperity she displayed towards poor William, who took it all so meekly.

But from outside the garden came the sudden sound of a mighty uproar—screams, and shouts re-echoed, of a kind unprecedented even in that clamorous household. Some great event must be even now and here taking place. She held her breath to listen, then knew that joy predominated in the outcry. The garden gate was flung open, and the children poured in—a tall figure in their midst. One glance at the new-comer's face, and Theodora was in his arms, clinging about his neck, kissing him, laughing, crying, breathless, speechless, while he held her to him as if he could never let her go again.

"Harold! Harold!" the children cried, dancing round him, seizing his hands and coat, and demanding his attention separately and collectively. And Harold it was, bronzed by Australian suns, and healthy, and strong, and handsome. He was very like Theodora, only that his laughing eyes were blue as was the sky above their heads.

"When did you come? How did you come?" she cried, as soon as she could find words. Harold laughed, hunted the children from his immediate vicinity with a wild war-whoop, and sat down upon the rustic bench with Theodora.

Meanwhile Maud—of course it was Maud—had discovered William Harden's "hand and heart" lying forgotten on the garden path. She read the letter through, then screamed in an ecstasy of rapture, danced about wildly, and finally, choking with laughter, read it aloud to the assembled multitude, perfectly regardless of Theodora's imploring protests. It seemed to her a shame to mock him, and a desecration to have the inmost feelings of his heart thus proclaimed to the world. But Maud would not stop, and the others jeered and laughed, and even Harold joined in, until at last Theodora began to cry. She could not help it; she was thoroughly overwrought, and she wept all the more because she felt that her tears were completely misunderstood. She knew that they were looking at each other in marvelling silence, thinking that this emotion could mean nothing more nor less than that she loved William. Harold kissed her, and put his arm about her, and drew her to his side, and told her not to cry, and that she was the best old girl in the world, and then he peremptorily drove the children away, and at length he and Theodora were left alone, except for the still presence of little Beth, whose dark eyes watched them languidly.

"Have you seen mother?" Theodora asked him.

"Yes, in the house. She has changed very little. Where is Mr. Ansley?"

"I think he is at Hinkley to-day."

"Is he as nice as ever—as gentlemanly?"

"He is not changed," said Theodora gently.

The young man shrugged his shoulders.

"That is a mild way of putting it," he said. "But it speaks volumes, for any change must have been for the better. What does he do all day?"

"Oh, I don't know. Let us not talk about him," replied Theodora. "Tell me instead about yourself. How and why have you come home? Oh, Harold, I am so glad!"

"Aunt Florence has been urging me to come back; she has never forgiven you for leaving her; and I must say, Theo, if you will excuse me, I think it was a most remarkably silly thing of you to do. You must be simply wretched here. Aunt Florence said I must come home; that if I staid out there longer, my manners would become colonial, and she could never recover the grief that such a calamity would cause her. And she has got me a post in London—in a Government office, I believe, so I shan't die of hard work, that's one good thing. So I came right along here, thinking what a joke to pounce in on you."

"Have you seen Aunt Florence yet?"

"No; came here straight. How the children have grown! Alice is a rare little beauty, and Polly is pretty in that small piquant way of hers. They are a small race, though, compared with you and me, Theo. And is that the little sick one?" he asked, nodding in the direction of Beth's chair.

"Come over and speak to her, Harold," the girl said, rising.

"She will be frightened; she does not know me," he said.

"This is brother Harold, Beth," said Theodora, raising the little sufferer on her pillows. The great sombre eyes looked at him very listlessly, then closed in weariness. Theodora sighed.

"Is there no one but you to look after her?" he asked her presently, as Theodora's dress brushed him, walking to and fro, with little Beth in her arms.

"No one else," the girl replied. "And I could not give her to anyone else, Harold, for she knows me, and loves me."

Harold was silent. He sat and looked at his sister as she walked.

"You are an angel, Theo," he said presently.

"Oh no, I am not," she said, laughing: "I am not in the least angelic, Harold, so do not think that, or you will suffer a frightful disappointment."

"But to stay here," he said musingly—"to give up all the bright and pleasant life you might have with Aunt Florence, to do as you are doing now. Yes, you are an angel, Theodora. I repeat it."

"I am glad you think so," she said, putting Beth back in her chair. "It pleases me that you think so, for I am very vain; but all the same, you make a grave mistake, Mr. Holbrook."

"What about this man who wants to marry you?" he asked, pointing to the letter he had captured from Maudie.

"Nothing," she said, and coloured.

"Could not be much less. Then you do not want to marry him?"

"No. Very decidedly I don't."

"What sort is the chap—a country yokel?"

"He is very good and nice, and has been very kind to me, but I am not going to marry him. I shall never marry, Harold." And she laid her cheek against his shoulder.

"Stuff and nonsense! Whenever I hear a girl say that I instantly prepare to attend her wedding. By the way," he added in the airiest way, "I asked a girl on the ship coming home to marry me."

"You did!" cried Theodora. "Oh, Harold! how could you?"

"Oh, Theodora! how couldn't I?" he rejoined mockingly, laughing at her startled face.

"But you've no money. You've nothing to marry on."

"But she has plenty."

"But you could not marry on her money."

"Couldn't I?"

"But, Harold dear, are you serious?"

"As serious as possible, my dear child."

"And she accepted you?"

"She did me that honour."

"And did she know your circumstances?"

"I don't know. I never took any trouble to conceal the true facts of the case from her. Neither did I parade my poverty: you don't do that on shipboard. You get up little concerts and sprees, and ship-croquet and fun crossing the line, and that kind of thing. Everyone with a first-class passage is as good as anyone else; perhaps she knew my brilliant prospects in the Government office. Perhaps she did not. You perceive I state the case with the utmost fairness and impartiality."

"And she likes you?"

"She was good enough to say she did, anyhow. And really, I don't see why she shouldn't. I'm not a bad sort of a chap by any means; now, am I?"

"Not a bad sort of a chap by any means," repeated Theodora, laughing—"but a sort of chap without any means."

"You forget the Government office, Theodora."

"And how much has she?"

"Thousands!" said Harold vaguely, with a comprehensive sweep of the hands—"quite enough to keep me—my wants are few, and my tastes inexpensive."

"I don't like to hear you talk like that even in jest," said his sister gravely.

"Would you refuse a man you cared for simply because he was rich?"

"No, certainly not."

"Then why should I refuse a girl for that reason? I can't help that Nora has money, can I? I didn't give it to her."

"Nora—what a pretty name! What is she like?"

"She is a dear little mite, with the most wonderful dark eyes you ever saw, and curly black hair, and one of those delicious creamy smooth complexions. And she sings like a seraph. And she is very fond of me, and I adore her." And Harold stroked his moustache with a contemplative air.

"Oh well, if you do, it is all right."

"Of course it is all right.'

"Does Aunt Florence know?" she asked.

"I proposed between the Cape and Southampton, Theo, and then I came straight away here; so I don't see how Aunt Florence can know, except she's a thought-reader, and subject to brain-waves, and that kind of thing."

"And Nora, where is she now?"

"Gone to her own people. They live in Yorkshire. Nora was travelling with her brother."

"What is her other name?"

"Craydon. Aren't you relieved I have not brought you home a bush-lady for a sister-in-law? What shall we do about calling Nora on a visit? We couldn't ask her here, and I wouldn't if we could. Do you suppose Aunt Florence will invite her?"

"I am sure she will."

"And you will have to come up to town to receive her. I shall be proud of my pretty sister." Theodora smiled.

"I shall be sure to love Nora for your sake," she said.

"And for her own," said Harold, with a happy smile. "You can't help it."

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. HARDEN'S TEA-PARTY.

"Instead of Yes, I gave him No."—ANON.

HANDSOME Harold Holbrook caused quite a sensation in stupid little Drueling. Miss Brown declared it did her heart good to see such a fine young man walk down the village street, looking for all the world as if it belonged to him, every cobble-stone. Miss Oldham said it was quite a pleasure to hand him his daily newspaper across the counter. He had a gay word and a brilliant smile for everyone, rich and poor, handsome and ugly, who crossed his path. The children followed him about in an adoring horde, so much so that Theodora had perforce to give them holidays in honour of his arrival. The young ladies of the village got up all sorts of tennis-parties, and expeditions, and gipsy-teas in the Raylington Woods for his delectation. And Harold accepted all attention and admiration in a calm, lofty way, as merely his due.

Even Mrs. Harden caught the infection, and gave a tea-party. Such an event had not been known in the annals of Drueling, and no one was more surprised and excited than Mrs. Harden herself. The real truth was that she had decided in solemn conclave with the doctor, that in the event of Theodora accepting William's offer of his hand and heart, there must be a party to announce the affair to the outer world. Theodora had refused William, but the idea of the party had gotten so firmly into Mrs. Harden's head, that she issued the invitations all the same, and regardless of what had occurred, actually sent Theodora a note the morning of her party, asking her to come and "put her tasteful hand over the drawing-room." Theodora, greatly marvelling, and inwardly wondering had William not confided his affairs of the heart to his parents, went as requested.

Anne, with a peculiar smile which conveyed the information that she at least knew the exact state of affairs, let her in, and ushered her into the room where Mrs. Harden was busily engaged unwrapping forks and spoons from the retirement of years.

"So good of you to come, dear," she said anxiously, as Theodora kissed her. "I half feared you would not, and I never could get through all that there is to be done without you. You are so clever and prompt, and you know so well just what ought to be done. I have lived so long out of the world, that I forget how to prepare for society."

"I am only too glad to help you in any possible way I can, Mrs. Harden," said Theodora, taking off her hat and gloves. "You need not have feared that I should not come."

"You have not been here of late, my dear," said the old lady, counting a row of forks for the twentieth time.

"I did not like to come," the girl said, colouring, seeing that a reply was expected.

"Is it because of William?" asked Mrs. Harden sharply. "Oh, William must learn to bear disappointment. We cannot have everything we set our heart upon in this world, Theodora.

"He wrote to you, my dear," said Mrs. Harden, nervously sweeping all the forks and spoons into a heap, so that long and careful counting would be needed to get them straight again—"and with our consent, our full consent, and, I may add, our complete approbation. I love you as if you were my own child, and my husband has the very highest opinion of you; and we hoped you would have come to us, and have been our daughter."

"Do not think I do not value your good opinion—that I am not grateful for your love," said Theodora, taking the old lady's trembling hand in her own slender strong one. "I could not marry your son. He is very good and true, and I am grieved that he cares for me. Still, I do not love him. The greatest inducement I could have had would be that I should become your daughter; and to marry him caring only as little as that about him would be to wrong him very deeply."

"My dear, you are right," said the old lady, fondly passing her other hand over Theodora's hair. "I do not like to think what poor William must be feeling just now. But, after all, it is better he should suffer now than marry one who does not care for him. Unless you felt that William was first and last in all the world to you, it would be wronging him to marry him, and wronging yourself too. If only it had been Jack, now——" and she sighed. "Any girl might have been proud of Jack; he was so handsome, and such a manly fellow! And a dear good boy too, though they said such bad things of him. You would not have found it hard to love Jack, my dear."

It became more and more evident to Theodora, as the morning wore on, that the real object of this festive gathering had been to announce her engagement to William. She was to have said "Yes," and fallen with delight into William's open arms; and then, at the party, William was to have bloomed forth as an engaged man in the eyes of the inhabitants of

Drueling. How shorn of its glories would the occasion be! She hoped William would hide his woes as nobly as the Spartan boy concealed the fox.

She went about her mission gaily enough, with the devoted Peter in attendance. Peter admired Miss Holbrook very much; but he was not of much practical assistance in the artistic arrangement of Mrs. Harden's drawing-room. Indeed, it would have taken a more heroic soul than Peter's to cope with that drawing-room. An "elegant walnut drawing-room suite" of chairs and sofas stood round by the walls, hopelessly green and glaring. A large round table occupied the centre of the room, with a bouquet of wax flowers under a glass shade in the centre, and a few never-read and unreadable books were placed in a circle round the edge.

Theodora pushed the table into a corner, drew the sofa across another, made the chairs stand about less formally; but the effect was only one degree less hopeless than the original arrangement had been. Who could do anything with those dreadful green chairs, and those red curtains, and those impossible objects called ornaments? While she was trying one plan after another, Mrs. Harden came in and sent Peter away; then called Theodora to the window.



"'Harold! Harold!' the children cried, dancing round him."—*p.* 806.

"This is Jack's," she whispered—there were tears trembling in her eyes as she spoke. "I found it just now in my jewel-box, where I was looking for some keys I have put astray." Theodora reverently opened the little leather case which the old lady placed within her hands. It held one of those little pictures on glass, with a thin gold-foil setting—an object which no one but a mother would keep—a small boy of about three, with his hands on his knees, sitting and frowning with all his serious baby might. Within the picture-case was a folded, much-faded paper, and inside the paper a silky golden curl. "Jack's hair when he was two years old," said Jack's mother. Jack's hair curled itself round Theodora's finger as she took it from its hiding-place. She stooped and kissed the curl of yellow hair before she folded it within the paper again.

"I thought you would like to see it, dear," said Mrs. Harden wistfully, creeping away as softly as she had come.

That was a great party. Everyone who was anyone in all Drueling and the neighbourhood round about was there—even the three Ansley girls were asked; and Harold had got them new frocks from London, in which they felt more magnificent than they had ever done in all their lives. Polly looked specially pretty; but Maggie and Maudie did not appear quite so much at ease. Little Alice had been left at home, indignant beyond the power of words to describe with Mrs. Harden and the "William man," that the invitation had not included her. Mrs. Ansley was resplendent in the brown silk. Harold was his own brilliant self, and no one could have dreamed that he was inwardly consumed with keenest amusement over the whole affair. Mrs. Harden kissed Theodora kindly. Dr. Harden greeted her very stiffly, and William not at all, and she subsided into retirement as quickly as she could, between Miss Marks and Miss Casson, on the sofa. Mrs. Casson and Mrs. Morley were talking energetically in the centre of the room upon the shortcomings of their respective servants, and how different everything had been in their youth before this democratic age set in, when the tendency is to overturn everything. The vicar conversed with the rector, standing in front of the paper waterfall in the grate. The three Miss Darleys fanned themselves with languid grace. William stood in a distant window, and conversed about the weather and the state of the crops with Julia Morley. Harold went about and made himself fascinatingly agreeable, paying the wildest compliments to every lady present, his laughing good looks carrying off the effrontery of his remarks. Theodora simply marvelled at him as he flitted from "flower to flower," not sipping honey, but carrying a stock of it with him.

"It is quite a case with William Harden and Julia Morley, don't you think?" asked Selina Marks, in a confidential whisper of Theodora. "He is quite *devoted*."

"Is he?" said Theodora indifferently.

"Poor Julia—she *is* so plain. Imagine her putting on that red dress this evening. The very colour of all others she should not attempt to wear. So odd, don't you think, how people never do know what becomes them? You always wear grey, and I think it such a pity—it makes you look quite sallow. You don't mind my telling you, do you?"

"Oh, not in the least," said Theodora smiling.

She wondered did Selina Marks suppose that a robe of terra-cotta colour set off her own face and form, or if Belle Casson really thought sky-blue became her rather muddy complexion.

"I never was one of those girls who objected to other people looking their best," said Selina loftily. "But I would not advise Julia Morley about her dress, not for untold worlds. She is so touchy, you can't think."

"Really! I should never have supposed it. I like Miss Morley very much," said Theodora. "There is something so nice and straightforward about her. You always feel that you can trust her, and that she means just what she says."

"So do all of us," replied Miss Selina tartly. "At our last tennis party, he—William, I mean—played all the time with Julia. It was really quite marked," she continued.

"I daresay he likes her as much as I do," said Theodora calmly.

"Have you quite given up society?" asked Selina, abruptly changing the subject. "You never go anywhere now."

"I have been rather busy," said Theodora.

She and the girls had been working womanfully to get the new frocks made, but she did not feel disposed to confide this fact to Miss Marks.

"Busy! Why, whatever can you have to do? I am sure I never know what to do with myself. But do you know, it is a bad plan to stop going out. People will talk, you know, and they are sure to say you have had a disappointment."

"Well, so I have. A good many, in fact. One keeps on getting so many disappointments that at last one gets used to them. It always rains if you specially want to go anywhere, or you can't get the book you particularly want at the library, or your dearest friends are out when you've come quite a distance to visit them."

Miss Selina glanced at Theodora's innocent-seeming face out of the corners of her narrow eyes.

"I did not mean that kind of disappointment," she said loftily.

"Oh, didn't you?" asked Theodora.

Just at this moment Peter the boy created an agreeable diversion by entering the room, with a deeply solemn face, bearing a tray of steaming tea-cups. Johnson, looking red and wretched, followed with another tray, laden with cups of coffee. He was very far indeed removed from Peter's inviolable calm. William hurled himself nobly into the thick of the fray, and handed cake and bread-and-butter, and asked everyone present did they take sugar. After ascertaining their views upon which important point, he relapsed to the window and silence. Not even Julia's glances had power to win a smile to his impassive countenance.

"Major Morley was asking me your age the other day," went on Selina, in her feline purring way. "I was so glad to be able to say truthfully that I did

not know. I told him you were not more than eight and twenty."

"Did you?" said Theodora serenely.

"Do you know, you really ought to keep those girls back a little. It makes you seem so old to have your step-sister coming out," was Miss Marks' next pleasant little speech.

"We don't count taking tea in a friendly way with Mrs. Harden coming out," said Theodora, turning towards her with a smile.

"No, of course not," said Selina smoothly. "But it is all of society they are ever likely to see, isn't it, poor girls? By the way, Miss Holbrook, a little bird tells me you were seen at Raylington lately, walking with the new doctor there."

'I?" said Theodora. "The new doctor?"

"Yes, Mr. Sarsfeld. He has just bought old Dr. Thornley's practice, we hear. And people say he is a very charming young man. You know him, so you can tell us all about him."

"Yes," said her father, who happened, in a pause of the conversation, to overhear Selina's last remark. "You know the young fellow, Dr. Harden, probably. Sarsfeld, just settled at Raylington."

"No, I have heard nothing of him," replied his host. "Rising place, Raylington. A clever young fellow, up to the new ways, might do well there. Thornley, poor old man, rather let things go down."

Selina was returning to the attack, when, fortunately, the two younger Miss Darleys proceeded to the piano to play a duet. It was something stylish and crashing—the "Battle of Prague," probably, with groans of the wounded in the bass. Harold next volunteered to sing, and poured forth a lackadaisical ditty, in a melodious tenor voice, that fluttered the ladies in the audience amazingly, each one fancying herself the object of those impassioned strains. He was begged to sing again, and he did. In fact, he was the star of the evening, and the cynosure of all eyes, at the very party which had been designed to do honour to his sister, who sat unnoticed in her corner.

She made her escape from Selina as soon as she politely could, and took refuge with Julia, whom William had forsaken long since. By-and-bye William, perceiving Theodora, came deliberately across the room, and sat down beside her.

"I got your letter, Miss Holbrook," he said dejectedly, as Julia rose to play a piano accompaniment to her brother's flute. "Will you not reconsider your decision?"

"I am very sorry, Mr. Harden," she said, looking at him with frank, earnest eyes. "I am very sorry, but I cannot say anything else."

William sighed heavily. William's next proceeding was to make the great speech of his life.

"I have not much to offer," he said humbly. "And I know I'm not much of a fellow. You are as much above me as the stars. But I know your life is not a very good one, and so I thought, if you would let me I could make you a little more comfortable. And Beth, she should have come too. You need not have feared about that. She should have been my little sister as well as yours, and we should both have taken care of her. But since you have said No, I must even take it. You always say what you mean."

Theodora's eyes were very grave and sweet as she answered—

"I hope we shall always be friends. I can never forget all your goodness to both me and Beth, Mr. Harden. Will you not try and forget all this?"

"What an awful noise that man is making with that instrument," quoth William, looking round wearily in Major Morley's direction. "I wonder could anyone induce him to stop."

It was here and now that Harold really proved himself the star of Mrs. Harden's evening party. Harold proposed round games—a thing unheard of in decorous Drueling—pooh-poohed all opposition in that lofty, masterful way of his, and presently had the room a whirlwind of lace skirts, floating ribbons, and swirling fans, with everybody laughing, talking, gesticulating, nay, shouting, at the same moment, and nobody listening to anybody else. Mrs. Harden looked mildly surprised, the vicar mildly alarmed, and Dr. Harden mildly amused; but everyone else, even the blighted young man William, joined in with eager zest, and very specially the Ansley girls and the two young men, Major Morley and the blue-eyed instigator of the riot. And then supper was another brilliant success, specially the table decorations by Theodora, which consisted of flaming masses of scarlet geraniums and yellow daisies. But as Theodora plainly overheard Harold tell Belle Casson during supper that if he lived in the house with the water-clock it would drive him mad in a week, she did not wonder that the doctor's farewell was distinctly cold. She had refused his son, and Harold had derided that beloved object—"his own invention"—the water-clock.

CHAPTER X.

SUNDAY EVENING.

"The perfect victory is, to triumph over ourselves."—À Kempis.

The next event which shook Drueling to its centre was the arrival of Mrs. D'Albert. She actually took Miss Brown's rooms for herself and maid, while the man put up at the inn.

Everyone came pressing to call after she had appeared in church for the first time, and then Mrs. D'Albert graciously returned these calls, generally with Harold in attendance. Harold had taken rooms at the "Dew-Drop"—so he was quite near his aunt's lodgings, and was much petted and adored by her whenever he appeared there. To Theodora she was icily cold and reserved. Her presence in Drueling was really due to the fact that she hoped by personal persuasion to induce Theodora to return to her, but she did not intend her niece should suppose she even cared for her society in the most passing way. So Harold was petted and Theodora snubbed. It was sharp pain to the girl, for she truly loved Mrs. D'Albert, the only mother she had known, but forsake Beth she would not and she could not. She hid her feelings well, refusing all invitations that she possibly could; but altogether her life at this



"She stood at the attic window watching the sunset."—*p.* 814.

period was not very delectable. Harold seemed quite as happy without her as with her; her aunt was frigid; and as the long hot days went by slowly, she saw plainly with each one that passed how little Beth grew weaker and nearer the end of her weary life. She longed with a passionate, painful longing for a little money to take her away to the sea-side, and let the cool breezes fan that wan, small, meagre face. She did not like to ask Harold for money, for he always declared he hadn't "a sixpence," and yet, in that inscrutable way incident to penniless young men, he always had money loose in his pockets. She could not ask Mrs. D'Albert. It was useless to ask her mother. There was nothing for it but for Beth to suffer on as she had always done. None of them knew of the long nights Theodora spent walking to and fro in her tiny attic room with the child in her arms; for it seemed as if she could rest in no other way.

One Sunday evening, the first for a long time that she had left Beth, Theodora went to church. A glory of light poured in at the western windows, and stole up to the distant dim chancel, touching arch and pillar and carving with a transient yellow gleam as it passed. Theodora sat just inside the door, and drank in eagerly the tender pathos of the beautiful evening service, resting her spirit from the cares of the week upon the quiet, comprehensive words of prayer and exhortation. Earth and its woes seem to fade into utter insignificance so long as our darkness may be lightened and our souls and bodies kept from the perils of this and every night. As

she rose from her knees to join in the closing hymn, she caught sight of Mr. Ansley sitting on a bench not far in front of her. In all her knowledge of him she had never seen him in church before. He was sitting in an attitude of utter dejection, with bent head and hidden face.

"And some have found the world is vain,
Yet from the world they break not free;
And some have friends who give them pain,
Yet have not sought a friend in Thee."

Tears rose in the girl's eyes. Was not the world a fleeting show, in truth, and are not the sorest wounds those which are dealt us by our friends?

"Thy touch has still its ancient power,
No word from Thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all,"

sang the choir softly. But Mr. Ansley did not raise his head. The benediction was given, and the congregation filed out into the churchyard. Theodora went on, hesitated, stopped, went on again, and finally stopped by the hawthorn tree, and waited for her stepfather. She was often glad afterwards to remember that she had done so.

He came along the path slowly, his hands buried in his pockets, and a look of astonishment came over his handsome florid face when Theodora stepped forward and joined him.

"You are surely not going to walk through the village with me, Theodora?" he asked. "I don't think you have ever done so in your life. And I, for one, don't blame you."

"I am sorry," she said simply; "there are many things I am sorry for in the past."

"Why!" he exclaimed, "you at least have nothing to blame yourself with. If you want to know what I think of you, though I don't suppose you care, I think you have been like an angel in that wretched house. You remind me of my mother, and she was the best woman who ever walked this earth." Theodora walked beside him in silence.

"There is no reason that you should feel sorry, Theodora," he went on. "Your past is a white one enough!"

"I have been impatient often—and proud——" she began, but he stopped her with a sweep of the hand.

"There has been enough to make you impatient," he said, with an angry undertone in his voice. "I might have been a better man had things been different. But now, what am I? Your fine-lady aunt looks through me, and does not see me when I cross her path. Harold never addresses a syllable to me. And my wife takes up with these people, and associates with them, and pays them court. I am weary of it all—the home and the life here altogether. If I had the means I would go to Australia; Harold seems to have done well enough out there, and it would be a chance for the children. What is there for any of them to do growing up here? Your mother could come too, if she would. She would not need so much finery out there. They are fine children too, and it is a pity to have their lives wasted as mine has been. Only for you, Theodora, they'd be perfect savages. What would you think about Australia? Harold might know of something I could get to do—if you asked him."

"I daresay it might be the best thing for the children," said Theodora absently.

"I am sure you were surprised to see me in church," he continued. "Not much in my line. Don't know how I wandered in there, but it made me think of my mother. I used to go to church with her when I was a boy, and her face used to look so happy and peaceful. And then I thought for her sake I'd like to give the children a chance, and make a fresh start. Would you cast in your lot with us?"

"Yes," said Theodora. Drueling or Australia, all places were alike to her now. "But the money, Mr. Ansley—where would that come from?"

"I don't know," he said dejectedly. "Your mother has some capital she could realise, but I don't suppose she would do it. I have nothing."

At this moment Alice came dancing along the street to meet them. She took Theodora's hand, then slipped her other inside her father's roughened palm and walked demurely between them.

"Well, my pet, what have you been doing?" he asked, looking down with fond pride at the child.

"Harold and the girls have gone for a walk, and Major Morley has gone too. Wouldn't that old Selina be mad if she knew! And I met Mr. Dobson, and he showed me his canaries, and gave me cake—I've a piece for Beth, Theodora, in my pocket. And I met the William man, and I told him you were gone to church, and he didn't look a bit pleased, or anything, so I'm afraid he doesn't like you as much as he used."

Theodora smiled into the little eager face, and, kissing her, sent her indoors. Then she turned to Mr. Ansley.

"I want to speak to you about Beth," she said—"I am anxious and unhappy about her."

"Death would be a happy release for her," he said grimly.

"Do not say that," she pleaded. "She is your child as much as Alice is, and would you give up Alice so easily?"

He put out his hands as if to sweep away the very idea of losing Alice.

"The cases are very different," he said.

"Yes, for Alice is strong and healthy and wants for nothing, while Beth is fading fast from life just for want of care and change. I have no money: I cannot buy her even the food and necessaries which a sickly child should have. Now I think perhaps it might save her life if I could take her to the seaside."

"The child is no worse than she has always been," he said, in a hard and dogged voice. "You are fanciful. In any case, what can I do? You know I have not a penny."

"Can you not give me even a little?" she pleaded.

"How can I get it?" he said, but not so harshly as before. "You know I have not sixpence in the world."

"The child is dying," said Theodora.

He walked on in moody silence, a heavy frown

gathering on his face. Suddenly he drew out his watch, and showed it to her.

"This has gone before now," he said, "and it shall go again, and whatever it fetches I will let you have, Theodora."

"Thank you," said Theodora gratefully.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW A PERFECT DAY ENDED.

"No echo seems to wake again
My heart to anything but pain."—A. A. PROCTER.

THE next day great were the noise, laughter, and delight in the Ansley household. Even Harold stayed at home to join in, and, indeed, aid and abet and augment, the fun. Mr. Ansley had gone to Raylington in the early morning, Mrs. D'Albert was with Mrs. Ansley in the latter lady's room. Little as these ladies liked each other, still they appeared to have a vast amount to say to each other. And Theodora took Beth out. The child was deathly pale, and had lain gasping for breath all the long hot night in the little low-ceiled attic room. Theodora was not sorry to escape to the quietness of the leafy country by-ways, for the Ansley children's delight was uproarious. It was caused by the departure of the Clockwork Family to the sea-side. The Hardens always went, and always had gone, upon the exact same day of the year—except when it fell on Sunday—to the exact same lodgings in the exact same watering-place upon the Yorkshire coast. The blinds were all drawn down, the shutters closed, the knocker was laid to rest in a chamois bag. Johnson remained in charge, while Anne and Peter the boy accompanied the family in their outing.

When Theodora returned to the house, she found it empty, and an unwonted silence filling all the chambers thereof. They had all, down to Alice, departed upon a pic-nic expedition to the hanging woods at Raylington. Theodora felt a little lonely, but she tried bravely not to think of the wood solitudes and its cool green ways—she could not have left Beth. She wondered if her fears for the child were fanciful, as they all assured her with such vigorous assertion. Even Mrs. Ansley said there was no change in Beth; that she had always been just as white and languid and weak. It was a very quiet afternoon, and fiercely, mercilessly hot. Vivid sunshine poured uninterruptedly from a cloudless sky. No smallest leaf stirred, and no bird sang. It was impossible to remain in the narrow, stifling house, so she carried Beth out to the garden to the deep shade under the old chestnut. Presently Johnson came across the street with a great basket of strawberries and a bunch of roses, with Mrs. Harden's love for Miss Holbrook.

Little Beth slept peacefully, with waxen, pallid face, and tiny drooping hands—so thin, so blue-veined, that the tears came to her sister's eyes as she looked at them. Then she set to work at that basket, which, no matter how much she stitched, seemed never to grow less full of boys' stockings gone at the knees and heels, and every place where a boy's stocking can be gone.

She worked until the sun went westward, dropping lower in the blue heavens, and long light lines of clouds began to gather about his path. She wondered why her stepfather had not returned. Had his good resolutions failed him, and had he remained in Raylington to spend the money after the various evil styles of spending money which he knew so fatally well? The train was due long since at Hinkley, and the walk over to Drueling was not much for a strong man like him. Another half-hour passed; the sun-rays now came slantwise over the high walls of the garden, and long shadows began to steal along the ground. The burden and heat of the summer day were passing, and the birds began a faint thankful chirping here and there. Theodora wished vainly that someone would come and talk to her—the day had seemed so silent and so long. There was not a sound; and Beth lay sleeping very stilly in her chair. But the afternoon wore on to evening, and the evening to twilight, and still no one came and the silence was unbroken.

After she put Beth to bed, she stood at the attic window watching the sunset. The sky was serene and high; the faint lines of shadowy clouds had grouped themselves, some into arches of gold, and some were floating in the pale, tremulous green reaches of light, like burning ships, flaming and thrilling through with vivid rosy light. And then the sun went under, and the grey turned to purple, and the crimson to faint orange, and the white to dove-colour; while a wide band of glowing crimson belted all the western horizon. But still no one came and the silence was unbroken. She went down-stairs through the dim silent house, and set the hall door open, for she fancied that made her seem less lonely. She listened for a few moments, but there was no sound of returning wheels.

Then she went up-stairs again. Presently she heard the sound of feet, a confused trampling in the hall, and she ran hastily down. As she descended the stairs, she saw out through the open door a group of children, and a few men and women in the roadway, beyond the railings, all staring in. Within the house there were voices, indeed, but no laughter, no merriment. She paused an instant on the lowest step, with a sudden fear catching at her heart. The door of the school-room opened, and Sarsfeld came out into the hall.

"I was coming to look for you," he said, walking straight to where she stood, and taking her by the hand, without any other preamble or explanation. Theodora gazed into his face with wide questioning eyes. He felt her hands trembling within his.

"What has happened?" she asked, her face whitening when she saw how grave he looked, and how smileless were his eyes. "Who is hurt?—what is it?"

"You have heard of the accident, then?" he said questioningly, looking up at her.

"I have heard nothing," she said. "Oh! do tell me!—do not keep me in suspense! Is it Harold?" And she clasped her hands.

"Harold!" he cried, surprised. "Is Harold here? No; it is your stepfather. We have brought him home."

He went to the hall door, and down the little garden path, said a few words to the people lingering there, and then came in and shut the door. Theodora watched his every movement dreamily, with a stunned look upon her face. He came back to her, and taking her hand, felt that she was trembling from head to foot.

"Come in here," he said, leading her into the drawing-room. "Sit down, and I will tell you all."

She sat down obediently.

"Is he dead?" she whispered.

"No; he is just living, but that is all. There is no hope. Will you send for your own doctor, now, before I go?"

"Oh, you are not going!" she cried, putting her hand upon his arm. "You will not leave us, surely. Besides, Dr. Harden went away to-day. We have no one to help us, if you will not."

"I will, with all my heart," he said.

"Where is your mother?" he asked her presently.

"She is out. They are all out," she cried, starting to her feet. "They must not come in suddenly, unprepared. Shall I go to him?" she asked, looking into the young man's face and shrinking visibly as she spoke. "What is being done for him?"

"I don't think anything can be done for him. There are a couple of men in the room. We were all telegraphed for to come when the accident happened. Just beyond Hinkley the train got off the rails and fell over the embankment. All you can do, Theodora, is to show me to what room we can take him, if indeed he can be moved. I have sent to Raylington for a hospital nurse. She will arrive presently, I hope."

"I will nurse him," she said.

Sarsfeld shook his head.

"It will not be for very long," he said.

"How long?"

"Perhaps the hours of this night," was the grave reply. Theodora's lips grew white.

When she had got the room ready they carried the poor sufferer there. Theodora did not see them bear the burden up the stairs, for Sarsfeld sent her to the window to watch for her mother. At last the carriage drove to the door. Mrs. Ansley waved her hand to Theodora, when she caught sight of her, and called out that they had had a perfect day, and it was a thousand pities she had not come. Theodora went down the walk to the gate.

"You look like a ghost," said Mrs. D'Albert brusquely. Her very love for Theodora made her anger against her so sharp, that she could not speak gently to her. Then, with a good-night which included them all, she drove on to the village.

Harold and Polly, who had walked home, arriving half an hour later, found wee Alice in a tumbled heap in the hall, asleep. There was the atmosphere of an accident, of something terribly wrong, in the house. They gazed at each other wonderingly. Then the sound of loud crying came to them from an up-stairs room, and Theodora's gentle, soothing voice. Alice, in Harold's arms, woke up, and began to weep. And then Theodora came softly down the stairs, and told them.

Polly took Alice from Harold, and went away with her in silence. Maggie sat down on the lowest step of the stairs and hid her face in her hands. Harold's laughing handsome face was very awestruck.

The brother and sister looked at each other in silence. He who had wronged and ill-used them all their lives was dying, a helpless shattered mass, his life fast ebbing away into the silence of death. And they were young and strong, with their lives before them.

Theodora took Harold's hand.

"I forgive him," she said, in a low and thrilling voice, and pleadingly she looked at her brother. But Harold shook his head, and freeing his hand from her clasp, went out of the house.

The nurse from Raylington did not arrive, so Theodora prepared to pass the night beside the dying man. She went to all the rooms first. Her mother was at rest, though not sleeping, and Harold, repentant, had come back and was sitting with her. The little boys lay with wide eyes, breathless because of the tragedy in the house. Maudie was asleep, her tangle of golden hair about a flushed face wet with tears; and Maggie was lying beside her pale and anxious. Alice slept peacefully, with the bunch of woodbine she had carried home for Theodora scenting all the room, the creamy blossoms thrust into a pitcher of water near the child's bed. Polly, dressed in her every-day dress, was sitting in the attic, close beside Beth, with a very resolute look upon her young white face.

The sick-room had been arranged by Sarsfeld's deft hands. A light burned low behind a screen, the windows were set wide open so that the least breath of cool air which might stir outside should come in. In the distant depths of summer sky the calm stars shone, and a warm wind just rustled the leaves now and again.

Theodora did not shrink, though she was sick at heart, and pale as any lily in the garden outside; she walked straight to the bedside, and looked at her stepfather. He lay there a prone, helpless figure, his features distorted in strong agony. As she looked at him, Sarsfeld came noiselessly forward from the farther window.

"You here!" she cried, gratefully putting out her hands to him.

"Yes," he said in a low voice. "Have you then forgotten that you asked me to stay? And do you think—if you never asked—that I would leave you thus—and here—and alone?"

The long hours of the night wore on. The silence was unbroken save by a moan of anguish now and again, and the young doctor's gentle footfalls about the room. He did everything for the sufferer. Theodora only sat and watched. There were deep purple shadows about his mouth and eyes, and the dews of death were already damp upon his brow. Towards dawn she rose and walked to the window. A bar of grey, low down in the eastern sky, told that the white light of another day was about to glimmer over the edge of the world. The stars were sweeping their marshalled hosts westward, and all the earth was dark and fragrant and dewy. She leaned her burning brow against the window-sash, and drew in

a spray of roses to moisten her dry lips with the dew which lay heavy on their leaves. Sarsfeld came and stood by her, his eyes fixed on the brightening east.

"Dawn," he murmured. "It cannot be long now, Theodora."

Even as he spoke, the dying man's voice called her. Theodora was at his side in an instant, her hand on his.

"What has happened?" he gasped. "Why am I here?"

He tried to turn his head to look around him, then groaned in agony.

"I remember," he moaned, "the crash, the shock, the pain. Oh, was not that death? Have I to die again?"

She moistened his lips with water, as she had seen Sarsfeld do, and tenderly put back the masses of his hair.

"I am dying now, I suppose?" he asked her, opening his eyes again, and fixing them upon her face, panting with death even as he spoke. He smiled with a touch of his old hardness. "Well, I am no loss to anyone, that's one good thing."

He lay back with closed eyes for a long time, his breath coming in long, labouring sighs.

"I want to tell you something," he whispered presently, motioning for her to come nearer. "I must tell you something: I can't die with it on my conscience. Stoop down and listen—I am weak. You must go to Dr. Harden when I am dead, and tell him I took the money. It was there facing me in the open drawer in the waiting-room. No one knew I was in the house except Jack. It was only fifty pounds, I found after I got home. I had ruined the boy for fifty pounds, and lost the last shred of honour I possessed."

Again the haggard eyes closed, and the weak voice ceased.

"It was a moment's madness—but for shame I could not speak. The old man suspected Jack, who had been betting pretty freely that week. I taught him that. He was a good lad, and all the bad he knew I taught him. I never dreamt the old man would have been so hard—so unforgiving."

His lips could no longer form the words; an ashy pallor came upon his face.

"And—Jack—is—not—dead——" he gasped, with the last flickering up of the lamp of life.

Sarsfeld put Theodora aside. He raised the dying man, and laid his head against his own broad breast. Theodora sank upon her knees, and wept.

When she looked up, he was dead.

(To be concluded.)

WITH THE HALT AND THE MAIMED.



SEDAN CHAIR, USED FORMERLY TO CARRY PATIENTS TO THE WATERS.

"AH! Alfred, life has gone very hardly with me since I saw you last," exclaimed George Burton, "and it seems to me I may as well give up hoping to get well again."

"But why?" asked his friend, Alfred Harvey. "Does the doctor say there's no chance of your getting better?"

"Not in so many words; but I asked him this afternoon when I should be fit for work, and he only said, 'Well, you won't be able to do anything heavy for a good bit;' and you know pretty well what that means."

"But why not try to get into a convalescent home?"

George gave a bitter laugh, and replied, "The fact is, you haven't heard the story of my illness, or you'd know why I've no faith in that sort of thing—at least, not *for me*."

"I wish you'd tell me about it," said Alfred. "You used to be a bit rheumatic, but I don't think you missed a day when we worked together."

"No; it never got really bad till about two years ago, and then I had a sharp attack that lasted long enough to lose me a good place. But I seemed to throw it quite off, and got into work again in a couple of months; only I had to be out of doors just as the first spell of cold weather began, and in less than a week they had to take me off to the nearest hospital, and there I lay for ten weeks as helpless as a baby."

"Was it rheumatic fever?" inquired Alfred.

"Oh yes, and I heard them say it was about the worst kind; but I pulled through, and they sent me to a convalescent home at the sea for a month. I came back quite hopeful, and was able to keep at work all through the summer, but as soon as the damp weather began I knew it was all up with me, and before Christmas I was in hospital again with another attack of the fever, and worse than ever. How I lived through the awful pain I don't know; but very slowly I crawled back into life again, and then I came across a gentleman I used to work for,

and he sent me down into the country for several weeks. Well, I came up to London on a Saturday, and got a job on Monday; and you'll hardly believe it, but by the next Saturday I was in the hospital again."

"And were you as bad as before?"

"Not as far as pain goes, but I can't throw it off anything like I did before, and I don't believe I shall ever be myself again."

Certainly, the prospect was dismal enough, and Alfred sat silent for a while, trying in vain to think of some cheering suggestion. At last a thought struck him, and he exclaimed, "Why, I believe there's a hospital at Bath where they treat just such cases as yours."



THE MEN'S WARD.

But George only shook his head, and answered wearily, "No, old fellow; it's very good of you, but I really have no heart to try anything fresh."

But Alfred was not to be so easily repulsed, and having obtained particulars of the hospital, he succeeded in coaxing his desponding friend into giving the new chance a fair trial.

"What did your doctor say about it?" he inquired, as George showed him the filled-in certificate.

"Oh! he said it was the only thing that might do me real good; his medicines wouldn't. And he said, too, that he'd forgotten there was a hospital, or he would have told me the Bath waters were my best chance."

"Well, you may be sure I shall want to know the result when I come back," was Alfred's farewell. And nine months later, on his return from America, he called at the house where he had said good-bye to his invalid friend. The door was opened by a tall young man, erect and active, with a face so bright that Alfred exclaimed at once, "Cured, I declare!"

"Yes, cured," responded George heartily; "and I never can thank you enough for making me try. But come in and hear a more lively yarn than my last."

"Was it a painful process?" inquired Alfred, after hearing of the method in which the mineral waters are administered.

"No; I can't say that. It felt very queer, at first, to be in a hot bath, up to your neck, for twenty minutes, and it used to find out my weak heart and feeble joints in a minute; but it isn't bad when you get accustomed to it."

"And you didn't take cold after being so long in hot water?"

"Oh! as soon as you come out you are wrapped in a flannel dressing-gown and a new blanket, and put to bed for half an hour. By that time you've pretty well got down to your usual heat; but they don't allow you to go out of doors on bath-days, and they are always very particular that there shall be no draughts in the rooms and passages."

"And you really got quite free of the rheumatism?"

"Oh yes, free as I had never felt since my illness first began; but I must confess I was dreadfully low in myself most of the time. They said Bath was not the place to suit my general health; and when I came away, after ten weeks, I didn't feel a bit

stronger than when you saw me. But in a very few days I began to feel the old energy coming back, and I've been at work now over four months without even a twinge of my old enemy."

This story of George Burton's cure—true in its facts—came to my knowledge some two years after the above conversation, and being in Bath recently with a friend, we called at the Royal Mineral Hospital where such wonders had been wrought. We were courteously received by the secretary, whose title of "Registrar" has a pleasant suggestion of olden days. Indeed, the hospital can boast of a somewhat ancient history, dating back to the laying of the first foundation stone in 1737 ; and it is interesting to note that whilst in the first five years the total number of patients admitted was only 635, during the last five years no less than 5,394 have been under treatment. Not only so, but the average of benefit received "has shown an equally steady increase," having risen from 62 per cent. "cured or greatly relieved," to the really astonishing figure of 95 per cent. And it is not surprising to hear that the waiting-list continues also to become longer and longer, although "nearly two hundred eligible cases passed by committee" has a terribly mournful sound.

These facts we have learnt in the office of the Registrar, who now proceeds to take us over the building. Passing through a wide hall—out of which opens a spacious board-room—a patients' waiting-room, and the quarters reserved for resident officers, we mount a fine staircase leading to the patients' day-rooms in the new wing, added as recently as 1857. The first we enter is the women's, where over 60 patients are more or less busily employed. Reading, writing, and all sorts of needlework, are the principal occupations. And although some of the more crippled are reclining on couches, and a great number show traces of gouty or rheumatic affections, the general aspect by no means suggests hopeless invalidism.

The walls are adorned with old-fashioned pictures of a somewhat sober type, relieved by one or two modern additions in a brighter style. A grand piano occupies one corner, and it is pleasant to hear that various ladies are in the habit of enlivening the patients with much-appreciated music and singing. The long tables down the middle of the room are used for meals, and women, being of a less quarrelsome turn of mind than men, enjoy the privilege of joints of meat served whole, for which privilege they are well content to forego grumbling over a slice that may possibly be the eighth of an ounce below the regulation allowance!

As we turn to leave the ward, my friend's eye is caught by a selection of odd-looking machines with which the far end is furnished.

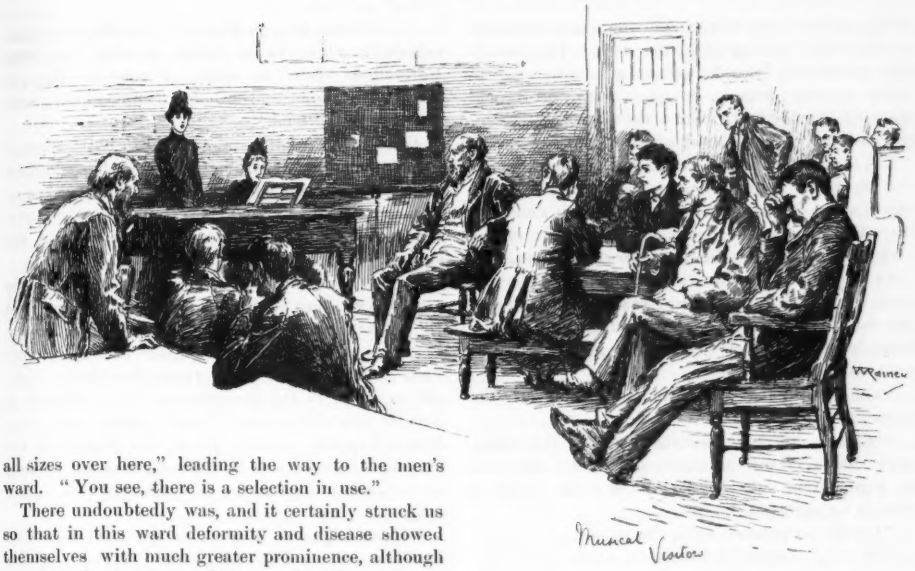
"Oh!" says our guide, "those are our go-carts;" and he proceeds to show us how crippled patients learn to walk by their aid, precisely in the same way that a child learns to propel itself, whilst support under the arms prevents overbalancing.

"And is this the preliminary to crutches?" we inquire.

"Yes, as a rule ; and we keep a reserve stock of



THE WOMEN'S WARD.



all sizes over here," leading the way to the men's ward. "You see, there is a selection in use."

There undoubtedly was, and it certainly struck us so that in this ward deformity and disease showed themselves with much greater prominence, although as a fact the sexes are about equal in the matter of suffering.

One young fellow we noticed, with a particularly thin, worn face, and a crippled right hand, busy with a frame-work woollen cloud. "An order," he explains, which he is anxious to finish; but he is not too busy to be pleased with our hearty admiration of his left-handed production. The wool-wrap industry is encouraged as having possibilities of something more than merely passing the time; but a good deal of material is needed, and many patients are afraid to risk their capital on the chance of a sale. For such there remains fancy bead-work; and some of the mats, little baskets, etc., are really pretty, and supply occupation at an infinitesimal cost. Games of all sorts are also in fashion, and although few of the patients are troubled with superfluous energy, they do need a good bit of varied amusement to ward off idle-handed mischief. Both day-rooms are lofty, well lighted, and cheered by open fireplaces—in addition to the general warming apparatus—and each has a balcony on the sheltered side, overlooking a capital exercise-ground, nicely laid out with gravel walks, trees, and shrubs.

Our next visit is to the chapel, providing accommodation for one hundred and fifty worshippers, and made beautiful at an outlay of £500. Here service is conducted by the chaplain, twice on Sunday, and two or three times in the week; and with so much heartiness it is not surprising to hear that there is a good *voluntary* attendance. Having duly admired the chapel, we proceed to inspect the dormitories.

"What is the matter there?" we inquire, as we pass a bed where laboured breathing speaks of chest affection.

"It is really a case of rheumatic gout, but the being in bed means a bad cold, caught by loitering about in the streets instead of taking a brisk walk."

"How often do they go for walks?"

"Three times a week—that is, on non-bathing days; but I am sorry to say they do not always make the best of the hour, and it is surprising how little notion many of them have of avoiding draughts, or of taking reasonable care of themselves."

In the whole of the women's dormitories we find only one patient, and she not confined to bed. Her face lights up as she catches sight of the Registrar, and she eagerly exclaims, "Oh! sir, I've walked to-day; the first time for three years and a half."

And she is delighted to tell how a month ago, after five weeks' treatment, her terribly contracted knees began to "give," and they are now so far straightened that, with the help of a go-cart, she has actually accomplished the feat of walking half the length of the ward. Her joy is a thing to remember; and scarcely less is that of a patient we meet later on, walking by the help of crutches, and gleefully announcing, "I'm going to be a cure yet."

"We certainly did not think he would be," remarks the Registrar; "he came in so absolutely stiff, and it was a long time before he could move a limb, even in the water."

"But I do not understand. Why 'in the water'?"

"Oh! many of the patients, quite stiff out of it, can move their limbs freely when they get in there," pointing to the bath-room we are approaching.

In spite of George Burton's description, we exclaim in surprise at sight of the bath. Indeed, it might well be called a water-room, entered by a flight of descending steps. Fourteen patients, we are told, can bathe at one time, the majority promenading up and

down, and the more helpless moving about by means of brass rails running along the sides. The bath is also fitted with hose, by means of which a jet of water can be brought to play with force upon specially affected parts, whilst the patient is getting the benefit of the general application.

"Is the temperature the same for all?" we inquire.

"Oh no. There are several stages—from the ninety-eight degrees of the tepid bath, with which the majority begin, to the one hundred and six of the 'full,' to which only a limited proportion attain."

In addition to the water-room, there is a shallow bath, in which specially bad cases can be laid in the water; and new rooms are being built for the fuller development of wet-massage and extraordinary treatment.

"Can you have an unlimited supply of the waters?" we asked.

"Oh no; the town council regulate the quantities for us in various quarters, but they allow us to pump from 5.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m., which is enough for our needs."

"Do all the patients drink the water?"

"Oh yes. Generally a tumbler night and morning, as hot as they will take it."

"And do any patients object to the water-cure?"

"Sometimes they go through a troublesome stage, especially where to be better involves the being worse first. But," he adds, "I must say they are sensible as a rule, and can be reasoned into giving the thing a fair trial."

Time presses, and we are obliged to hurry through the basement, only pausing to admire a fine specimen of tesselated pavement, discovered, amongst many Roman relics, in digging the new building's foundations, and retained *in situ* for the benefit of the curious.

Passing the laundry, where the whole of the patients' washing is undertaken by the hospital, and the kitchen, where wholesale preparations for tea are in progress, we come round again to the entrance hall. Here we find a tall young Scotchman waiting to speak to the Registrar, and it is difficult to believe that this erect "Saul" could ever have been a crippled patient. He is very pleased at the surprise he elicits, and is evidently looking forward to exhibiting himself as a wonder in his native country.

"I couldn't move hand or foot when I came in," he assures us; adding with a laugh, "and, you see, I'm too tall to lie in a cab, so they had to bring me on the outside!"

A. R. NEUMAN.

LUMINOUS BODIES.

(PREACHED, BY APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ST. GILES', EDINBURGH.)

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

"Ye are the light of the world."—ST. MATT. v. 14.

IT is a trite and familiar observation that our Blessed Lord, in His discourses, often employs the world of Nature as a parable or expositor of the world of Grace. Among other emblems, the sun of heaven, the noblest object in the visible universe, He takes to symbolise His own Person and Mission:—"I am the Light of the world." What the material luminary is to our globe, He, the great Fountain of life and light and happiness, is to His intelligent creation.

But He makes that sun a type of His Church and people, as well as of Himself. Those who receive their light from Him become themselves light-giving and light-imparting. Being transformed into His image, every individual believer becomes a luminous centre to others. He expands the figure in the verses immediately following:—"No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

And what is the great lesson which, under this well-known image, our Divine Redeemer would convey? It is the *influential power of living and vital Christianity:* that, just as at His omnipotent word, of old, the globe was bathed in its new element of glory, so when He says to the soul in the chaos of moral and spiritual death, "Let there be light," that awakened soul, baptised in the new-born spiritual element, must "arise and shine!" Let us, in a dependence on the Divine blessing, direct your attention to the great truth which, under a simple yet expressive symbol, Christ brings home to individual Christians; or, as an inspired Apostle, carrying out the type suggested by his Lord, expresses it, "Among whom ye shine, as lights in the world."

I. The Christian is a light of the world. His influence may be compared to light in this: that it is *diffusive*. There is a beautiful system of mutual influence and dependence all through the material universe. However deeply selfishness may have

become embedded in the ruined and fallen soul of man, it has no place in the great world of God. Nothing in creation seems to stand alone, nothing to be isolated. The mightiest agencies act and re-act on one another. The little flower that blooms unseen in the desert cannot keep its fragrance to itself—it must scatter it all around. Every planet, by the law of gravitation, is both influenced itself and influences others. So it is with the moral creation. God never intended man, far less the Christian, to be a selfish being: that his light should be that of the miner's lamp, which is intended only for his own direction, not for others; but rather that of the beacon, cheering the tempest-tossed in the dark sea and starless sky, and guiding them to their desired haven. The light of a holy, Christian, consistent life is seen of all men; and as little can the sun appropriate and retain his own beams, or the moon make a monopoly of her borrowed radiance, as a Christian man or woman absorb their light, and exercise no influence on their fellow-beings around them. The simplest definition of the Christian's character and duty is the best one: not only to *be* good, but to *do* good. Each, too, whatever be their sphere or position, must exercise *some* influence, stir some ripple, however little, on life's waters. As it is the property of the tiniest taper that glimmers in the sick-chamber or in the poor man's cottage, as well as of the blazing meteor, to diffuse light (though in vastly different degrees), so the humblest and poorest and lowliest, as well as the loftiest saint, may do *something* to show forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into marvellous light. Oh, what a solemn thought, that each of us, whatever be our lot, or history, or circumstances, or status in the world, is either like the upas-tree, casting a deadly shade all around, or like that of the Psalmist, "planted by the rivers of water, and bringing forth fruit in its season"; either deceived and in darkness ourselves, and deceiving and darkening others, or, if God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts, not only do we receive light for ourselves, but we are also lamps hung out to guide the feet of other travellers into the way of peace.

II. The Christian is a light in the world; his influence may be compared to light, in this: that it is *steady and consistent*. There are many things in Nature which seem calm and unchanging, which are nevertheless fitful and deceptive. What repose more intense than that of the breathless summer air, unstirred and unruffled by a passing breeze? But see that same air at another time, lending wings to the storm and giving voice to the thunder! What more tranquil than the calm of the ocean, the mirror of a cloudless sky, unfretted by one rippling wave? but see it again, swept with storms and strewn with wrecks. Who could have believed that in that quiet bosom there could have slumbered elements so dreadful? Not so is it with the light of heaven. Unlike the fitful flashings in the northern sky are these pure unflickering beams issuing from the fountain of light. Passing at times, it may be, through a dense medium that may partially obscure, the light itself is unchanged. It is stainless, unpolluted, glorious, as when it was first emitted from its great source.

Here is a picture of the Christian: a light in the world by the influence of a stainless, pure, consistent example, proof against the vicissitudes of life, in prosperity as well as in adversity a shining witness for his God—all the brightness of the meteor, with all the steady lustre of the true constellation! If change there be, it is only the progressive change of advancing holiness. His Sun not, like Joshua's, standing still, but like that same unwearied dispenser of blessings in his daily course through the firmament, his path is "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." What a mystic power there is in high-toned consistency! It is easy for us to act the good soldier of Jesus Christ on a show-day: it is easy for us to wear the livery of godliness at set times and seasons. It is easy for us to *appear* to be Christians—the thing is to *be* Christians; to go forth to the world like Moses as he descended the mountain, with our countenances shining with the beauties of holiness: in the bustle of every-day life, in the marts of commerce, in the resorts of industry, as well as in the house and the family, to be proclaiming by elevated motive and consecrated purpose, by faith and love, and meekness and gentleness, and unselfishness—"I am a servant of the Lord Jesus." Aye, and even when the shadows of sorrow are gathering around us, to let our light, the light of patience, and resignation, and humble unmurmuring submission to the Divine will:—to let these shine forth in the midst of the darkness as the stars shine brightest in a midnight sky, or as the dank leaves of the withered rose exude the sweetest fragrance in decay.

III. Light is *silent* in its agency, and as such, it is descriptive of the *silent, noiseless character of Christian influence*. We say, in the silent, quiet, unobtrusive character of Christian influence, believers may be said to be the light of the world.

Silent agencies are often the most powerful. The tempest which bows the forest under its sweep is potent, but not so powerful as the secret, subtle electricity which, unnoticed and unheard, lurks in the air we breathe and the water we drink. The avalanche coming sweeping down, bearing terror and destruction in its course, uprooting primeval forests, is a terrific power, but it is local, casual, temporary. What is it in comparison with those silent but mighty agencies which, unobserved themselves, are only manifested by their results? Take that of heat, the agency of heat, *e.g.*, in the bowels of the earth. We see it not; it lurks unnoticed in these mysterious caverns; it only indicates its tremendous force by a few craters on the surface of the globe, as if safety-valves to prevent or to foretell the destruction of a world. Look at the wondrous power of vegetation. Look at the ancestral oak, how silently and noiselessly it has grown to perfection, sending its

roots downwards and its branches upwards till, from the little acorn, it has become the defier of storms, and for long the defence of nations! Or look at the silent miracle of each returning spring. Not long ago, a world laid in the sepulchre of winter; every tree bared of its leaves and stripped of its glories; no trace of life or animation throughout the cheerless solitude; creation seemed to have gone to her grave, and the snow was her winding-sheet. But at the resurrection time of spring, how silently and stealthily all again effloresces into life and loveliness and beauty! The leafless forest is clothed with living green, the mountain side with verdure, and amid a song-burst of praise the valleys wave with exuberance and joy.

The same is the case with light. Its agency and influence are silent, noiseless, unobtrusive. The gates of the morning are opened; we hear them not. The gates of the evening are closed; we hear them not; silently they revolve on their hinges. All unconsciously the soft radiance streams into our morning chamber all silently it merges and melts into the evening twilight. It is a type of the Christian and of true Christian influence. It is not the life of bustle and loud profession which is the influential one. True godliness is too deep and real to be noisy; it is known more by its deeds than by its words. The building of the Temple of Jerusalem of old was a beautiful exponent of the silent and unobtrusive character of the religious life. It rose in silence! "Neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, was heard in the house while it was building."

Be it ours to aim after the noiseless eloquence of a holy character, our pathway in the world marked by quiet devotedness in God's service. It is not the outward parade of boastful profession He values, but the undemonstrative—yet, in spite of itself, the demonstrative—evidences of the fruits of the Spirit, made manifest in a life and conversation becoming the Gospel. The cup of cold water unostentatiously given, or the patient forgiveness of an injury, will, on the Great Day, receive the acknowledgment denied to many a brilliant deed that drew down the plaudits of thousands. The Psalmist speaks of the most eloquent witnesses in the material world as *silent* ones: "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth forth His handiwork." "They have no speech nor language," he adds; "their voice is not heard." But day hands on the unspoken message to day, and night transmits it to night. In silent power the dumb witnesses are hourly proclaiming His eternal power and Godhead.

And what these lights are to the material world the Christian is to the moral world. A life given to God never can be silent. A Christian may, from lowly and poor and humble circumstances, be little conscious of exercising any influence for good. But remember, it is with *unconscious* influences and agencies as we have said of *silent ones:* they are often the most important. The light of a ship, hung out for its own use, has proved the security and safety of the castaway. The sweet aroma wafted from the spicy islands is said to give the first tidings to the mariner that land is near, while he descries nothing but a wilderness of waters around him. So, many a believer may be, like that solitary isle, conscious of emitting no influence; and yet, all unknown, the sweet fragrance of grace and consistent piety may be wafted abroad, and many a hopeless and hapless voyager on the sea of life may be lured and guided into the quiet of the Gospel haven. Be it ours to hold on the even, unobtrusive tenor of our way, commending as we may the religion of the Lord we serve. I repeat it once more: silent and unconscious agencies are frequently the mightiest. Often has the infidel who has rejected the message of God contained in the *inspired* Word been awed into conviction from the study of the *living* Epistle, as page after page of a heavenly life passed under review. The tree in the forest which has defied ruder influences has at last had to yield under the falling of the snowflake. The axe had not marked it, the breath of the tempest had passed over it unscathed, but flake by flake of virgin snow softly and gently loaded its branches—it succumbed and fell.

IV. Once more, I observe that *light often survives when the source of light is gone.* This, too, is characteristic and descriptive of the nature of Christian influence. It survives the subject of it; a man's character lives *after death.* You may have often observed the rays lingering on the mountain tops when the sun had itself set. When the glens are in deep shadow, the summits which enclose them are ruddied over with light, rendered all the more lustrous by contrast with the sombre twilight tone around.

So it is with the Christian. He dies; but when the sun of his earthly existence goes down, the subdued and softened light of character lingers on the world's mountain tops, so that, in one sublime sense, it cannot be said, "The place that once knew him knows him no more!" Like the sun in the western horizon, he vanishes from sight, only to shine in another and brighter hemisphere. But he leaves a radiance behind him. The memory of holy looks and holy words and holy deeds: of high-minded Christian integrity and faith and love: a consistent walk with God: these are the lingering rays which even the shadow of death cannot obscure or extinguish. Let not the Christian mother, as she is laid on her death-bed, abandon all hopes of her prodigal. She may see the prayers and counsels of a lifetime apparently mocked and scorned. These prayers and that example will not perish along with her. The unheeded voice may yet be heard, though it seems to be hushed for ever in the silence of the grave, the land of forgetfulness. John Newton's mother was laid somewhere far off in her grave in England; but the hand that had oft smoothed his infant pillow was knocking at his heart that dark night when, standing at the prow of

his vessel, he remembered the hymn which his mother taught him! Brethren, it is a solemn thing, this death-surviving influence. Influence during life is a vast and sacred responsibility; that we must either be like the living stream, fertilising as it flows, or like the stagnant pool, which the sun shines on, breeding or diffusing corruption. But still more solemn is the thought: No man has ever left this world without exercising, after death, for good or for evil, some influence on his fellows. *Surviving influence!* It is like the bell in one of our northern lighthouses, which, when the lonely watcher of the rock suddenly died, was said still to continue tolling, swung by the dash of the waves!

My friends, which will it be with us? The doleful toll, a dirge over forfeited opportunities, neglected trusts, wasted hours, guilty memories? Or shall we be among the happy number "with whom the melodies abide of the everlasting chime?"

If all we have said has a solemn significance with regard to individual believers, so, also we may appropriately recall, has it to the Church, and every branch of the Church in its collective and corporate capacity. No Church can absorb its light, no Church can shine alone and for itself. As the world's spiritual Pharos, it must diffuse its radiance all around. No Church can have a true claim to be evangelical, which fails to be evangelistic. It ought to be, it must be, the centre of holy living influences, which know no circumference but the world. And surely if it be the bounden duty of a Church always to be thus giving forth light, especially should it be so in seasons of trouble and darkness and perplexity. If the wakeful Levite in the Temple of old was at all times tremblingly alive to his charge as the guardian and custodian of the House of God, much more would he be so in times of danger, when the enemy was at the gates. How carefully would he then trim his lamps and feed their flame! Let the alarm-bell which is now tolling over the nations, as well as the Churches of apostate Christendom, serve as a call for quickening our faith, deepening and energising the sense of our responsibilities. The old ever-refluent tidal-wave of unbelief is leaving its devastating mark on our own shores as well as on others. Be it ours to look with greater simplicity of trust to Him who rules the raging sea. Or, returning to the figure of the text: amid the darkening shadows of materialism and rationalistic error, to seek for light and direction from the true "Light-Giver," who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks and holdeth the stars in His right hand, feeding each candlestick with the oil of His grace, and keeping every star in its sphere in the firmament. Brethren, as a Church, a halo of transmitted privilege is ours. A sacred torch has been handed down to us from other generations. Let us re-kindle it at the Divine altar-fires, and keep its flame undimmed for those who are to follow. If our quest, the quest of many an earnest soul in these times, be: "Wilt thou not revive us, O Lord?" as a Church, may we be prepared to give a ready response to the approving voice and summons of the Master: "Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!"

JOYCE HALLIDAY'S MISTAKE.

"JANET, Miss Peggy is talking to that old fisherman again. You ought not to let her go about those boats so much."

"I can't stop her, Miss Joyce," retorted Janet feebly. "I've told her lots of times you'd be angry, but it's no use; and he's a decent kind of man."

"I don't doubt that, but she is not likely to get much good from a fisherman. Go and bring her away at once."

Miss Joyce shut up her book with a snap, and then as suddenly opened it again, and smoothed her knitted brows. Someone was coming along the jetty, someone was coming to her: and Janet, and Peggy, and the fisherman, dwindled into very secondary items. Life was altogether too brief to be given up to minor worries.

The "someone" came leisurely down the rough planks—a tall, good-looking man in a velvet coat, that stamped his profession at once. No one but an artist, also a refined and fashionable artist, could have arrayed himself in such soft rich browns and greys; every detail, from his collar-stud to his shoes, was perfection in its own department. Joyce looked up at him with ill-concealed admiration shining in her honest eyes.

"I thought I should find you down here," he said, balancing himself lightly on the low parapet; "what is Miss Peggy in disgrace about? Janet looked like a thunder-cloud as she passed me."

"And I felt like one," laughed Joyce. "The child has such a ridiculous fancy for some old fisherman down yonder. She would spend all her time among the boats if she could. I don't quite like it."

Mr. Salterne put up his glass and surveyed the brown nets spread out on the cliff side, and the owners busily shaking them down. It made a fair picture in the slant evening sunshine, but pictures don't always bear too close inspection into details.

"I should scarcely fancy you would," he remarked. "That kind of thing is very well in print—in every-day life it is best to keep up a respectful distance. I speak from experience. I have had something to do with subjects of that class."

"I saw something of yours once in the Northgate collection—a fisherman's hut," said Joyce, her face flushing with enthusiasm, "and I liked it greatly, though I didn't think, then, I should ever come to know you."

"I owe a good deal to that picture," returned the artist, lowering his voice a little. The waves crept in and out under the girders, the sun sank lower behind the cliff; one or two of the fisher-girls paused half enviously to glance at the two sitting so quietly on the jetty, rehearsing the first sweet notes of the old, old story. If Mr. Arnold Salterne could but have transferred it all to his canvas without one disturbing shade of his own personality, he might thenceforth have taken higher rank in his profession.

Into the midst burst Peggy, hot and indignant, scattering all the peaceful effects into thin air. "Aunt Joyce, it 's too bad. I wasn't doing a bit of harm. I was just helping old Piers to dig sand-eels, and now——"

"Sand-eels!" echoed Joyce. "Oh, Peggy, how can you touch such nasty things? Look at your hands—and your frock!"

"Miss Peggy ought to have been born a fisher-girl, and then no one could have interfered between her and those nice slimy eels," remarked Mr. Salterne with a little shrug. He was not particularly attached to the young lady. Peggy never harmonised with the surroundings. One of Joyce's worst drawbacks in his eyes, was the way she allowed the child to monopolise her time and attention, though he was careful not to express that opinion.

"It 's more than half your fault," protested the intruder, turning upon him. "Aunt Joyce never made half so much fuss till you came to stay here. Mr. Angus never says things like that, and I wish——"

Peggy's remarks rarely reached their natural termination. Joyce interrupted them again, very decidedly this time. "That will do, Peggy; we are going home now. I am sure Mr. Salterne has no wish for any more of our domestic difficulties."

Joyce marched away her troublesome charge with an austere countenance. It was a very mortifying incident to her. Mr. Salterne was so refined—almost fastidious in his tastes; if it had been Will Angus, who was little better than a fisherman himself, it would have been a different matter. One thing was certain—she would have no repetition of it. Joyce had been undisputed mistress in her father's house since almost her babyhood, and did not approve of opposition. Peggy had come from India two years ago to Aunt Joyce's care, and was the person who oftenest transgressed, and was oftenest forgiven. Joyce made allowance for her that she made for no other person, young or old; but now it was a case of the proprieties and Mr. Salterne's opinion combined, and Peggy must go to the wall.

Joyce told her father something of her intentions as she poured out his tea the next morning at breakfast, but he scarcely seemed to realise the enormity of the offence.

"I don't think the old fellow will do the child any harm, Joyce," he said, without lifting his eyes from his newspaper. "I 've seen him about his boats the last twenty years, to my certain knowledge; and Will Angus thinks a lot of him. They often go out together."

"Still, it does not at all follow that he is a fit and proper person for Peggy to associate with, papa. If you had seen the state she came home in yesterday afternoon—Mr. Salterne looked quite disgusted."

"It doesn't take much to disgust that gentleman," said Mr. Halliday rather grimly. "There is more grit in Will Angus's little finger than in his whole body. However, do as you please, Joyce; it 's your affair, not mine."

Joyce generally did as she pleased. She saw her father off to his train for town, and then she sallied forth to interview the objectionable fisherman herself. She found him at the sheds, busy with a pile of tarred rope that smelt of anything but Araby. Indeed, a powerful odour of fish pervaded the whole atmosphere. Joyce gathered up her skirts carefully and opened the campaign—

"Good morning, Mr. Piers."

"Morning, miss."

"I have come down to speak to you about my little niece. She has got into the habit of running about these sheds far too much, and we do not like it: will you be good enough not to encourage her?"

Old Piers put down his rope and faced her gravely. "Nay, miss, it 's for you to forbid it if you dinna like it. I 've had bairns of my own, and it 's no in me to be uncivil to a wee lassie. The beach is free to all, and it 's no my place to forbid her to come or go, as long as she 's no in harm's way."

"I have forbidden it; but, of course, as long as you provide amusement for her, it is a temptation to disobey," said Miss Halliday stiffly. "I am sorry you cannot see it in the proper light; but we must watch her more closely ourselves. Good morning!"

Going home up the drive, Joyce came upon Peggy setting off for a walk with Janet, and straightway issued instructions to that effect.

"You are not to take her anywhere near the beach, Janet; there are plenty of other walks to be found.—And you are not to go beyond the garden by yourself, Peggy—remember that."

Miss Halliday went on her way, blind and deaf to the angry tears in Peggy's dark eyes and her energetic protest against this sweeping edict. There was a clatter of horses' feet behind her a minute or two later, and Will Angus himself came dashing by. He reined up when he saw her, with a sudden light breaking over his plain, square face, that said more than any words; only Joyce—short-sighted Joyce—could see nothing but the contrast between it



"'I am going to ask Piers to be my friend as well as yours.'"—*p.* 828.

and the handsome head that had so often bent over hers through those blue summer days.

"What is wrong with Peggy?" he asked, walking on beside her on the soft turf. "She began some mournful story about old Piers; but he will do her no harm. Joyce. Piers was one of my best friends when I was a lad."

"Do you suppose I think he is going to kidnap her?" demanded Joyce impatiently (she was remembering how instinctively Mr. Salterne had understood the same subject). "The beginning and end of it is this: I will not have her associating with any of those fishermen. That you went there is no reason whatever for Peggy; indeed, rather the contrary."

Will looked down at her in some surprise. "What has come over you of late, Joyce? You never used to speak like this. It's my belief that some of Salterne's nonsense is at the bottom of it all."

"It might be better for you if you had a little more of his 'nonsense,' said Joyce severely. "Mr. Salterne is at least a gentleman."

Will Angus flushed scarlet; he vaulted on his horse again before he spoke. "One gentleman of that kind is sufficient in the field at one time. I'll not interfere with him."

Joyce looked after him with a touch of compunction. Will had been her steadfast friend and squire for so many years; nevertheless, that gave him no right to dictate to her. Mr. Salterne never thought of questioning anything that she said or did. She told him about her encounter with Piers as they sauntered along the cliffs that afternoon to meet Mr.

Halliday on his return from town, and was assured of his approval and commendation.

"It is best to take a decided stand with that kind of people; you are sure to be taken advantage of otherwise. Of course it was an unpleasant thing to have to do; but it 's not likely to be necessary a second time. How did Miss Peggy take it?"

"Poor little Peggy! she is very faithful to her friends. Naturally she resents it deeply; but impressions soon wear away at her age."

"And how is it at your age?"

Some meaning in the tone brought the warm colour to Joyce's face. "I—I don't quite know," she said hesitatingly; "but I think I could be as faithful as Peggy."

They had come to a pause by the gate into the station lane; in the distance the crown of Mr. Halliday's hat was merging slowly into sight. The artist stooped down and left a kiss on Joyce's hand as it rested on the top bar of the gate. "I think so too," he said softly, and then they stood in perfect silence till the hat and owner came up to them.

"So this was the farthest you could manage?" said Mr. Halliday, wiping his brow with a brilliant silk handkerchief as he passed through the gate Mr. Salterne held ajar. "Well, I don't wonder; it 's uncommonly sultry to-night: we shall have a storm before morning. You had better come on and dine with us, Mr. Salterne," he added, seeing that gentleman preparing to branch off at the cross roads.

"You are very kind, Mr. Halliday; but you see, I am hardly in trim for dining out."

Mr. Halliday scanned him from head to foot. "I see nothing amiss with your trim," he said drily. "For myself, I don't find the cut of my coat affects my appetite in any way; indeed, time was——"

"We shall be very pleased to see you, Mr. Salterne," broke in Joyce hastily; "we are not exacting people in the way of dress."

Truly it is not easy to cultivate æsthetic views when one's family tendency sets rather in the opposite direction. Joyce sat—a fair châtelaine—at the head of her father's table, trying, with but indifferent success, to elevate the tone of the conversation, and conscious, through all, of the eloquent eyes that followed her lightest movement, of the handsome head that bent towards her with courtly grace each time she spoke. A small thing to have such influence, and yet on the nameless charm of it Joyce was building up stately castles—too stately by half for every-day habitation.

"Where is Peggy?" she asked, looking round the empty drawing-room, when they went in after dinner was ended. The child was generally coiled up with a fairy tale in a big chair by the window. The fairy tale was lying there face-downwards now, but there was no sign of its owner. Joyce rang the bell before Mr. Salterne could interpose.

"You are very anxious for Peggy's company this evening," he said, half reproachfully.

"It 's not that exactly," returned Joyce; "only she thinks so much of the privilege of sitting in this room, it is curious she should miss a moment.—Where is Peggy, Janet?" turning to the maid, who was standing at the door.

"She was here half an hour ago, ma'am; she must have slipped out by the window."

"Go and find her at once, then; there will be a storm before long."

Joyce crossed over to the piano, and began to play softly. Mr. Halliday sat down in Peggy's chair, and closed his eyes to listen. Mr. Salterne folded his arms on the top of the piano, and studied Joyce's expressive face.

He meant to ask her to be his wife—had made up his mind to it—not rashly (he was a man who knew his own value in the matrimonial world, and would on principle have avoided falling in love in undesirable quarters), but Joyce was pretty and teachable—just the kind of girl to take in hand and train up to the high standard befitting his wife. Moreover, she would be an heiress to no mean extent. Mr. Halliday was well known in commercial circles, and that item was beyond dispute. And then—these practical considerations being satisfactorily disposed of—he loved her: after a fashion of his own, perhaps, but to the best of that fashion. And Joyce's implicit belief in his greatness was stirring in him a longing for higher work, broader aims; he was a better man already for knowing her—nearer high-water mark.

How high that mark might have been was never to be known. Janet opened the door abruptly, and the music died out in sudden discord.

"I can't find Miss Peggy anywhere, ma'am; I 'm afraid she 's run down to the beach again."

"Then she must just run back again," said Mr. Halliday, waking up and looking round the room defiantly.

"That she must," said Joyce, with some curtness; "I will go down for her myself. Janet, bring me a shawl."

Mr. Salterne went down with her; it was not a hundred yards beyond the gates, down the steep cliff path. The sheds were closed and deserted, and they went on to the jetty, where the boats were often moored. A big rough lad was punting about in one, and staring out to sea with a perplexed face.

Mr. Salterne beckoned to him.

"Have you seen anything of a little girl about the beach to-night?"

"Ay," was the response, "she wor here a bit ago. She wanted after Piers to the fishing; he 's just awa'."

"But where is she now?"

"I canna tell ye, unless she 's awa' after him. There 's a boat missing; it wor tied here when I went back with the baskets."

Joyce gave a startled cry. "Surely she has not gone off alone in it?"

There was a dull haze creeping over the water; the twilight was darkening fast. They stood on the steps of the primitive lighthouse at the end, and stared out over the waves, that broke sullenly against the girders. A whole fishing fleet might have been close at hand, and they would have distinguished nothing.

Joyce turned to the lad in terror. "Why didn't

you look for her before? How could you leave a child alone in such a place?"

The lad looked back at her. "I didna ken she wor missing till ye came speiring after her; I 'd my work to attend to."

"Will you take me out to look for her?"

"Ay; step in."

"Is that the best boat you have?" demanded Mr. Salterne, holding Joyce back.

"It 's the one with the sail; it 'll go fastest."

"What does the boat matter? Let us go," cried Joyce; "every minute counts."

The tide was going out; they drifted with it, tacking now and then out of the way of the salmon-nets, peering with strained eyes into the darkness. The waves crested and broke under the bows; the wind was rising; the storm Mr. Halliday had predicted was upon them. Joyce scarcely heeded it; every nerve was at full tension, watching, listening for any sound of a cry.

Mr. Salterne did heed it; nothing in the shape of hardship or personal endurance had ever come his way before. To be suddenly, without any preparation, launched out in an open battered boat on a dangerous coast, in the midst of a storm of wind, and rain, and thunder, was something that no mortal man was called upon to bear. He grew fairly sick with terror. Every minute lengthened into ten. What was Peggy—what would Joyce herself be to him if he were to be drowned out here in this blind, reckless chase? Self-preservation is the first law of nature. Drenched and shivering, he crawled over to where Joyce sat.

"I will not go another yard," he said authoritatively. "We must go back at once, or we shall all be drowned together out here."

Joyce looked at him incredulously: "And leave a little child to drown alone?"

"We cannot help it. You have no right to sacrifice your own life and mine in this manner."

"Is there any danger?" cried Joyce to the lad who was wrestling with the tiller ropes.

"It 's a gey dirty night," he answered cautiously.

"I insist upon your putting in as quick as you can do it," ordered Mr. Salterne in a shrill, hoarse voice.

Alas for the artist's hopes, they withered up then and there, past all resurrection, in the unutterable scorn that swept over his lady's face. Why, Will—rough, commonplace Will Angus—would have held on the quest as long as two planks were left together! Oh, if she but had his strong hands and clear head beside her now!

The lad looked at Joyce for confirmation.

"Yes, put back," she agreed in cold, clear tones. "We have no right to take this—gentleman out against his will."

The putting back was a long process; the waves dashed over the boat—wind and tide were against them. The lad Reuben had the work to himself; of his passengers one lay limp and useless in the stern, one was unconscious of all but the watch she was keeping through the blinding rain.

As they turned the lighthouse corner and drifted into smoother waters, they caught a glimpse of another boat also fighting its way in. Reuben stood up to signal it.

"It 's Piers," he cried to Joyce in great excitement. "The storm has brought him back, too, for it 's no his time for getting in."

The boats came in almost side by side. Mr. Salterne felt that he had come out of the very jaws of death as he clambered out on the dripping jetty. He held out his hand to assist Joyce, but she did not stir.

"You had better go home and take care of yourself, Mr. Salterne," she said icily. "I am going back to look for Peggy."

"You dinna need to, my woman: the bairnie 's here, safe and sound," said old Piers solemnly from behind.

He had the child in his arms wrapped in a pilot jacket; he had heard the pitiful cry as the runaway drifted helplessly past, but in storm and darkness it had been no easy work for him and his lad to rescue and bring her home.

Joyce, shaken out of all her theories, knelt down on the wet stones and kissed his horny hands in a great rush of relief and gladness. "Oh, Peggy, my girlie—my girlie! I thought you were under those cruel waves. I will remember old Piers for this all the days of my life."

The storm went down as suddenly as it had risen. For long afterwards, Mr. Salterne cherished a belief that it had come purposely for his undoing. He found his way up to the house early the next morning to see if it were possible to efface last night's impression. The clear morning sunshine flashed over a tranquil sea and fair earth, as if no wind or tempest had ever beaten on either. Surely human nature ought not to be less forgiving.

Joyce's pony-carriage was at the door, and she and her father stood on the steps. She was going to drive him to the station, and the visitor felt instinctively that he had come at the wrong time. Joyce's face looked as tranquil as the morning, but the night's storm had had its counterpart in her own reflections—her idol had fallen from his pedestal for ever.

At her age it was hardly likely to be a lifelong sorrow, and the tides might ripple in and ripple out again, the sun might shine and the stars glimmer as brightly as heretofore. Still, for a time there would be something missing out of them for her, for a time the wheels would work a little heavily.

"How do you do?" Mr. Halliday nodded complacently to the visitor: was it all fancy that there was a gleam of triumph in his keen eyes? "I hear you didn't altogether enjoy your sail last night. Never mind: 'He that fights and runs away,' etc. There 's a good deal of worldly wisdom shut up in the old adage."

"I am sorry I cannot ask you to stay," said Joyce very gravely. "I am going out with my father."

"So I see," returned the artist, standing bare-headed in the sunshine. "But perhaps after you return I may be more fortunate."

"I am afraid that will be too late. I am going round by the sheds afterwards, to cultivate the fisher-folk. Peggy and I have good reason to respect them henceforth."

And then the pony trotted cheerfully away, leaving

Mr. Salterne standing alone, and feeling more solitary and more insignificant than he was at all accustomed to feel.

He saw Joyce once, only once, again. He was on his way to the station to go back to town himself—he would try no more sea pieces at present—and passed her basket carriage drawn up before a little group at the roadside. Peggy sat on the wall, old Piers' arm about her, listening to the conversation with great contentment. "Peggy" (Joyce was speaking very earnestly), "I am going to ask Piers to be my friend as well as yours. I have been finding out that it takes something more than finery to make a man."

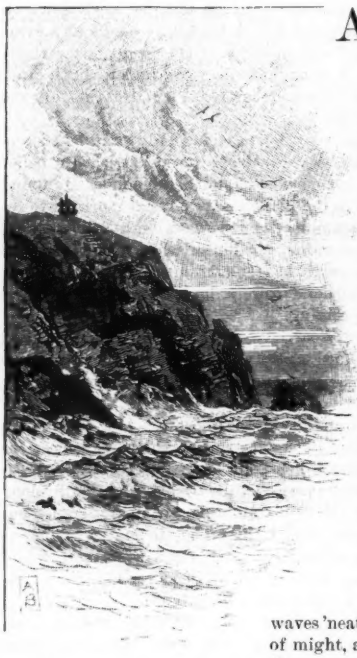
And seeing that when Will Angus was married, that next spring, the first person who received an invitation to be present was old Piers, it may be concluded that so far Miss Halliday has proved as faithful as her little niece.

SARAH PITT.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

THOUGHTS ON SPIRITUAL NAVIGATION.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR FINLAYSON, AUTHOR OF "THREEFOLD SALVATION," "EVANESCENT PHILOSOPHIES," "THE ETHICS OF ATHLETICS," ETC.



A MAGNIFICENT ship was homeward bound from New York. Her great engines had been working at full speed for several days, and as her swiftly revolving propeller cleft its passage through the aqueous masses of the Atlantic, crumbling the anger-swollen waves 'neath its stroke of might, and leaving the waters lashing and writhing in its wake, the huge vessel ploughed her way through the waves triumphantly. Homeward she sped; now rising, now falling, and daring, with full-nerved arm, the rage of all in her ambitious attempt to reach the haven where she would be, and to land her precious freight of human life safe, sound, and speedily. The hearts of the passengers and crew beat high at the prospect of standing on *terra firma* once more. Then hand would join hand, heart would meet heart, and joy too deep for words would find expression in the bond of reunion. That night a number of the passengers stood about on the decks looking at the phosphorescent sea. They watched the brilliant flashing of the waves cleft asunder by the vessel's prow; and admired the tremulous radiance playing around as wave after wave appeared, crested with light, and, crashing against the sides of the great ship, irradiated the dark and surging waters, giving them here and there the appearance of broken masses of liquid fire. Others stood at the ship's stern, and, gazing at the long stream of light that followed in her wake, marvelled at the thousand inexplicable coruscations which glanced and gleamed over the ruffled waters. Presently the convulsive throbbing of the great engines is perceptibly lessened; and as the vessel creeps from what at first seems a mere haze into a heavy sea fog, the engine indicator is altered from "half speed" to "dead slow." The prevailing gloom is infectious, and a depressing influence creeps over passengers and crew. And, as the great ship slowly makes her way up Channel, the forebodings of some are, alas! realised, and the noble vessel, almost at the end of her voyage, is stranded upon a rocky shore. The passengers are rescued, but the vessel becomes a total wreck. When, some time afterwards, an official inquiry into the cause of the disaster is held, the result is made plain in the pregnant words, "The master was *hugging the shore*." Ah! many a noble vessel, having successfully braved the perils of the ocean, comes to grief at the close of her voyage through hugging a foreign shore. And many a craft laden with precious freight, and setting sail in placid waters, and amid fair winds, is stranded at the commencement of her voyage through hugging the shore.

Now I want the foregoing to point a parable in the life of the reader. There is a voyage we must all take. Life is an ocean for us all. And I want to say a word to you, my brother and sister, which, with your kindness to welcome it, and with God's grace behind it, may prove helpful to you in the voyage of life. As Wordsworth says:—

> "We sail the sea of life; a calm one finds,
> And one a tempest; and, the voyage o'er,
> Death is the quiet haven of us all."

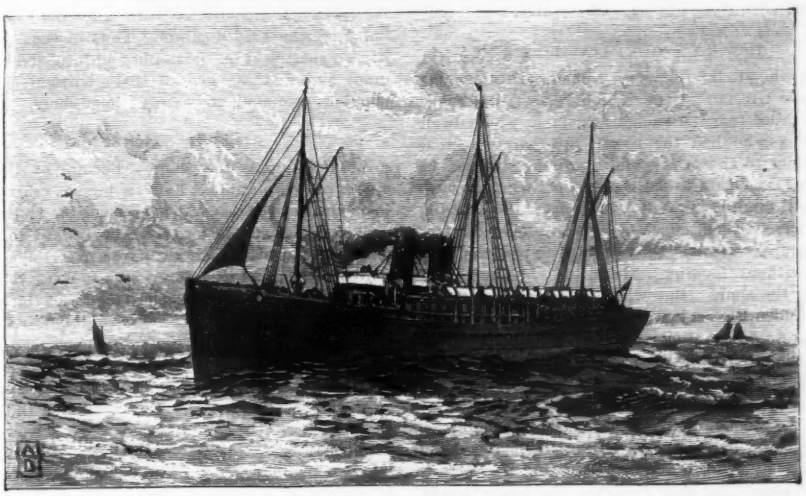
As we launch our vessels and spread sail on the ocean of life, it is well to be prepared for all that may lie before us. No mariner will take an ocean voyage

without a compass: yet many who bear the name of Christ embark on the voyage of life, and carelessly sail amongst sunken reefs, shifting sands, and treacherous under-currents, without regularly contemplating the chart God has given to direct them, or without ceaselessly looking to Christ as their Pilot amid the seas and storms of life.

"Oh, that way madness lies. Let me shun that."

A Lord Chancellor of England, Thomas Erskine, truly said, "The best advice which any one friend can give to another is to advise him to consult God; and the best turn that any book can do its reader is to refer him to the Bible." Here is our chart for the voyage of life. Yet many a fair craft, in setting sail over the sea of life, is given to "hug the shore" instead of launching out into the deep in humble reliance on the Divinely appointed chart. If, in your voyage through life, your soul draws its chief nourishment from public meetings, emotional hymns, mission or evangelistic sermons, narratives of personal experience, and all that is merely exciting in religious gatherings, the inevitable result will follow—leanness of soul. You have been hugging the shore. You will have a poor, fitful, emotional, sickly, and sentimental piety. Your Christianity will be stunted and dwarfed; your spiritual growth will be retarded, because you have been feeding on "weak and beggarly elements" instead of the pure Word of God. Be not bewitched; we need a stronger religion than this; we want a manly, vigorous piety, a religion of fixed, definite principles. And when the soul draws its chief strength from Scripture, it will be healthy and vigorous; it will not only derive more good from public privileges, but it will be kept sound and steadfast in the faith, preserved from erroneous opinions, enriched with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

A man must either be the slave of circumstances or he must make circumstances his slave. The latter is the only manly position. A log may float with the current, but to swim against the tide requires power. In the Gospel, God makes a full provision for our voyage of life. By nature we need conviction of sin, conversion of heart, restoration to God's favour, and grace to live a life of holiness and self-denial in the midst of many temptations. There are many strong adverse currents on the sea of life. God does not promise to deliver us from every under-current of trial or temptation; but He does promise support in every temptation, and grace for every hour of need and every wave of trouble. The secret of our failures is just this—that we lean on self instead of leaning on God: or, like Peter, we look at the waves instead of looking at Him who walketh upon the waves; we look at circumstances instead of fixing our eye upon Him who is above all circumstances. What is that but hugging the shore? Before us all there may lie strong seas and adverse winds. As Quarles forcibly says:—



'Homeward bound."—*p.* 823.

"Earth is an island posted round with fears;
Thy way to heaven is through the sea of tears;
It is a stormy passage, where is found
The wreck of many a ship, but no man drowned."

Courage, faint heart! Stand out to sea. No storm can drive Christ from us. No sea will be rough if He be our Pilot; and no wind wholly adverse when He is near, Who can at any moment secure a great calm by simply saying, "Peace! be still!" There is a wonderful truth in the beautiful lines of Bishop Ken—

"The merchant who towards spicy regions sails,
Smells their perfume far off, in adverse gales;
With blasts which thus against the faithful blow,
Fresh odorous breathings of God's goodness flow."

If, then, we are to look upon life as a wide ocean where many are shipwrecked and irrecoverably lost, where more are tossed and fluctuating, and where none can secure to themselves a future undisturbed calm, yet so long as the ship is under sail, obeying her helm, and steered according to the chart, whether the weather be fair or foul, she is every day approaching nearer to and must shortly make land. And if the Pilot be aboard we shall reach the haven where we would be. Thus, as we voyage along the ocean of life, the things of earth vanish into insignificance when compared with those of time and eternity.

HOW TO AVOID FATALITIES.

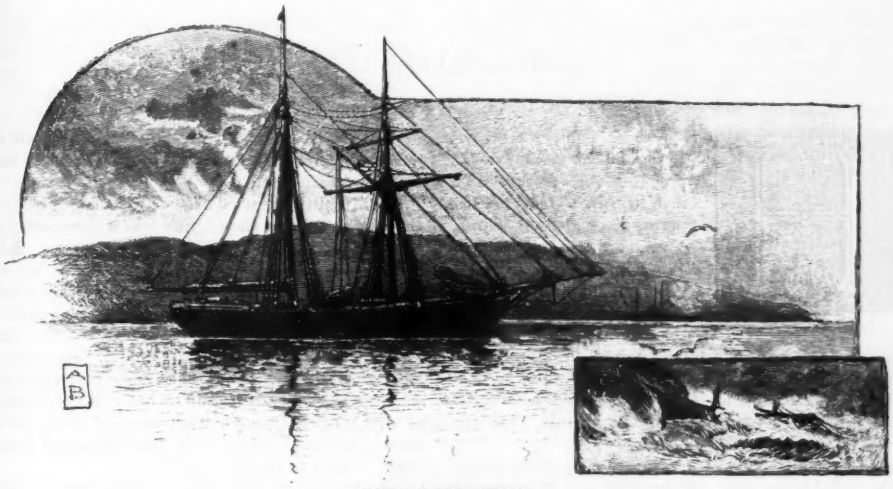
Those who are familiar with Homer, will remember the subtle Grecian legend which relates that when Ulysses sailed past the enchanted island, where dwelt the sirens who had the power by their sorcerous symphonies to charm all who heard their music, he took the precaution to fill the ears of his crew with wax, and, binding himself to the mast, the alluring strains were without effect, and his barque held safely on her course. He was thus enabled to pass the fatal island without landing. He knew the danger of hugging the shore. But when Orpheus, on his way to the Golden Fleece, had to pass the dangerous shore, he, being a good musician, set up better music than that of the sea-nymphs, and enchanted his crew, who were therefore insensible to the alluring melodies of the sirens. Thus, without resorting to the devices of Ulysses, he was able to pass the treacherous shore, not only safely, but with disdain. To be insensible to the voice of temptation is good; to out-sing it is better. We want something more positive. The lesson taught by Orpheus is the one we most need for the voyage of life. Let us have no ears for the siren voice of temptation; let us out-sing it by a better melody. Thus every mariner embarking on the voyage of life does well not only to close his ears to the siren voices on the fatal shore, but to learn the melody of a better music from One who lovingly says, "My son, give Me thine heart." He it is who tenderly pleads, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." His voice of peace is no illusion amid the mirage of life's ocean. His tender tones can still our terrors when, amid the darkness of life, while the ocean seems so great and our little boats so small, there comes, through the storm that terrifies, His thrilling, soothing whisper, "It is I, be not afraid." None who listen to the voice of Christ have ever regretted it. He lures none to their destruction. His voice brings salvation. He puts a new song into our mouths. He stablishes our goings. And when our spiritual navigation is surrendered to Him, then the voyage of life is indubitably most fascinating.

A little girl seeing the letters "T. C. M." on a flag flying from a steam launch belonging to that invaluable Society, the Thames Church Mission, inquired what they meant. The reply that the letters might stand for *Trust Christ More*, the motto of the Society, conveys a message that we do well to adopt as our keynote in the voyage of life. If you wish to elevate character, to purify conduct, to promote goodness, to cultivate self-subjection, let the eye of your soul "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Calvary is the source of power. Let the eye of faith ceaselessly contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ, and then our constant endeavour will be to deny our wills, to rule our tongues, to soften our tempers, to mortify our evil passions, to learn patience, humility, meekness, forgiveness, forbearance, charity, courtesy, and steady continuance in well-doing. And the endeavour will not be in vain, for the Holy Spirit will give the needed power. Thus in the voyage of life we shall float on the mighty unfathomable sea of grace, and find the love of God a bottomless deep, a populous profound, an ocean without shore.

HINTS IN NAVIGATION.

Avoid hugging the shore. Beware of the siren voices of temptation. Many a human craft sailing joyously over the seas of life becomes the victim of its own rashness and temerity. Now I want to stretch out the hand of help, if I can, to some reader on the voyage of life, and therefore I seek to warn you of the perils of the shore, and some dangers of the voyage.

There is the shore of *Scepticism*. Beware of this coast. Many a human craft in the voyage of life anchors in this bay, and remains as though she were a surveying vessel, or a stationary lightship appointed to warn others of the danger. Some hug this bay as though it were the end of their voyage. Now honest doubt may be tested by the questions, "Is it painful?" "Is it temporary?" He who is honest is not content to remain in a state of doubt. He will manfully navigate his way through difficulties until he arrives at the glorious simplicity of the truth. He learns that the law of light for the inner life is, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Doubts and indecision are marks of weakness rather than strength. "There is but one chance of life," says Mr. Ruskin: "in admitting so far the possibility of the Christian verity as to try it on its own terms. There is not the slightest possibility of finding whether it be true or not first. 'Show me a sign first, and I will come,' you say. 'No,' answers God; 'come first, and then you shall see a sign.'" A child who has not learned simple addition cannot understand the mysteries of algebra. Seed-time first, then harvest. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. It is in a life of action rather than in study that most minds find the truth which makes men free. Christian life is, at least, as undeniable as physical life. As the notes of the siren song of scepticism are wafted from the shore, we seem to hear the refrain of the scientific Pascal out-singing them like Orpheus, and we catch up the words "*Les incrédules sont les plus crédules.*" (The incredulous are the most credulous.) Thus we put to sea, for the faith of the Christian has nothing in common with credulity. Brother, if you have anchored in the Bay of



CALM AFTER STORM.

Scepticism, slip your cable and stand out to sea. On the ocean of life avoid this shore. Starboard your helm and launch out into the deep, with the cry, "Lord, increase our faith."

There is the shore of *Procrastination*. In the voyage of life there are treacherous undercurrents which lure the soul towards the shore of indecision. There is a terrible significance in this word. To stop our ears, close our eyes, or harden our hearts to the warning it conveys is an act of insanity. My brother, how is it with you in your spiritual navigation? The question is put in all tenderness. You live in a Christian land, you may be an occasional worshipper in the house of God, you may be a communicant, and yet, after all, you may be undecided in your spiritual life, while your vessel is carried by the undercurrents of formality and indecision towards the fatal shore on which many a human craft is wrecked. Every experienced pastor of souls can tell of cases where, after a long period of continued and wilful resistance to the grace of God, the soul seemed morally incapable of yielding to, or receiving, the truth, although outwardly appearing anxious to do so.

Brother voyager, beware how you despise the claims of the Lord Jesus on your heart and life! Only in so far as you yield yourself to Christ can you navigate your way successfully on the voyage of life.

"*The world, the flesh, and the devil*" play a regular sonata on the voyage of life. Ah! listen not to the sorcerous symphonies of these siren voices. Out-sing them by better music. There are undercurrents in the sea into which many a mariner unknowingly steers his ship. Everything seems to go forward with success until, by miserable experience, the mariners find that, instead of going forward, they have been all the time receding. Many an experienced master of a vessel has been obliged to confess, "I've lost my reckoning." So also is it with the soul in the voyage of life. Where is the child of God that has not backslidden? There are times when every Christian mariner must confess with shame and sorrow, "I've lost my reckoning." We may never, indeed, have fallen into sins which even men of the world repudiate. We may never have had any such temptation. But in God's sight we may be guilty of more heinous sin than those who commit grosser forms of sin.—"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." The only remedy for the child of God is to return as a penitent sinner to the Lord Jesus, Who says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." There was a time when all the disciples forsook Christ and fled. Even the impetuous and fervent Peter denied his Master. And we, without Peter's excuse, have too often denied our Redeemer. The Lord's tender glance of love, as He "turned and looked upon Peter," melted Peter's heart, and won him back to the Saviour's fold; and so it may be even with us, for He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

> "Oh, Oft Forsaken, Oft Denied,
> Forgive our shame, wash out our sin;
> Look on us from Thy Father's side,
> And let that sweet look win."

As we proceed on the voyage of life, let us never again for a moment attempt to sail under two pilots. Nothing more surely will destroy our peace and leave us stranded on the shore. Expediency is a rock on which many Christian mariners split. Let us have nothing to do with any course of conduct of which our conscience disapproves. With God's grace, let us go to no place where we cannot ask God to go with us, let us engage in no work on which we cannot ask God's blessing, and let us indulge in no pleasure for which we cannot return to God thanks. Traversing the ocean of life in this spirit, we shall find an abundant entrance into that glorious haven where storms cannot beat, "Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

LITTLE SALLIE LUNN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TERRIE'S TWO COATS," "BANDY," ETC. ETC.

HER father's name was James Lunn, and her mother's—the pretty young mother who died within a year of her marriage—had been Sarah. Nothing would satisfy poor James Lunn in his bereavement but that the wee thing his dear dead wife had left for him to cherish should, like her, be named "Sarah," never thinking, manlike, of what the result would be. Even if he had thought of it, I don't fancy that would have made any difference; for, to his mind, "Sallie" was the sweetest name on the whole earth.

And a right bonny little maid was tiny Sallie Lunn. The neighbours said whimsically, yet with tender smiles, that no name could have suited her better, so sweet and brown and soft was she; and not seldom did the big girls, who helped to "mother" the motherless little one, assure her, with many kisses, that she was "so good," they could "eat her all up!"

So round, and velvety, and dimpled a baby was surely never seen before, nor such big clear hazel eyes as those that shone beneath Sallie's long dark lashes, and spoke love to those around her ere the rosebud lips had learned to frame a word. The first syllable that little Sallie Lunn ever uttered was, "Tiss-tiss!" She wanted to "tiss" everybody; and her earliest attempt at consecutive speech was the silvery assurance, "Me love 'oo!" with which a kind word, or a smile, or the most trifling gift, was almost always rewarded.

As she grew a little older, her great idea—the natural expression of her loving nature—was to help. "Me help 'oo up!" she would say, standing at the top of the stairs, and reaching out two chubby hands to the tired father, who, with his basket of carpenter's tools on his back, came heavily toiling from below. And his step grew lighter and his face brighter in a moment. How could he be sullen or surly, still less loiter at the tavern bar on his way home from work, when that sweet sunny smile and those dear dimpled hands were waiting to give him welcome? His little maiden "helped him up" indeed! While scarcely more than a baby, she learned to put "dada's 'lippers" ready for him on the fender, and was never happier than when he would let her patiently tug with soft pink fingers at the laces of his great rough boots, and tumble backwards amid rippling laughter as, by a mighty effort, she pulled them off.

Every creature that knew Sallie loved her, whether on two legs or four. The people who lived on the ground-floor kept chickens, and to go out in the yard with a pinafore full of grain, and gather the "cheeping" balls of fluff about her feet, was one of the crowning delights of Sallie's life, its sole drawback being that it conflicted somewhat with her benevolent desire to be on affectionate terms with all the pussy-cats in the neighbourhood and the sharp little terrier over the wall.

One of Sallie's greatest friends was Mrs. Prescott, at the corner baker's shop. She was a stout, comfortable person, with sad eyes, but a kind smile. Sallie always blew a kiss to her as she passed on her way to school, and Mrs. Prescott always put by a little currant roll for Sallie's tea. Sensitively alive to trouble in every form, the little one saw the silent sorrow in her friend's pleasant face. She did not know that she saw it; she only knew that sometimes she felt that she *must* run to her and cry, clasping as much of the ample white-aproned form as her short arms could enfold, "Oh, Mrs. P'escott, I *do* love you! I want to kiss you a lot."

One day, when Mrs. Prescott was turning out a lumber-box, she came across an old picture-book. It was very old; the baker's wife herself had not seen it for many long years, and she could scarcely look at it even now for the mist that came between. But after a few minutes' hesitation, she said to herself, "I may as well give this to little Sallie Lunn. It's doing no good here, and it will please her; bless her!"

And so it did. Sallie thought those pictures the most gorgeous in the world; for they were coloured, not like the toy-books nowadays, with richly blended oleographic tints, but in two or three decided hues, which, with their combinations, did for everything. Cinderella was there in a red skirt and blue jacket, sweeping the floor with a purple broom; and Jack the Giant-Killer, who, being under the necessity of climbing a green bean-stalk, was compelled to perform the feat in yellow trousers and a blue cap; while the complexions of Jack and Jill showed decided symptoms of biliousness, traceable to the influence of a field of ripened corn hard by their cottage door. But, at the same time, the minuteness of detail was charming. You could almost count the bristles in Cinderella's broom; the pat of butter and pot of honey in Red Riding Hood's basket were not for a moment to be confused with the cakes lying at their side; nor was it possible to mistake the contents of the cruet-bottles on the giant's supper-table.

Sallie Lunn sat upon the shop door-step poring over this work of art, and hugging her little knees with delight. Suddenly she looked up, some childish query on her lips, and saw Mrs. Prescott looking down at her with eyes swimming in tears.

The book was forgotten in a moment; Sallie's open arms were invitingly held out, and her lips pursed up with a waiting kiss. The baker's wife folded the little creature to her heart, and choked down a sob.

"I *do* love you!" said Sallie; "I love you 'leventy million pounds. You got a headache, Mrs. P'escott?"

"I've got a heartache, dearie."

"Is that badder? Poor Mrs. P'escott! Dada had a toofache one day, and I loved him, an' it got better."

"Only God can make a heartache better, dearie. And I think—I believe He will; but it's long—long to wait!"

"I 'll ask Him to make haste, shall I?" said Sallie, with wide, wistful brown eyes. "He knows dada 'n' me, 'cause we talk to Him in the mornin' an' every night. I will ask Him, Mrs. P'escott, to make your heartache well."

"It 'minds me o' the time," said old "Y-e ye"—"ah, it must be nigh upon twenty year ago, now!—when her own little gal was a-playin' in an' out and round about the shop much as that little one do now. A sweet little gal were little miss, and her mother kep' her like a pictur'. I think I see her now, a-runnin' across the road to me for a orange or a ha'p'orth o' cresses, all in her nice white pinny and her pretty



"'Have it—please have it.'"—*p.* 835.

After that the simple petition, "Please, God, make Mrs. P'escott's heartache better," was regularly added to Sallie's prayers; and the little loving creature became dearer to the baker's wife, if possible, than before.

Most of her playtime, except when her father was at home, was spent by Sallie in that pleasant shop. In addition to her natural clinging to kindly Mrs. Prescott, the child liked the place—it was so clean and cheerful, with its milk-white boards and polished brasses, and rows of comfortable-looking brown loaves, and the nice smell of hot bread and buns.

blue bows, and her yellow hair a-curlin' all over her head. Well-a-day! Mrs. Prescott wor a fine young woman in them days, and I worn't the doubled-up old crittur I am now." And "Y-e ye" gave a sort of grunt that was meant for a sigh.

"Y-e ye" was a name which the children had given the old hawker because of his queer cry. It was his way of pronouncing "*Wor*-ter*cerre*-ses!" And in the winter when he sang "*Or*-an-*gees*" it was very much the same. "Y-e ye," I need scarcely remark, was on the most friendly terms with little Sallie Lunn. When not more than six years old she knitted him a

pair of warm scarlet cuffs, and he always picked out for her those oranges whose marks of brownish film on their golden skins were the outward and visible sign of sweetness within.

One autumn afternoon—a half-holiday it was—Sallie Lunn was standing in the sunshine at the baker's shop door cuddling the baker's tabby cat, when "Y-e ye" came shuffling along the other side of the way. In his basket were some of the very first oranges of the season. Somewhat pale and sour-looking, certainly, but the first, and "little missy," as the old man proudly called the carpenter's pretty child, must have one.

A lovely picture she unconsciously made, standing there with the setting sunlight touching her peach-like cheek and bronzing her chestnut hair, and making amber gleams in her dark-fringed eyes, while pussy's whiskered nose was pressed caressingly against her face, and the soft paws hung in willing helplessness over her round brown arm.

I fancy "Y-e ye" must have been thinking more about this picture than the guidance of his own hobbling feet, for just as he stepped off the kerbstone to come over to her, his heel slipped, and the next moment he was lying in the gutter, while the yellow oranges went rolling in all directions.

Sallie sprang forward with a little cry, the cat dropped, and her hands instinctively stretched out to help. But she never reached the old man's side. It was all the work of a few seconds. A pair-horse van came clattering suddenly round the corner: a shout, a childish wail, a woman's shriek, and violently pulling up the struggling horses, they lifted Sallie out from between the wheels, and bore her, senseless and bleeding, into the baker's shop.

She was not dead.

"Take her to the hospital," the doctor said. "It is by far the best way. The best surgical care and nursing are her only chance, and she will have it all there."

Mrs. Prescott's heart yearned over the wounded, motherless lamb, but she knew that with the shop to mind it would be impossible for her to give that amount of attention which the little sufferer would need; the hard-working father could not neglect his employment, even were his hands as skilful in nursing as his heart was good; and the neighbours, kind and willing as they were, all had families or businesses of their own which absorbed nearly all their time and strength. So to the children's ward of St. Mercy Hospital little Sallie Lunn was carried.

"I'm glad we let her go," Mrs. Prescott told "Y-e ye" a few days later. For, strange to say, the old man had sustained but slight ill effects from his fall, and came to the baker's regularly every morning to learn how "little missy" did.

"I'm glad we let her go. La, it's a beautiful place: all so light, and bright, and airy, with the pretty white cots, and the little ones looking so clean and neat in their little red flannel jackets, and so happy with their toys on the tables in front of them. And the nurse who has got our Sallie in her charge is one of the sweetest-faced young ladies I ever saw."

"And do they say as she 'll be all right again?"

"Well, they don't say much, one way nor the other," returned Mrs. Prescott doubtfully. "It's hard to get out of them what they do think. But we must hope for the best, you know."

She spoke with the steady cheerfulness acquired by long practice, but the old man detected pain in her tone.

"If any harm—lastin' harm, I mean—have come to that pretty lamb," he said, with quavering voice, "I should wish the Lord had 'a' took me first, or let me 'a' gone down somewheres out o' sight, sooner than me bin the cause of it, so to speak. What had she done, now, I should like to know, that sech sufferin' sh'd ha' come on her?"

"It is one of the things we can't understand," answered the baker's wife; "and there 's many of them in this life, God knows. But He *does* know, you see: that 's the only comfort in it. And He would not be God if He would let sorrow come to an innocent babe like that without some good purpose, some real blessing, being at the back of it. God knows and God loves; we must hold on to *that*, or we 're lost!"

Mrs. Prescott had been conning this lesson since before Sallie Lunn was born, and she often felt afraid that she did not properly know it yet. Ah! the lessons grown-up people have to learn are sometimes hard indeed!

Sallie was kept in the hospital several weeks. She grew very white and thin, and her eyes seemed larger and darker every day. But she was always as bright as sunshine.

"I do love *everybody!*" she enthusiastically confided to Mrs. Prescott on one of the latter's many visits to her. "Peoples *is* so kind! And I love Nurse Annie. Nurse Annie is so good: she lets me have the big dolly with the pink shoes. Mrs. P'escott, I *do* think Nurse Annie knows what will make a heart-ache well!"

The baker's wife smiled as she tenderly stroked the wee, transparent hands that caressed her own, but shook her head.

"Well," continued Sallie, "I do keep on asking God, I do! I 'se never missed once. Ain't the ache a little tiny bit better, Mrs. P'escott?"

"You make haste and get better yourself, dearie," said her friend: "that will do it no end of good."

About this time a kind gentleman sent to the hospital a large parcel of illuminated text-cards for distribution among the little patients. He ought to have been there to see the sparkling eyes and hear the long-drawn "O-o-oh's!" of rapture with which his presents were greeted! The one which fell to Sallie's share was among the prettiest of all. The picture represented a sweet-looking lady, with a face full of the tenderest love, bending pitifully over a little child who nestled in her arms, and clung, as if in grief or fear, about her neck. It was a lovely picture in every sense. The tints were rich and soft, the shading was delicate. Sallie could not but know, young though she was, how greatly superior, both in sentiment and style, this was to the old fairy-tale book at home. The baby's curling hair and the lace

upon its night-dress were a source of great delight to her, almost as much as the pattern in shining gold that bordered the card all round, and which her tiny finger traced out with such a reverent touch. But the lady's face was the best of all. The words, in pretty letters of crimson and blue, were a little beyond Sallie's scholarship; but Nurse Annie told her that they said, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you," and that they were spoken by God Himself. Sallie Lunn had never known what it was to have a mother, but, lying in her cot poring over that picture and verse, the idea of mother and of God became somehow fused together in her imagination with a sweet, compassionate face and the thought of comforting. Had this been the only work of blessing which the donor's thoughtful kindness wrought, he had been well repaid indeed.

In course of time Sallie recovered from her injuries—grew well enough, that is, to be taken home, and make room in the hospital for some other little sufferer in greater need than herself. But so fragile and snowdrop-like she looked, so different from the dimpled, rosy-brown girlie of a few short weeks before! A strange pain wrung her father's soul as he looked at her, several people shook their heads, and old "Y-e ye" rubbed his red cotton handkerchief hard into his twinkling grey eyes. "It 's allus the way! it 's allus the way!" he said. "Them as seems the fittest to live—— But, as the baker's lady says, God knows!"

As soon as the spring days came again, James Lunn gladly arranged to pay a trifle a week for Sallie's admission into a seaside home for convalescent children, and thus our little maid made her first acquaintance with the big ocean.

Wild and cruel as it has been to some, it proved a good friend to her, chasing and sprinkling her playfully with its silvery spray till she could not but laugh, and clap her hands, and join in the fun; making her hungry—oh! so hungry!—for even the plainest food; and kissing her creamy cheeks till they grew pink.

Sallie and her companions from the Home were playing one morning at "Touch!" They were racing and romping on the parade, which so early in the year was almost deserted. In one of her pauses to take breath, Sallie noticed a poor-looking young woman sitting in a corner of one of the seats. Her elbow rested on the wooden arm, and her face leaned on her hand; she was very pale, and seemed weak and tired. It was with kindly gaze, however, that she watched the children's game; and meeting Sallie's lovely brown eyes, she smiled.

Instantly—she did not know why—Sallie thought of her old friend Mrs. Prescott. "I wonder if this lady's got a heartache too?" she said to herself, and smiled back, edging a little nearer to the seat.

The woman held out her hand, and, without an instant's hesitation, Sallie put hers confidingly within it.

"You ill?" asked the child, full of sympathy.

"I have been ill; I 'm better now."

"So 'm I! I 'se glad you 're better too." Then, after a slight pause, Sallie wistfully added, "You got a heartache?"

The stranger started at this unexpected query, and her white cheeks flushed. "I 'm poor, and lonely, and miserable!" she said, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Poor, and lonely, and mis 'able!" Sallie's rosebud mouth drooped into a pitiful curve, and her little brown hand softly stroked the thin fingers of her new friend. The woman did look poor: her shawl was thin and darned: and she did indeed look miserable. Sallie wondered what she could do to comfort her.

With the thought of comfort came the remembrance of that precious text-card she had had given her at the hospital. She had brought it to Southbeach with her—it was too valuable to leave behind—and had taken care of it in her little pocket ever since. Soiled and bent and creased as it was, that card was Sallie's most cherished possession still. Therefore it was the best thing she had to give away.

Filled, baby as she was, with the true spirit of loving sacrifice, the treasure, with much difficulty, was extracted from its hiding-place and pressed into the stranger's hand.

"Have it—please do have it!" pleaded Sallie, earnestly. "See if it ain't a pretty one. Look at that lady cuddling the little boy! Ain't she a dear? She 's his own mother, and she 's loving him up 'cause he 's frightened of the dark. Look at the nice work on his ni'gown. Nurse Annie said he 's frightened of the dark, but Nurse Ruth said p'raps he 'd been a naughty boy and was sorry, and he 's saying he 'll never do it again, so his dear mother 's glad and she 's forgiven him. Nurse Ruth says that 's how God forgives, and that 's what the words mean—you read 'em."

But the stranger's tears were falling hot and fast, and blinding her eyes both to the card which Sallie held up and to the child's sweet wistful face.

"Oh, *please* don't cry!" begged Sallie. "You shall have the picture, really—truly! I do mean it. Is your heartache *very* bad?"

* * * * * *

It was a bright, rosy little maiden, radiant with health and gladness, who, the month's holiday being over, sprang into James Lunn's arms at Cannon Street station. The change of air had come just at the right time to save the child, giving a fresh start on the road to complete recovery. Old "Y-e ye," who knew when she was expected, and was waiting outside the station with "the biggest orange he had ever set eyes on," exclaimed when he saw her—"Well, if ever! Well, I never! If she ain't done brown at last!" Then he laughed at his own facetiousness until the red pocket-handkerchief was once more in request, and he rubbed his eyes harder than ever.

"I must go 'n' see Mrs. P'escott after tea," said Sallie. "Pussy will be glad to see me back. I wonder who 's had my little roll all the time I been away! P'raps she 's given it to some poor little boy. If she has I won't have it no more. 'cause he 'd be so sorry. I wonder how Mrs. P'escott's heartache is?"

So hand-in-hand father and child went round to the corner baker's shop. A strange woman was

standing behind the counter, and the moment she turned, Sallie recognised her as the one on whom, at Southbeach, she had bestowed her precious card. The recognition was mutual.

"Mother! Here, mother!" cried the young woman; "this is the little girl I told you of—the very same. Oh, you darling that ever was!—to think that I should find you again!"

Then Mrs. Prescott came out into the shop and asked them all to go inside, and Sallie found herself kissed by everybody. It was not long before her sharp eyes detected her picture-card, mounted and framed, and standing on the mantel-piece.

"Oh, look!" she cried. "Look, dada! Ain't it nice!"

"I'm going to hang it up in my own room," said Mrs. Prescott, in a queer, shaky voice—the young woman had slipped away in the bustle and disappeared. "If it hadn't been for that card and the blessed words it spoke to her when she was anigh despairing, my poor girl might never have come back. She says it was just like a voice from heaven when she needed it most, telling of forgiveness and love. Your Sallie was a ministering angel that day, Mr. Lunn!"

"Dada, who is that lady?" questioned Sallie, as her father took her back to their lodgings. "Did she once be Mrs. P'escott's little girl?"

"Yes, lovey, and she's her big girl now."

"And did she be naughty one day?"

"She was naughty a good many days, I'm afraid, and ran away from her nice home," answered James Lunn. "But she is sorry now, and has asked God to forgive her, and asked her mother and father to forgive her. And she is going to stay with them now, and be good."

"Oh, I *am* glad!" cried Sallie, with an ecstatic skip. "P'raps Mrs. P'escott's heartache might get better now, eh?"

"I think," said the carpenter, "that very likely it will soon be quite well."

"Oh, ain't that nice!" said the little girl. "You and me 'll say 'Thank you' to God to-night, won't we, dada?"

"Yes, lovey, yes!" answered James Lunn, in accents deep with feeling.

"'We 'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that 's to come.'"

JENNIE CHAPPELL.

THEIR BRIGHT EXAMPLE; OR, HALF-HOURS WITH THE WORTHIES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

III.—MRS. AUGUSTUS HARE.

IT is now well on to twenty years since the "Memorials of a Quiet Life" was added to the store of English biography. The subject of the memoir was the widow of one of the brothers Hare (Augustus and Julius), whose joint "Guesses at Truth" first awoke in them the interest of the English mind. Julius lived to acquire fame and honour among the notable theologians of his day, but Augustus, who became the husband of Maria Leycester, died very young, leaving little other literary memorial than a volume of sermons preached in a small country church, but very valuable as showing what such sermons ought to be. His wife was a member of an old English family, who had held the same lands for centuries; they were connected with many branches of the aristocracy and nobility, but retained that charm of simplicity and humanity which makes the alliance with culture and refinement so interesting and beautiful.

After five years of wedded life, Augustus Hare died somewhat suddenly at Rome, and a union of intense affection and sympathy on both sides came to an end. Though he had been an earnest believer and faithful pastor, Mr. Hare's death-bed was not without shadows. For two months he lay, looking full into "the moral eye of God's justice," and feeling that it was too much for him, till the clear apprehension of Christ's redeeming grace and finished work brought to him the peace that passeth all understanding.

The heart of his young widow was fearfully shattered, but her trust in the love of her Heavenly Father sustained her. Having no child of her own, she adopted a nephew, Augustus Julius Charles Hare (the well-known writer), whose love to her, like her love to him, could not have been more tender had they been really mother and son. The love bestowed on him in the helplessness of childhood was beautifully repaid by his filial care for her, especially under the infirmities of sickness and age. Mr. Hare is the biographer of her whom he called his mother, and the book is pervaded by a fine spirit of tender affection. It is indeed the memorials of a *quiet* life, and in this respect it differs from most female biographies of the day. Most of our Christian women whose biographies are written were remarkable for their activity, their zealous devotion to labours of love, and the chief interest of their lives lies in the harvests they were permitted to reap, the good they were enabled to do. The interest of Mrs. Hare's life is of another kind. Not that she wanted the spirit of active beneficence. After her husband's death, while she lived in England (first at Hurstmonceux, and afterwards at Holmhurst, near Hastings), she was

full of consideration for the poor. "Each morning," says her "son," "as soon as breakfast was over, would see my mother cross her high field with its wide view over level and sea, and then follow the oak-fringed lane to the girls' school, where she taught the children —always gladly welcomed by them, from the interest she contrived to throw into the most ordinary lesson, often enlivening her instructions with stories of things she had seen or heard of, or simple facts of natural history. When any were sick or sorry, it was their 'lady' they wished to see; if any prosperity befel them, they hastened to tell her of it; and at their little festivals, especially that of the 1st of May, nothing was considered complete unless their dear lady was there, sitting under the laburnum trees in the little school court, enjoying all with them."



"Were any sick, it was their 'lady' they wished to see."

Still, Mrs. Hare's life was characteristically quiet. The good she did was mainly done through the graciousness of her own spirit and the emanations of love and goodness that fell on all who came in contact with her, and pre-eminently on those who enjoyed her intimacy. In this point of view she is one of those worthies with whom a half-hour may be spent with eminent advantage. For in this rushing age, when activity ranks so high, and a Christian woman, if she is not carrying some public burden, is liable to be thought of as a cumberer of the ground, there is some risk of forgetting that the Marys as well as the Marthas may render eminent service both to God and man. The character that shows a beautiful purity, like the white lily, and that exhales the fragrance of roses and violets, makes a precious contribution to the Christian atmosphere, and if it were only more common would turn the visible Church into a garden of "spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices."

There were many persons of beautiful character among the connections and friends of Maria Leycester's family. There were the Stanleys of Alderley (one of whom, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, was married to her sister), Reginald Heber, rector of Hodnet, and afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, and others of devout conversation and blameless character. But the foundations of their religious life were somewhat vague; perhaps they were like those with whom Mr. Wilberforce classed his mother in her early years—Christians of the Tillotson stamp. Maria Leycester thirsted for something more definite. It is probable that the death of her mother, which happened in her childhood, led to her first serious impressions, and made her desire to lead a devout and useful life. Afterwards her impressions were greatly strengthened by correspondence with her sister-in-law, Lucy Anne

Stanley. Her first efforts were in the direction of a purer heart and a better life. The line she took was that of the Thomas à Kempis school; she sought after the holiness of Christ without a definite idea of how pardon of sin was to be obtained, or, as theologians call it, justification before God.

But this did not satisfy her. By-and-bye, Divine truth seems to have cleared out to her mind; her ideas of justification and sanctification became very definite. The result was, that while her feet rested firmly on Christ's finished work, the longings of her heart for conformity to the will of God, and for the enlargement of her faith, hope, and charity, were ardent and unceasing. To be near God and filled with His grace; to make manifest the life of Jesus in her mortal body, and to show the working of that life in acts of loving consideration for all around her, was her lifelong aim. She was insensibly drawn to prefer books of Evangelical and Calvinist theology, and when, becoming a widow, she settled beside her brother-in-law Julius, her preference for this school was the only point on which they differed.

It is strange that some religious teachers in our day of no little mark are trying to lead us away from this ground to that earlier experience which she and her husband found unsatisfactory. It seems to be thought enough if young people just have the desire to follow Christ. Questions of guilt and pardon need not trouble them. If they wish to be holy, all is right. Without here questioning the sincerity of the religion which rests on this foundation, undoubtedly Maria Leycester, like thousands more, found the atoning work of Jesus the main foundation-stone of her religion, and an indispensable help towards that imitation of Christ which is so apt to elude the grasp of those who do not fully realise His atoning love.

The simplicity and beauty of Mrs. Hare's spirit were shown in the delight and enthusiasm with which, when married, she settled down at Alton Priors, a primitive little hamlet in Wiltshire, of which Mr. Hare's college was the patron. Seventy souls were the whole population; of refined society, of beautiful scenery or objects of interest of any kind, there was literally none. She was so content with the place, so pleased with the old rectory and its little low-roofed rooms, so willing to pardon the want of a garden—defects, by the way, which her brother-in-law Julius could not pardon—so interested in the people, so refreshed with any instance, however insignificant, of good done, and so ready to help her husband, that the years flew like the wind, and the place looked to her like Paradise. When the family living of Hurstmonceux fell vacant, and Augustus was pressed to avail himself of his rights, he would not stir, but left the prize for his younger brother Julius. When their relative, the widow of Sir William Jones, was found to have accidentally destroyed the will that was to give a large part of her property to the Hares, there was no apparent disturbance of the mental serenity that knew how to be abased and how to abound. The connection with Alton was brought to an end only by the illness and death of Mr. Hare. When he became sickly, his wife and he went to Italy for his health; but what had been expected to be a benefit proved the reverse: a blood-vessel burst, and after oscillating for a time between life and death, he passed away at Rome in great peace in February, 1834.

The blow was a very crushing one, and had Mrs. Hare been a selfish woman, she would have been overwhelmed. The sympathy between her and her husband had been so tender, and their companionship so close, that to lose him was to lose all that brightened her earthly life. But she derived happiness from thinking of all that had supported and cheered him in his last illness, and had given peace and calmness to his death-bed experience. She felt new obligations to the Saviour because He had been such a Saviour to him, and to the Bible that had given him such consolation and joy. And the Saviour Who had been near to him was near to her. Nor did her interest in others pass away. Her old friends awakened in her a more tender love now that her experience of the vanity of life had scattered the dreams of an earthly paradise. They, too, would have to pass through the cloud one way or other; it was her earnest desire to contribute to their life any brightness that she could.

On returning to England she made her first home, as we have said, beside Julius Hare at Hurstmonceux. Her time seemed to be spent between cultivating the garden of her heart and scattering fragrance all round. There was a green alley at her house which used to be called her "Prayer Walk," where she used to pace up and down in prayerful meditation and aspiration. She could say of her great sorrow—"In the wealth of God's love to me His poor servant, He has given anew all that it is possible for me rightly to enjoy, and made the earnest desire of my heart to long after that which would be to the praise of His glory. . . . 'Lord, teach me right judgment and knowledge'—that is my constant prayer. I know not how to guide my household aright, how to train up my child in the way he should go, how to draw my dearest Julius nearer in fellowship to his God and mine. Let this threefold duty be made plain to me, so plain that I may not err in it; and whatever may be the cost, O may the Spirit of Jesus reign in me till every selfish aim and purpose is rooted out, every unkind and severe judgment, and perfect love and perfect purity are wrought in my heart."

Her devotion to the Bible was very great. "When, from outward circumstances or inward temperament, the Bible is the main food of my mind during the day, and all other intellectual nourishment is only the garnish as it were to this chief dish; or, to borrow an image from music, when God's Word is the air and man's word only the accompaniment, my soul is kept in perfect peace; it feels as if all were in its right place and fitting proportion. When, on the contrary, this is not so, and the wisdom of man is most prominently before me, and that of God thrown into the distance, I feel ill at ease, and my mind seems tossed to and fro without stay or peace."

The grace in which above all others she aspired to excel was love to her God and Saviour. Meditating on the words, "They seemed to Him but a few days for the love He bore to her," she prays, "O that such a love as this might fill my heart to Him who has so loved me that the years of my earthly pilgrimage

might, like those of Jacob's servitude, seem but a few days for the love I bear to Jesus, my Lord and my God! And so they would if the soul could ever be kept at that height of spiritual joy and peace to which it pleases God occasionally to raise it; but alas! it so cleaves to the earth, and earth so encompasses it about, that without a life of abstraction from the world and man, it is hard to preserve the freshness of an ever-flowing fountain of love, able to swallow up the polluted streams that are constantly pouring into it."

The latter years of Mrs. Hare's life were afflicted with serious illness. She always found benefit from the air and scenes of Italy, and she liked the opportunity to revisit her husband's tomb at the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, and renew her acquaintance with the scenes she had visited in his company. The illness to which she was subject was a singular one. Fainting-fits came on, during which she would lie for many hours in a state of syncope so complete and deathlike that her friends were afraid lest the authorities, hearing of her condition, should insist on her being buried. At Pau, in 1865, she remained in that state for sixty hours; then, after a brief recovery, she relapsed into a second trance of a hundred and twelve hours; this was succeeded by a third trance of twenty-six hours "of absolute rigidity, icy coldness, neither the pulse nor the heart beating, or any breath; an entire appearance of death." "A serene peace overshadowed her; a heavenly sweetness filled her face, and never varied except to dimple into smiles of angelic beauty, as if she were already in the company of the angels; and indeed, perhaps she was; for 'I have not been alone' were her first words on awaking; 'your Uncle Penrhyn and Aunt K. have been with me.'"

But even from these gates of death she returned. She had several journeys to and from the Continent even after this strange experience. In 1868 she was so ill at Rome that all hope of her recovery was abandoned. Yet even then she rallied and came home; and it was not till the end of 1870, and in her own house at Holmhurst, that her spirit finally departed for her heavenly home.

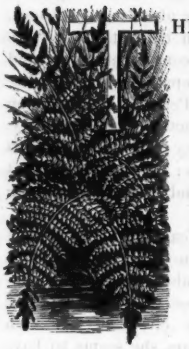
Mrs. Hare had a wonderful catholicity and charity of heart. She thought it the right course in general society to endeavour to treat all and speak of all who professed themselves Christians as our brethren in hope; to strive against the natural shrinking from the manifestation of a spirit that would be uncongenial; and in meekness and love to maintain in one's own conduct and language the importance of heavenly above earthly things, the value of the substance above the shadow. Especially ought we to abstain from harsh judgments of others, who might appear to act from other motives. She thought that all who belonged to the visible Church should be looked on and spoken to as fellow-heirs of its privileges, except when an opening occurred of speaking to any-one personally and practically. Some may think her rule a lax one, and tending to evil; but it is to be observed that what it was intended to regulate was public and somewhat general intercourse. And surely it is a better rule than that of harsh and bitter judging, and assumption of the power of summarily determining whether one is a true Christian or not. The question deserves more attention than it often gets: how are we to treat those whom we believe to be unconverted, and whom we often meet, without, on the one hand, making them think that they are Christians, or, on the other, becoming offensive, and exposing ourselves to the reproach of deeming ourselves holier than they? Perhaps the question is answered more easily in practice than in theory. The spirit of love and humility will solve many a problem where logic is helpless; only let us see that it is really the spirit of love and humility by which we are inspired.

We may just glance at one feature of Mrs. Hare's character that seems to us an imperfection. She seems to have held too much aloof from the ordinary fellowship and from the social activities of the Christian world. Beyond the circle of her own relatives, friends, and neighbours, she seems to have had little association with anyone. We never hear of a public movement or a Christian society with which she became identified. She travels a good deal on the Continent, but does not speak of the spiritual condition of the people, nor does she seem to help any society that aims at their good. We do not remember even a passing notice of the Church Missionary or any other missionary society. Of course she sought after a "quiet life." But the quiet life might still have been combined with a wider outlook from her watch-tower, and a more active concern for the world's good. The attitude of separation from the Christian world generally which she maintained seems to have hindered the outflow of her heart in loving desires and fervent aspirations for the whole family of mankind.

We claim Mrs. Hare as one of those eminently saintly women whose transformed lives and purity of heart bear an indefeasible testimony to the truth of Christianity. If ever woman lived upon Christ, it was she; if ever woman showed how really Christ rears and nourishes the life of God in the soul of man, it was she. We may give up to the world the hordes of inconsistent men and women who call Christ "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which He says. We may let the world say, if it pleases, "If these be what you call Christians, we are better as we are." But we will not let the world say that the Christian Church has nothing better or more genuine. We go to its innermost sanctuary and find its true jewels, resplendent in the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope. We find one of these in Mrs. Hare; and pointing to her and many like-minded men and women, we say, "Behold the proof that the Spirit of God is still working in this world, and take heed to yourselves lest peradventure, in your disbelief, you be found to be fighting against God."

FOREWARNED, FOREARMED.

BY THE REV. J. HILES HITCHENS, D.D., AUTHOR OF "ECCE VERITAS," "THE YOUNG MEN OF SCRIPTURE," ETC. ETC.



THERE is a family crest belonging to those who own the name of "Horn," in which there is the representation of a bugle, with the motto "Monitus, munitus," "warned, armed," or, freely rendered, "Forewarned, forearmed." The motto refers to the use of the bugle or horn in giving friendly or hostile intimation of what is impending. The horn is still so used. Our huntsmen make the valleys resound with the blast of the horn. Our coachmen intimate their approach by the same means. At Llanberis and elsewhere, when slate or stone is being removed by explosives, the sound of the horn cautions all who are near to find some refuge; whilst on the Continent, instead of a shrill whistle, the more mellow horn is used on the railways. In each instance the intention is to *forewarn*. Whether the result in every case is that the hearer is *forearmed* is very doubtful.

Now, God has ever adopted the principle of forewarning. He has prepared men for the results of their deeds. He has never permitted mortals to sow the seeds of misfortune and sorrow without some intimation of the nature of the fruits which such seed will produce. When he introduced Adam to Eden, He said, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." When the wickedness of the antediluvians had so increased that the Lord resolved to sweep the inhabited parts of the earth clear by a deluge, He first sent Noah, "a preacher of righteousness," to forewarn men. When the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah was fixed, two angels were sent to Lot to prepare him, and Lot was sent to his sons-in-law to forewarn them. Before Pharaoh and his host were overthrown, he had warning upon warning. Each of the ten plagues told him what was the Will of Heaven, and what would be the penalty of opposing that supreme Will. Before Jericho was seized and destroyed, there were six days' notice of the coming tribulation; the shrill sound of the ram's horn was heard repeatedly. The two destructions of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans and the Romans, were foretold by the prophets and by Christ. Thus God has ever dealt with man.

There are *physical* forewarnings. Oppressive exhaustion tells us we are making excessive demands upon nature, and that we are exposing ourselves to some severe illness. Aches and pains caution us against repeating certain acts of folly, or say to us, "Oh, do not this abominable thing, which the Lord hates." If such warnings be not heeded, paralysis smites us down, or consumption steals over us, "the banner-rose of health" passes from the cheek, the eye forgets its "summer light and warmth," the step becomes languid, the hands thin and pale, and "at length the glassy eye" is for ever closed "in dread mortality."

There are the forewarnings of *conscience*. That "oracle of God," that "pulse of reason," that "sense of right," that "tremendous power" inhabiting us "without our leave," that "sole monarchy in man," that "vicegerent of God in the human heart," *will* speak to us. Amid the din of the most discordant sounds it will make its voice heard. We may try now and then to repress it and stifle its utterances, but it will be heard. It will flash its light upon our pathway, and show us whither our career is tending. It will write before our mental vision the word "Beware!" in startling capitals. It will "light a torch to distant deeds, make the past present, and the future frown," and thus "awake the soul, as with a peal of thunder, to strange horrors." He that is *forearmed* by such forewarning is secure and happy, and can say, with Shakespeare—

> "I feel within me
> A peace above all earthly dignities,
> A still and quiet conscience."

There are the forewarnings which come to men by the *dealings of God with our fellow-men*. Many of the calamities which befall those around us are designed and adapted to break up our thoughtlessness and check our evils. Not infrequently have men taken heed to such warnings, and become decided followers of Christ and useful servants of the Church. Thus Waldus, a rich merchant of Lyons, passing along the street one day, saw a man fall dead on the pathway. The sight profoundly impressed him. It suggested to him the necessity for preparation for death. The impression ripened into consecration to the Saviour. He became a preacher of the truths of Scripture, and ultimately founder of the Waldenses.

There are forewarnings which come to us in *dreams*, and which undoubtedly come from God. Of old the Lord spoke to men by dreams and visions of the night. He does so still. Ever and anon most striking instances occur in proof of this statement. Take, for example, the following. A clergyman of New Jersey, America, states that he had in his congregation a young man who yielded to the temptation to drink ardent spirits. From being a respectable and respected artisan, he fell into habits of vice and became the associate of evil-doers. One



"Darling little brother."

(See p. 842.)

night he dreamed that returning home from a drunken revel, and ascending the stairs to his bed-chamber, he fell backward to the bottom of the stairs, broke his neck, and opened his eyes in hell. The terrific character of what he saw and heard so horrified him that the effort to escape awoke the sleeper. The dream made a profound impression upon the young man's mind. He visited his clergyman, narrated all to him, and promised in future to live a different life. His minister assured him that his dream was a solemn warning from God, and that the only security was to abandon his evil companions and habits. For a time all went well. His wife and family were once more cared for and happy. His place in church was once again filled. His godless acquaintances were forsaken. He became respected and prosperous. Returning home from his daily employment one evening, he was taunted by his old friends, who called him a Methodist, reproached him with not being able now to enjoy himself, and as being too weak to take a glass of ale. To prove himself possessed of self-control, he yielded to persuasion, and joined his companions to drink. The old desire revived. He went from one glass to another, and from that to a third. He sank again into his former habits, and sad to relate, he returned home one night in a fearful state of intoxication. Going up-stairs, he tumbled to the foot, and was found dead. Alas! that, being forewarned, he had not kept forearmed. The dream was intended to work his reformation, and secure his eternal safety. But the warning being neglected, his end was death, physical and spiritual.

There are forewarnings which are given by *Heaven's representatives*—the ministers of Christ. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonian Christians, says, "We have forewarned you." So every faithful preacher of the Gospel can say to the people of his charge. It is his duty and privilege to caution his hearers against the spiritual dangers which beset life's pilgrimage — to point out the Slough of Despond, Arbour of Sloth, Bye-path Meadows, and Doubting Castle—to put the pilgrim on his guard against such characters as Pliable, Obstinate, Formalist, Hypocrisy, Talkative, By-ends, Money-love, Hold-the-world, Ignorance, Turn-away, who are as certainly encountered now as when John Bunyan penned his immortal dream. The Word of God is as applicable to the minister of the Gospel to-day as it was to the prophet of old—"Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and *warn* them from me;" and very solemn, but deserving of attention, are the declarations, "If thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it: if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

And then there are warnings given us by the *Divine Spirit*. The Holy Ghost strives with us, maketh intercession within us, places guilt in a clear light, that we may see its enormity, tells of judgment to come, that we may prepare for it, broods over the heart to win it from the world and woo it to God. But, alas! the many warnings too often are despised. It is possible to "quench" the Spirit, to "resist" the Spirit, to "grieve" the Spirit, and even to "blaspheme" the Spirit of God.

Let all who desire to be *forearmed* for temptation, tribulation, vicissitude, loss, bereavement, and death take heed to the warnings God has given. Whether those warnings come through the physical organism, by conscience, by providential dealings, by dreams, by the voice of the minister, or by the work of the Spirit within, let them be regarded as from the Infinite One. To be *forewarned*, let it be to be *forearmed*.

"O DARLING LITTLE BROTHER."

1.

O DARLING little brother, you lie on mother's knee,
Soft hand reached at my cheek, with pat of wonderment and glee:
She loves you well, does sister Nell, and baby, too, loves me!

2.

O darling little brother, all day you laugh and crow,
All night in sleep serene and deep you draw your breath so low,
That, sure, you seem of joys to dream which only angels know!

3.

O darling little brother, beyond the salt sea foam,
In foreign scene to serve the Queen dear father now must roam;
How great his joy to clasp his boy when he comes safely home!

4.

O darling little brother, as night's deep shadows fall,
Mother and Nell, their wants to tell, to Christ the Saviour call;
We pray for you, for father too, and God will keep us all!

J. H. D.

IN THE SECOND PLACE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I," "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," "ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

"YES," said Hope. "Yes"—she continued very slowly—"and that is all? You never saw the other girl again?"

"Never."

"And you think I should make you a good wife?"

"Honestly, I do. Honestly, I also believe that you will be happier with me than living alone in Bayswater."

"I was not unhappy there; I had a full and busy life—the boys interested me. I was independent."

"Practically you shall be so still. I will never coerce you."

"Oh, it isn't that," Hope frowned.

They were walking up and down in the shelter of one of the pine woods at Bournemouth. The aromatic sweet smell came pleasantly on the air. Hope walked slowly; she was still weak, and her face had only a faint colour.

"Suppose," she said at length—"Suppose I say yes, and you marry me, and then—then—afterwards you see the other girl."

"Is it likely?" said Markham. "What is one face? There are millions in the world. I have spent two years looking for it, and never caught a glimpse or got a clue. The face may have gone away into the infinite—the girl may be dead. In any case, the chances are a thousand to one that I may never see her again."

"You ask me to be your wife. And you love this other girl. You don't say anything at all about loving me. Don't you think you are very unkind to me?"

Markham looked full into Hope's eyes. She raised them frankly to meet his—they were full of pain. Then she lowered them as if something had struck her, and a crimson wave of colour caused by some deep emotion swept over her face.

"Give me your hand," said Markham.

She gave it without a word.

"Listen," he said slowly. "Listen: I am a very earnest and a very honest man. I won't say a word that I don't fully mean. Even to help my own suit—even to bring sunshine into my shadowed life—I could not say now one word that I do not mean with my whole heart. I don't love you as I love the face that flashed across me and went away. I don't love you with the unreasoning passion which I feel when I think of it. But I do love you, Hope, in a way that I never thought to love a woman; I love you in the best way because I honour and respect you, because to look into your eyes comforts me, and to take your hand in mine gives me a sense of peace. You are the best thing in all the world—a pure-hearted, noble-minded English girl. To think of you in my home makes me happy. Will you come, or will you say no because of a shadow?"

"I will come," said Hope. "Yes, I will come. You have spoken very good words to me, and I thank you; but remember—don't ever forget—that where you give little, I give all. Don't forget that. God help me, if the shadow grows into life."

"It shan't—it won't—it melts already," said Markham with enthusiasm. He folded his arms round Hope and kissed her.

"What a delightful arrangement!" said Katie Douglas, when she was told. "And you began by disliking him so much, you know, dear. Anyone could see that. You could not bear even to have his name mentioned; and Bee and Maud Chatterton even now talk of how cross you looked when you found yourself on Rossiter's back."

"I am so delighted about it all, dear," said Mrs. Chatterton; "don't mind that silly girl and her ridiculous nonsense. It is sometimes true—is it not?—that we conceal our real feelings by pretending to dislike."

Hope smiled and blushed.

"I don't think I ever did dislike him really," she said in a low voice. "At least, not since he sang 'Farewell to Lochaber.'"

"And you are very happy now, darling?" said Katie.

"Yes, Katie, I am certainly very happy."

"You have made an excellent and wise choice," said Mrs. Chatterton, drawing up her chair luxuriously to the fire and gazing at the flames with a pleased smile. "I may as well say, Hope, now that all chance of such a thing is at an end, that you are not at all the sort of girl to run about London alone. It's all very well for some, but you are not the kind."

"I took very good care of myself, I assure you, Mrs. Chatterton."

"I dare say, my dear. But it was a pity, a thousand pities. Now, as Mr. Markham's wife—he holds an excellent position at Oxford, you know, dear, a distinguished man in himself: very—as his wife, the air which was so unsuitable in an omnibus will be really becoming."

"Mrs. Chatterton means that you have such a proud way of walking," explained Katie.

"And of looking, my love," added the good lady.

"It's no matter," said Hope, suddenly facing round upon them both. "I am not marrying for position. I am marrying because I love Dick more than all the rest of the world. I am proud of that, if you like. But as to position, I think a girl may keep up her dignity even if she does ride in omnibuses. I was very happy in London, and very independent, and I had no idea of going about in a poor-spirited sort of a way."

"You couldn't, darling—it wouldn't be in you," explained the adoring Katie.

But Mrs. Chatterton looked at the girl as if she would read her through.

"She's a fine young thing," she said to herself. "It would take a good deal to break her spirit. I cannot help admiring her. I wonder if she will be happy with that rather queer professor. He has a temper—I am sure he has a temper. How will Hope get on with a man who possesses a temper?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Cecil Grey heard of Hope's engagement, he did not say a word. A friend broke the news to him at his club, a friend who knew Markham, and who was much interested in the fact that he was about to incur the risk of matrimony. This friend, Clavering by name, plied Grey with questions, to which he received such short and unsatisfactory replies that he left him, under the impression that he (Grey) was "soft" on the girl himself.

When Grey got home to his neat little flat in Curzon Street, he found a letter from Markham, a very brief epistle, also announcing the fact:—

"Wish me joy, Grey; it is all right. Forget our conversation coming up to town last week. Hope knows, and is satisfied. Forget it, and come down to Bournemouth; we all want you.—Yours,

"DICK MARKHAM."

"Forget it!" muttered Grey; "I'm so likely to, of course! Wasn't it always the sort of thing I dreaded? Didn't I long ago say to Hope that if she —*she* met Markham it would be all up with me? Doesn't instinct tell me who the girl is that has bewitched him?—the girl with a look of Hope, only more beautiful; with Hope's voice, only sweeter. And she was in Rome then; and wouldn't it be just the sort of thing she'd do—to appeal to a stranger to help her? He wouldn't take a liberty—he wouldn't dare; and she—she would have her own way with any fellow. Forget it! Yes, that's so likely!"

Cecil did, however, "come down to Bournemouth"; and there he made himself exceedingly agreeable: congratulated Hope warmly, cut a number of stale but time-honoured jokes, delighted Katie Douglas, to say nothing of Bee Chatterton, and was altogether the life of the party.

Markham wanted Hope to become his wife with as little delay as possible.

"You have nothing to wait for," he said; "you can rig yourself out afterwards. What do a lot of clothes signify? We want one another. Come to me at once, Hope."

"It is not the clothes," said Hope. "You don't suppose I care about them? But I should like to hear from Jocelyn before I quite fix the day. No, I have not seen her for two years; but she is my only sister, and I love her dearly. I want to hear from her before I change my name. I have written; I may hear in a day or two. After that, I don't mind how soon you take me, Dick."

Hope was looking very radiant just now. If the shadow troubled her, she certainly never let it flit across her bright face. Markham found new charms in her day by day; and once or twice it even occurred to him to wonder how he ever could have preferred an unknown face and the echoes of a voice to this tangible, vigorous-minded, and fascinating girl.

"After all, I should not be afraid to see the other face," he said once to himself. He was standing by Hope, who was dressed in white, and whose slight hand rested on his arm as the thought came to him. He felt glad. "I can give my whole heart to the girl I am going to marry," he murmured, with inward rejoicing. "I love you, Hope, better every day," he said aloud, and he printed a kiss on the girl's broad white brow.

"Have you fixed the day?" asked Cecil of him that same evening.

"Well, not exactly," replied Markham. "Hope is waiting to hear from Miss Jocelyn. She's wonderfully attached to her sister. You sympathise with her in that, eh, Grey?"

"Stuff!" said Grey. "I wouldn't wait, if I were Hope. I'll speak to her to-morrow."

"My dear fellow, forgive me; you and Hope have always been excellent friends, but as regards her marriage with me, I think *I* am the right person to talk with her—I mean that she is not likely to yield a strongly expressed wish to anyone else."

"It's all rubbish!" said Grey again, in a very ill-tempered tone. "Hope is a goose—you'll forgive my saying so, Markham; but what does it matter, in a case of this kind, whether she gets a letter from Jocelyn or not?"

"For my own part, I agree with you, Grey. I am most anxious to be married, for, independent of any sentiment in the matter, it is extremely inconvenient trotting backwards and forwards from Oxford. I am absolutely neglecting my necessary work. I do trust Hope won't mind our having a very short honeymoon."

The next day Jocelyn's eagerly looked-for letter arrived. It contained all the usual congratulations, and ended with an almost passionate request:—"Don't get married until I get back to you, my own dear, sweet, pet Virtue. I shall break my heart if you do; and Aunt Margaret, I am sure, will allow me to come back to England a little before herself and Lottie. Telegraph, when you get this, what is the very latest date to which you can defer your marriage, and I will be with you in time. I will, I must, I shall! Do grant me this one little petition, my own Hope, for the sake of old times, and because—because—well, because, in spite of everything, your Jo is not the happiest of mortals."

There were pages more in this voluminous letter, but the sum and substance of all was the same: Hope must not give herself away until Jocelyn stood by her side.

"And I won't," said the girl, tears filling her big bright eyes. "You won't ask me, Dick. Jo has set her heart on this, and it is not much to grant. I should like her to stand by my side when I give myself to you, Dick. She is the only one very, very near to me—and quite absolutely belonging to me. She is not only my sister, but we are twins. Do you know, we never had a quarrel in our lives! Of course I differed from her:



"Hope was still glancing over her letter."

I differed from her awfully once, but we never said unkind things to each other as other girls do—never. She only asks us to give her time to come. We will give her time, won't we?"

"Certainly," said Markham. His face was grave; he did not know why he suddenly felt quite depressed. At that moment Cecil sauntered into the room.

"You have heard!" he exclaimed. "Foreign paper!—you have heard then at last, Hope! How—how is Jocelyn?"

"All right," answered Hope. "She wants to come to the wedding, and Dick—Dick is kind. He says she may. You'll be glad, won't you, Cecil?"

Hope was still glancing over her letter. She looked up with an arch, gay smile now, full into Cecil's face.

"You'll be very glad!" she exclaimed, a note of sympathy in her voice.

Glad! No man ever yet looked less glad.

"You're not going to be such a fool?" said Cecil, turning white to his very lips, and glancing at Markham. "Jocelyn's at the other side of the world; and to put off a wedding—you'll repent this, Markham. I say, but you're not going to do it, you two, you are only joking!"

"I don't understand you, Cecil," said Hope in astonishment.

But Markham's tone showed real annoyance.

"I would do anything to please my future wife," he said sternly. "And in this matter I shall most certainly yield to her very natural wish.—Hope dear, did you not once tell me that Mrs. Seaton and your

sister and cousin were coming to town in May? This is the first week in March. We will be married in May. Write and tell your sister so."

This arrangement was finally made. Cecil did not interfere by another word. The only thing he did do was to ask for Jocelyn's address, which Hope gave him, wondering why he looked so pale and careworn.

"Are you going to try your luck again?" she asked. "Oh, I hope, I trust you will succeed!"

"I shall never succeed!" he answered almost brutally.

And he hurried out of the room, banging the door noisily after him.

Markham was obliged to go back to Oxford, and an arrangement was made that Hope should live with the Douglases during the short time that would elapse before her marriage. Mrs. Seaton, Lottie, and Jocelyn were spending the winter and spring in Algeria, and Jocelyn wrote enthusiastically about Hope's goodness and Mr. Markham's kindness in putting off the wedding-day. It was finally arranged that it was to take place on the first Saturday in May, and even for this Jocelyn must travel back a day or two before her companions.

Mrs. Seaton wrote a long letter to Hope, begging of her to overlook the past, and offering her house and her own chaperonage for the wedding ceremony. But Hope's answer was a decided one.

"I don't want to think any unkind thoughts of you, Aunt Margaret. I am even grateful to you for being good to Jocelyn; but I cannot be married from your house: it would pain me. I cannot possibly do it. Besides, we have decided not to have any so-called wedding. We are going to church one morning early, and we shall be very glad to have Jocelyn with us—very glad for that, but there is not to be any wedding in the sense of requiring a grand house or having numbers of strange people, who don t care for one, looking on."

"Your sister must be a very odd young person," said Mrs. Seaton after she had read this letter aloud for the benefit of the two girls.

"Delightful and original, I should call her," exclaimed Lottie.

"Well, my dear, it always was your way to admire rudeness and unconventionality. Of course, I shall send Hope a wedding present; but beyond that I don't suppose anything further is expected of me."

"Not even that, if I understand Hope aright," replied Jocelyn, turning away her face and suppressing a very slight sigh. "Dear Hope! I shall like to see her again."

"I wish you could manage to take me with you, Jocelyn," said Lottie. "Hope cannot possibly have any enmity against me.—Might I go, mother? It would be refreshing to see a girl with a strongly marked antipathy for anyone. Besides, I suppose she is marrying a wonderful oddity.—Did you ever see an Oxford don fit to look at, Jocelyn? There, mother has gone out of the room. She is quite huffed about Hope, I can see that. Jocelyn, have you made up your mind about the Count? Forgive me, dearest, but I am dying of curiosity."

"Which I trust won't quite finish you, Lotty, as I mean to tell you nothing until I please myself."

CHAPTER XIX.

DAYS pass quickly when one is busy, slowly when one is anxious. Cecil Grey thought the two months which intervened between Hope's engagement and her wedding the longest he had ever gone through. Hope, on the contrary, full of energy and work, her heart dancing with joy, her whole nature basking in the sunshine of a great love, found these same days marvellously fleet-footed.

Hope was not a girl to do anything by halves. When she fell in love, she was not likely to do so in a half-and-half way: there was no one like Dick Markham; there was no girl so altogether blessed as Hope Karron. For a time the queer story Markham had told her produced a certain effect—a certain uneasiness when her joy seemed most near to perfection; but every day, as she thought more of the man himself, the less did she trouble herself about an unknown, indistinct, shadowy rival.

Hope's wedding-day was arranged for the sixth of the month, and, for various reasons, Jocelyn's arrival could not take place until the day before. On the morning of that day Cecil called rather early at the Douglases' house. His face looked careworn, his eyes had an excited gleam in them, the boyish expression had almost totally left his somewhat thin but handsome face. The little house was in that state of confusion which will precede even the quietest wedding. Cecil was shown into the drawing-room, which was littered all over with wedding presents and odds and ends of half-finished finery. In a moment Hope opened the folding doors which divided the tiny room from the dining apartment behind. She came in hastily, holding out both her hands to Cecil, and looking so radiant, so expectant, so like her name, that the young fellow recoiled with a half-smothered exclamation.

"Good gracious, Hope, don't look so happy!" he said.

"Cecil!"

Hope's expression changed to one of concern and pity.

"Dear Cecil, you are not well. Why do you speak to me like that? Why should I not look happy? Jocelyn is coming to-day, and to-morrow I am to be Dick's wife. Dick! fancy Dick falling in love with me, Cecil. You used to say he was so good, even good enough for Jocelyn. Do you remember? Fancy my getting him! How can I help being happy, dear Cecil?"

"Yes, but you looked so—so—like the thing itself—like Hope itself in the room. Don't, it isn't lucky."

"Cecil, you really can't be well. Do you know you are talking the greatest nonsense?"

"Perhaps so. I have had a sensation of being rather hipped lately. Don't bother about me. I called to-day to know if I could be of any help to you, Hope."

"In what way?"

"Well, you see, Markham won't be up from Oxford in time. I thought perhaps I could go to Victoria with you to meet Jocelyn. There 'll be sure to be a

fuss, getting her things through the Customs, and all that. I thought perhaps I could be a help."

"Dear Cecil, of course you can be a help—it will be just the very thing. One always wants a man on these sort of occasions, and Jocelyn won't be my dear old Jo if she has not heaps of luggage. But you 're sure you don't mind, Cecil?"

"Why should I?"

This was said a little roughly. Hope coloured.

"I mean—you see, Cecil, I don't forget you even though I am so happy—I thought it might hurt you to meet Jocelyn like that."

"Not a bit of it—I 'm long past that stage."

Again he spoke roughly, and a warm colour flooded his face.

"Then I 'm delighted to have you," said Hope, not noticing, or not appearing to notice, his queer manner. "Do you know, I rather strategised about Dick. Of course he wanted to come with me to meet Jo, but I did not want him to see her looking tossed from travelling, and tired, and altogether not like her beautiful self. So I managed to get him to choose a train from Oxford which would come in too late to bring him in time to Victoria. He is to dine here to-night, and then Jocelyn will be quite rested, and he 'll see her at her very best. It is nice, therefore, to have you, Cecil. And, dear Cecil, I should like to take this opportunity to thank you."

"What for, Hope? For goodness' sake don't begin loading me with thanks."

"But I must. You have always been a sort of brother to me. Perhaps, Cecil, perhaps what you most wish for will come right after all. Then you and I will be the two happiest people in the world."

"I 'm past wishing or hoping," muttered Cecil. "All the same, I 'll do what I can for you, Hope—I mean, up to the end. I 'll bring a hansom here at three to take you to Victoria."

Hope could not help wondering a little when Cecil at last took himself off. Was he ill? How changed he looked—not at all as if he was glad to see Jocelyn once more. Then she recalled with a vague, half uneasy wonder that the change in Cecil had really begun about the date of her own engagement to Markham.

"It is odd, and I can't account for it, poor dear fellow," she murmured.

But she was too busy and too happy to dwell long on any disturbing thoughts that day.

The Continental train was due at Victoria between three and four. It was nearly half an hour late, but that is a common occurrence, and would not have greatly mattered to anybody on this particular occasion had not a certain train from Oxford been very sharp to time, and had not a certain individual who intended to come by a later one travelled by it.

"Good!" said Markham, as he sprang on to the platform at Paddington. "They are sure to be delayed a little at the Customs. I 'll risk it—I 'll go to Victoria. It will be a surprise to Hope, and I can but miss her and that sister of hers at the worst. I've a chance, however, of being in time if I get a fleet horse and a good hansom. Yes, I 'll certainly risk it."

The cab bowled off merrily, and Markham, leaning forward a trifle in his seat, gazed before him with an abstracted but pleased expression. He was pleasant to look at, at that moment—an ugly man, doubtless, but with a face marked not only by many indications of power, but of kindliness, of steadfastness, of truth and honour.

As the hansom carried him swiftly to Victoria, he was looking at a picture—a very happy picture to gaze at for a man who had hitherto all his life felt himself more or less of a waif and stray. He was looking at a peaceful English home, at a bright English girl its presiding genius, at himself as the centre of her affections, the owner of her and the house she lived in. It was all bright, and the picture was about to become a reality. He quite forgot the shadowy face, and the voice which had haunted him for two years had become almost indistinct. Had he remembered the face and voice at that moment he would have laughed.

"Thank God I am cleared of that folly!" would have been his exclamation.

The cabman drew up at Victoria. Markham paid him his fare and walked into the station. A porter told him that the Continental train was just coming in. He was in time, therefore. He walked leisurely towards the platform indicated. He would not hurry himself. Hope should kiss her sister with no one there to look on. When her first great joy had subsided, he would touch her arm and get her to introduce him.

He reached the platform; it was full of people, bustling, rushing about, gesticulating, embracing. The scene was noise and confusion. Markham stood a little in the background. He was so big that he could look over the heads of most present. There was no hurry. He smiled to himself at the people who made so much fuss and got so excited. Suddenly his gaze lit upon Cecil's slight figure. He was glad to see him there; it was good-natured of Grey to go and help Hope at this crisis. Then he remembered what Grey had told him about his own feelings for Jocelyn, and he stepped a little further out of sight, and almost reconsidered his project of surprising Hope at this juncture.

Hope was standing close to Cecil's side. She wore a grey dress, and a black lace hat partly shaded her face. She, too, was tall and slim. Her very upright carriage gave her always a distinguished appearance, and Markham owned to a sense of pride as he reflected that she belonged to him.

Both Cecil and Hope were standing close to a first-class carriage. Cecil was loading a porter with all sorts of rugs and wraps, and the next moment a girl stepped out, put her hand on Hope's shoulder, looked up into her face and kissed her. She was not so tall as Hope, but the moment she came up to her and touched her, she gave to Hope a peculiar appearance. The whole scene set itself at once in a sort of picture in Markham's brain, and Hope, to borrow an old simile, looked like the moon beside the sun. The strange girl's face was set in a frame of the softest golden hair, her eyes looked big and dark, her colouring was brilliant, her smile radiant. She said

something to Hope, and Markham fancied that he could hear her voice, lower, richer than Hope's. Hope was graceful, lovely in her way—but beside this girl! Markham felt himself turning faint, cold, and sick. He had not forgotten, then! The shadow had come to life. He stumbled rather than walked away. Neither Jocelyn nor Hope had seen him, but as he reached the end of the platform a hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned. Cecil Grey linked his arm within his.

"It's all up, old man, isn't it?" said Grey. "Oh, yes, I always guessed this—always—since you told me you met her in Rome. Come away; don't let the girls see you at present. Bear up, if you can, Markham, I'll come home with you, and we can talk the matter out."



"'If there is bad news, tell it to me quickly.'"—*p.* 849.

CHAPTER XX.

"AND so you are really and absolutely over head and ears in love, Hope?—Hope the wise, Hope the cautious! Who'd have thought it? Who ever would have thought it? But tell me about him, my own pet Virtue. How did he catch and imprison that grave, steadfast heart of yours? How was it done, Hope?"

Jocelyn and Hope were together in the little bedroom which they were to share that night. Jocelyn was lying back in the one easy-chair; Hope was standing by the window. Both girls were in white; but Hope's dress was plain, made simply, and high to her throat. Jocelyn's was a mass of ruffles and laces, and revealed the exquisite shape of rounded throat and rounded arms.

"How did you do it, Hope?" repeated Jocelyn; and now her big eyes looked up wistfully at where her sister stood erect, clasping and unclasping her long fingers.

"Jocelyn, I am so happy to see you again!" said Hope, and she bent down and kissed Jocelyn on her forehead. "Jocelyn, try not to joke, for once in your life. I am a very happy girl—a very, very happy girl."

"Dearest, that goes without saying. But describe your hero. Is he beautiful? Is he artistic? Is he rich? Is he clever?"

Hope put her hands to her ears.

"You shall see him for yourself in a minute," she said. "I won't answer any questions about his appearance. You will see him for yourself in a minute. He is coming to dinner, and he ought to be here directly. Had we not better go into the drawing-room?"

"Yes, love, certainly. Is Cecil Grey coming to dinner too, Hope?"

"Yes, Jocelyn." Hope looked full into her sister's eyes. "Are you going to be kind to poor Cecil?"

"I can't tell you, Hope. Is my dress all right?—and my hair? Do you like this new way I have of arranging it? Hope, I must tell you something. Cecil wrote to me when I was in Algiers—such a letter. Poor boy! I did not think he could have cared for me for so long. He did write such rubbish, too. It isn't *me* he cares for; it's an ideal he looks at through my eyes. I am wonderfully commonplace. Poor Cecil! he is something of a boy still, but he has grown wonderfully handsome."

"What did you say in answer to his letter, Jo?"

"What did I say? I am not going to tell you all my secrets, miss, even though you are to be a bride to-morrow! So you won't describe your wonderful Dick to me? Well, as you say, I can soon judge for myself; but answer me one thing at least—is he well off?"

"I really don't know, Jocelyn."

"Oh, what an unworldly Virtue! No wonder she retains her bright face! But seriously, Hope dearest, did not two years of poverty make you sick of it?"

"No," said Hope; "I have had a very happy two years."

Jocelyn looked full into her face. The strained expression was once more apparent in her eyes; she looked two or three years older than Hope at this moment.

"And riches can become monotonous," she said, in a dreary, low tone.

Then she linked her arm in Hope's, and they went into the drawing-room.

"The gentlemen are late," said Mrs. Douglas. "Hope dear, how well you look!—not a bit tired or overdone.—Jocelyn—I really must call you Jocelyn for your sister's sake—will you sit by me? Here, on this sofa, my dear."

"I will, if you will tell me all you know about Hope's wonderful Dick," replied Jocelyn Karron lightly.

Hope moved away to the other end of the tiny drawing-room; a very slight sensation of restlessness came over her. It was five minutes past the hour appointed for dinner.

"How late these tiresome men are!" pouted Katie. "We have such oceans to do to-night.—Yes—what is it, Jane?—what do you want?"

Jane was the housemaid, a neat-handed girl, who had taken a fancy to Hope, and Hope to her. To-morrow she was to change mistresses, and go away with Hope on her honeymoon.

"What is it, Jane?" repeated Katie.

"Can I speak to Miss Karron, please, Miss Douglas?—Will you step out for a moment on the landing, please, Miss Karron?"

The girl's face was grave, important, but not in the least alarmed.

"It's a message from that tiresome dressmaker!" said Katie to herself. She was dying to follow, but did not like to.

"What is it Jane?" said Hope, as the two stood on the landing; "is anything the matter?"

"Mr. Grey is in the library, miss. He wants to know if he can speak to you in private for a minute."

"Mr. Grey? But he is coming to dinner with Mr. Markham! What can be the matter, Jane?"

"I don't know, miss. What he said was, 'Ask Miss Hope Karron if I can see her for a moment by herself, and don't let the others know.' Mr. Grey is not in his evening dress, miss."

Hope felt as if a cold hand were laid on her warm beating heart. She did not change colour, however, nor allow the maid to see a trace of uneasiness in her face.

"It's a message from Mr. Markham, of course," she said. "Don't say anything until I know, though, Jane. I'm sure it's only to say that Mr. Markham can't come to dinner. But don't say anything until I give you leave."

She ran down-stairs, opened the library door quickly, came in, and shut it behind her.

"Now, Cecil, if there is bad news, tell it to me quickly!" she panted.

"My dear Hope—my—dear Hope——" said Cecil.

He came up to her, took her hands, wrung them in his own, then put a letter between them.

"There," he said; "I couldn't say it, nor could he. It's in the letter—what's of it, that is—it's bad enough, but not hopeless—no, not quite hopeless."

Hope did not utter a word. She clasped the letter tightly; her lips parted as if she wanted to say something very badly, but Cecil did not wait; he took up his hat and rushed out of the house.

When he was gone Hope went to the door and called Jane.

"Tell them to go to dinner, Jane," she said. "Make them go—invent any excuse you like; I am busy—I can't be disturbed for a little. Come back to me at the end of ten minutes, Jane—I may want you."

Hope shut the door and turned the key. The cold weight still rested against her heart, but it was slightly numb now, and although her intellect never felt keener or brighter, her capacity for extreme suffering was slightly blunted. She opened the letter, and was amazed to find that it was in Cecil's writing:—

"Dear Hope,—Markham can't manage it, so I am doing it for him. He has had a sudden blow; he is ill—yes, that is it, Markham is ill—he can't be married to-morrow, and I've been to the church and put the thing off. I am also writing to Mrs. Douglas; she will get her letter through the post. Don't you bother to tell her. God bless you, Hope. Cecil Grey.

"P.S.—Markham says he may be all right soon. It's a sudden attack—he says he may get quite over it."

Hope clenched her fingers as she read. She read the letter twice, then she slipped it into its envelope and put it back into her pocket. Jane's tap came softly at the other side of the door. Hope sprang to it and opened it.

"Good gracious, Miss Hope! has anything gone wrong? You look—you look—oh, Miss Karron, forgive me, you look dreadful bad."

"I'm tired, Jane," said Hope, forcing a faint smile. "Don't worry about my looks just now. Are the others at dinner?"

"Yes, miss—so surprised and questioning-like: but I didn't let out a thing. Susan's waiting on them, and they're at the fish now—spring salmon—and it was an elegant dinner, Miss Hope, fit, so to speak, for a bridal. You couldn't fancy a small bit of fish if I brought it here, miss?"

"No, I shall be sick if you mention food. Jane, I want you to come out with me; I want you to come at once—before they leave the dining-room: run up-stairs and bring down my hat and cloak. We can walk down the street a little way and get into the first hansom we meet. I want you to be very quick, Jane; and, Jane, I'm in great trouble. Will you be brave and faithful, and willing to do just what I tell you to-night?"

"Yes, miss—oh, indeed, with all my heart, miss."

Jane's honest eyes began to overflow.

"You'll have plenty of time to cry afterwards," said Hope, in her quiet tone. "Fetch me my hat and cloak, and let us go at once."

A moment afterwards the two girls were walking quickly down the street. Ten minutes later Hope was standing on the steps of a large mansion occupied by the Chattertons, who were spending the season in town. She knew that both Markham and Cecil were their guests for the time being.

"No, I don't want to see Mrs. Chatterton," she said to the footman, who knew her and asked her to enter. "Will you please tell Mr. Markham that I am here, and must see him at once?"

"Mr. Markham is in his room, miss; I don't think he is well. The others are at dinner, and—— Oh, here is Mr. Grey."

Cecil came hastily forward; he had not changed his morning dress; his whole appearance was untidy; his face looked thinner and more worn than ever.

"The doctor has just left," he said. "Markham has had a shock. Did you not read my letter, Hope?"

"Yes, I read it, and I have come here. I must see Dick at once."

"Come into this room."

Cecil took her hand and almost pulled her in, slamming the door behind him.

"Don't you know it is very imprudent for you to come here?" he said with irritation. "We are trying our best to hush up the thing and not have a talk, and of course how can it be prevented if you come here looking as you do? How can you see Dick when he is in his room? He's ill. I told you he was ill, in my letter."

"By this time to-morrow," replied Hope, "but for the shock which you talk about, I should have been Dick's wife. Then you could not have kept me away from him. I will see him now—I won't leave the house until I see him. He is not so ill but that he can see me. Go up and tell him that I am here. Ask him to come down and see me. He can be as ill as he likes afterwards. I won't leave the house until I see him."

"You are very unwise, Hope—this may be most injurious. Am not I doing my best for you? It is madness your seeing Dick to-night. Besides, he is ill—ill enough to see a doctor; it is hard of you to want to disturb a man who is very ill."

"Call me any names you like, Cecil. I am not going to leave the house until I see Dick. I am almost his wife, and he is almost my husband. I am not asking too much."

"It's on your own head, then," said Cecil. "I would have saved you the blow."

And he left the room.

(To be concluded.)

REVELATIONS OF CHARACTER.

BY THE REV. W. MANN STATHAM.

II.—CHARACTER AND CONVERSATION.

I HAVE endeavoured to show in my first article how character reveals itself in the countenance, and now we have to study its manifestations in conversation. Speech is the great outlet of our thoughts and feelings; and the great power of personal influence for life and death, the Holy Book says, is in the tongue. The life that is within us cannot long be repressed, and the readiest channel which the inner fountains can find is speech. As the power of conversation belongs in God's creation only to man, as it is his high prerogative, so the measure of this great gift is the measure of our responsibility.

Think of all the daily happiness which comes to us through the medium of speech: how we can interest and instruct, cheer and comfort, guide and warn, by speech. A great writer told me once that he judged of men and women by *the questions that they asked*; so true is it that our tastes, and estimates, and solicitudes do come out through our manifold inquiries.

But it is not alone in the questions they ask that men and women reveal themselves, I think, but in

their less conscious speech. Surely, also, the *kind of language* people use tells us whether they are reverent or irreverent, delicate or indelicate, hasty or patient. It will be readily admitted that slang language is bad, and is in itself a liberty taken with that which ought to have a dignity in itself as the divine method of communication between beings who are made in the image of God. Slang speech reveals a vulgarity of heart which finds a sensational sort of pleasure in degrading certain noble words, and making them serve as a little electric battery of amusement and surprise. If a young lady tells you that a certain performance was "awfully funny," you begin to think that nothing is really very awful to her at all. If it be replied that there are certain slang words which ultimately take their places in our lexicons, I quite admit the fact. They are often deemed pungent, and especially expressive. I venture to suggest, even then, that they are not always appropriate for educated conversation simply because they are to be found in dictionaries.

Language, like dress—and it *is* the garb of thought—ought to be a becoming adornment, not in any sense what is commonly called fast on the one hand, nor *negligée* on the other hand. And as dress is generally admitted to be, in a considerable degree, expressive of character, so is language. And, then, if words in and of themselves are expressive of character, so is the thought expressed in the words. There is, for instance, mere idle conversation, which, if it was ever printed off, would appear supremely ridiculous. And there is that worse than idle—viz., gossiping conversation, which delights to talk of the faults and failings, the weaknesses and wickednesses, of neighbours and friends. When people talk much of these things, you judge, and rightly judge, that they are not likely to be tender, or kind, or considerate people; nay, more, you come to the conclusion that they are conceited people, not only condemning sins to which they are not personally prone, but implying that there is a sort of pleasant moral contrast between themselves and those whom they condemn. I have heard it said that people are generally very severe on sins which they are naturally inclined to themselves; and that intensely selfish people and miserably covetous people are the first to discern and to denounce these faults in others; in fact, that the listener might make a *tu quoque* application of their criticisms as possibly very appropriate to themselves.

How inwardly you admire a man whose speech is free from guile and envy, who praises some competitor, who is generous in his estimate of an absent friend, and who risks the disapproval and disappointment of his companions by venturing to bless one whom they have cursed! We are always giving inward verdicts upon those who satirise and slander others, whose conversational powers seem to run away with them, and who finish their poor little diatribes on some neighbour or friend with the goody-goody praise that he is "not such a bad fellow after all." I am afraid our unspoken verdicts of this sort of people often hinder any real friendship with them or affection for them. We do not necessarily write a man down a good scholar because he finds fault with the accent or pronunciation of another, though probably he intends that we should do so; nay, more, we think of him as a poor, priggish little pedant, who does not mind letting down the honours of another thereby to increase his own reputation.

Once upon a time, it is said, one of this class of critics, having given it as his emphatic judgment that in words of four syllables the accent should always be placed on the second syllable, found himself in a most unpleasant fix. Being engaged in describing some results of a railway accident, he had to say that "one lady was suf-*foc*-a-ted, and the other had her arm dis-*loc*-a-ted." Conversation does sometimes reveal this tendency to depreciate others that so self may be exalted; and could the speaker see into the minds of his auditors, he would experience a magneto-electric shock of surprise at reading something akin to the words, "Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost *thou* steal!"

What contrasts in character we see sometimes in one day, after little groups of visitors have called. Some appreciate everything, see what is to be admired and approved in every little picture, in every trifling household alteration, and in every added touch of grace and beauty in house and garden; making the memory of their visit a quiet little benediction, and helping onward the endeavours of some in rather unpretending homes to make the best of things. But others seem afraid lest their powers of criticism and the individuality of their opinions and judgments should not have free play and be made properly manifest. "Yes, very pretty," they say; "but wasn't the place more comfortable before?" "Yes, nice little sketch enough; but doesn't the sky spoil it, do you think?" "Yes, I fancy it *is* an improvement to the place; but do you think you will ever see your money for it again?" Poor souls! they do not seem to know it, but their conversation is full of "ifs" and "buts!" Having interlarded their entire talk with them, they leave you in an unpleasant mood, unless you have great firmness of judgment as to what is right and good yourself.

I remember a young lady of my acquaintance who was out on horseback, and who met on her way one of this class. She received, as she thought at first, a pretty compliment: "You look nice on horseback, my dear," an old friend said to her; "but, then, *all* ladies look nice on horseback." Thus it is we find strange mysteries in life. There are some people who seem to think it not good for you to be too comfortable in mind, and who evidently believe that a mosquito or two—small ones—can do no harm to anyone, but only help to keep alive your mental activities, and to preserve you from too great contentment and quite unnecessary pleasure.

From all which I learn that character reveals itself in conversation. Thus it is you read off the character of the crotchety, the querulous, the irritable, and the "take-it-out-of-you" kind of people, who think it their mission in life to set you right! people who often treat you as if you had a pachydermatous sort of skin in a mental sense! Exceedingly sensitive, perhaps, in themselves, they never in the least mind hurting you.

All these manifestations of character reveal the qualities of our hearts in conversation. It is amusing to note the surprise with which they hear any counsel given to, or any criticism upon, *themselves*. They cannot understand it. The entire system of things in the universe of talk seems to them moving in the wrong way, and for hours afterwards you gather, by little scraps of conversation, that they felt your impertinence in counselling *them*, and that they did not succeed in breaking the shock on the buffers of their vanity.

On the other hand, there are words that do good like a medicine; not prepared draughts at all—in the sense of any set discourse—but occasional and intermittent speech which softens the asperities of daily life; which calls you off to a thoughtful view of God's mercies; which makes you feel on better terms with every living creature; which tempers justice with mercy, and the blame of a fault with the praise of a virtue; which makes the morning bright with gratitude, the noonday as merrily busy as a mill-wheel with duty, and the evening cheerful and serene. This is the true elixir of social life; and God endowed us with speech that we might be ministers of grace, and kindness, and goodness to each other in a world where there is so much of weariness, anxiety, and woe. We must indeed "*keep our hearts with all diligence*" before we can "*order our conversation aright*."

What we *are* precedes what we *say*. When the spring of repression is removed, as every child knows, the "jack-in-the-box" comes out; and it is beyond our skill to keep an ever-watchful hand on any spring. Would it not be well sometimes to recall at eventide the sayings of the day, and to think, "That is *I*. Let me study the likeness and see if I like myself"? Selfishness, of course, reveals itself in conversation in a remarkable way: think of the long time people will talk about *themselves*, their accidents, their projects, their ailments, their families, and their belongings; and then think of others, whose great aim has been to interest *you*; to take you out of your sadness of heart; to create a kindly atmosphere of thought for you to breathe in; and whose words have eloquently told of their endeavour to cheer and comfort you. I am not pleading in this paper for a minute sort of microscopic examination of our own or of other people's conversation; this would inevitably destroy all naturalness, ease, and happiness: nor do I wish to destroy the enthusiasm which sometimes overdoes praise, any more than I would crush the instinct which leads to faithful criticism; but with regard to the latter be it remembered that it is not enough simply to speak *the truth*—we are enjoined on sacred authority to *speak the truth in love*.

Character is, after all, the highest of our endowments in the sight of God; it is greater than skill, or invention, or genius, for these are merely mental bestowments; and in His sight our varieties of intellectual gifts are but different lengths of little blades of grass lying at His feet; but moral and spiritual elements enter into character—and it is in these that we find our greatest glory and honour, for through them we wear within our hearts the very image of God.

There can be little doubt that conversation is, in one sense, an art, and as such, essays have been written upon it; but my aim has been to treat of it as the natural expression of our ordinary thoughts and feelings. I am quite aware that the word conversation itself has now a sense restricted to speech; and that in New Testament times, "Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ," meant this, "Let your course of life" be so; or as some prefer to translate it, "Act the citizen as becometh the Gospel of Christ." In modern days, however, conversation means what we call "talk," and as such it is an ever-flowing stream, having its fontal springs in the thoughts of the heart. We may learn much, I think, from a consciousness of the irrepressibility of our real selves, and learn to avoid those dangerous sallies of sarcastic humour which imperil our friendships. An old divine has said, "Some people prefer to lose their friend rather than their joke;" surely a most dangerous conceit of cleverness this, to prefer the amused applause of the multitude to the respect and honour of a friend. Well may we pray God "to set a watch upon the door of our lips," for the escaped bird cannot be recalled. The spoken word is our property no more: "Of thine unspoken word thou art master, thy spoken word is master of thee."

It seems to me unworthy of great natures to prefer a kind of don't-care-ism as to what people think of their characters. The impression left by one hour's conversation often lasts for years—it sometimes strengthens virtue, and weakens the attractions of vice, it often keeps alive sacred reverences for the sanctities of the hearth and home; it often inspires endeavours after a nobler life; and it often directs the helm of the vessel of another's life, which, imperilled by sand-banks of scepticism, maëlstroms of folly, and under-currents of temptation, feels the hand of a pilot friend guiding it safely into the heavenly course. Above all other considerations connected with conversation, there is the great one of pleasing our Blessed Lord and Saviour Himself; and the prayer of Holy Scripture, beautifully linking together, as it does, the heart and the lips, is a most appropriate one for us all: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be alway acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."

XUM

THE ELDER SUNDAY SCHOLARS.



SOME ELDER SCHOLARS.

WE have been told in the "Ingoldsby Legends" how the world is divided by the best geographers into Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Romney Marsh; and doubtless, even since the days of the Rev. R. H. Barham, there have been not a few who have believed the Marsh to be by far the most important of these divisions. Europe and Asia, Africa and America have been but names to them; Romney Marsh has been a reality of rich pastures on which grazed the sheep that bore their own ear-mark. The Marsh graziers were ready to admit the possible existence of lands and waters beyond their ken, but, for their own part, were content to confine their thought to the limits of their vision as they looked around to the horizon that bounded the wide stretch of green on which they raised their wool and their mutton.

But even their world, narrow as it was, was larger than that of some others. It is currently reported that in a village lying snug and somnolent in one of the many hollows in the North Downs near to where they break off abruptly in the white cliffs of Dover, there lived not long ago a man who had reached old age without ever having stirred from his native place, or seen beyond the crown of the rolling slopes that encompassed it. One day he was brought to the face of these downs where they breast the south-west wind that sweeps up the Channel. He stood in wonder and amazement as his eye travelled over the open country lying before him, and at the sea stretching beyond. "Lor! I never knowed the world wor half so big!" was the exclamation that broke meditatively and solemnly from his lips, when he had sufficiently recovered his senses to find utterance.

This type has passed, or is fast passing away. We have found how large the world is—and how small. Railways, steamships, and telegraphs have destroyed distance. All parts are within touch of each other,



MIND AND MATTER.

and the antipodes are nearer to us than the next county to that they lived in was to our fathers. Intercourse between the east and the west, between the north and the south, is a matter of every-day occurrence. Yet, notwithstanding all this, provincial and local customs survive and distinguish—even within the bounds of our own small island—one part from another. The northern resident goes south, and the southern goes north. Each has a chance of seeing, understanding, and adopting all that is best in the different manners and customs which he meets with away from home, and of explaining and introducing all that is best in the methods he has been accustomed to, and now misses. Some such interchange of ideas and practice is doubtless taking place, but slowly. The distinctions remain. The ignorance may be gone; we know that the world is larger than our own native village. But, if each has learned *of* all, each has not learned *from* all. The best customs of every locality have not yet become the common heritage of the whole. Possibly, notwithstanding constant intercourse and intermarriage, blood and tribal distinctions—to say nothing of geographical and industrial—are still, and will long continue to be, sufficient to render such a result impossible. What is best for one is not necessarily best for another. We shall plainly see more than we may borrow profitably. But we may see, even then, with appreciative eyes and interested minds.

These thoughts and facts have been suggested to one accustomed to the life of the home counties on becoming a resident in Lancashire. In many parts of the south he has been familiar with the question—constantly asked, seldom answered—"How shall we keep our elder scholars in our Sunday-schools?" It is a serious question, to which an answer is sadly needed. And it should be a matter of no little interest to those who ask it to know that, at least in some parts of the north of England, no such question can arise. The elder scholars are kept. Children enter the Sunday-school through the Infant Class; pass their childhood in association with the school; pass through the "awkward age," and are still scholars; become young men and women, fall in love, get married, and yet come to the Sunday-school classes. And if, later on, in the case of the wives, home cares and duties preclude anything like regularity of attendance, the husbands—now fathers perhaps of half a dozen children—continue their regular attendance, and join Sunday after Sunday in the class-study of the Word of God. In some cases a system of joint service is in vogue, two sets of teachers taking the classes alternately; and in these cases those off duty do not find it derogatory to their dignity as teachers to sit in the classes as scholars. This is clearly as it should be. Religious knowledge is not a matter of years. Insight into the mysteries of God's Kingdom is not to be acquired like the subjects of a Board-school curriculum. Spiritual power is not to be marked off into "Standards," is not a subject for examination and subsequent oblivion like the area of countries and the length of rivers. Never has a man more need to study and remember the Word of God than when family cares are coming on him; never has he more ability to feel the force of the application of that Word than when life's burdens begin to press, and when the interests of others depend on the ordering of his steps. The class, therefore, where men listen to a teacher's explanation of the words of the Master, to his illustration of those words in the Master's own life, to his application of the Divine law and of the Gospel principles to a man's every-day calling, and to his appeals founded on personal experience, may well include as great a diversity in age as do the pews where a congregation listens to similar exposition and entreaty from the preacher's pulpit or platform.

At the same time, it need not be supposed that the ideal has been reached in these northern schools because the problem of keeping the lads and lassies in the classes, even after they had ceased to be mere lads and lassies, has been practically solved. The writer of this is too recently acquainted with these schools to do more than state the facts; judgment or explanation would be premature. But as far as he can see, neither the character of the scholars nor the standard of the teaching possesses sufficient superiority over that in the south to explain the difference. And if in the south there be the regretful confession, "We lose our scholars between the school and the church," there may possibly be found a corresponding lament in the north. For out of the Sunday-school vigour comes a special temptation. That the school should fail to be "a nursery of the church" may happen under one set of conditions as well as under another. The very success of the school, and the persistent loyalty of its scholars after they have become mature men and women, tend to create an organisation outside, and independent, of the church—it may even be, overshadowing it, so that those who sympathise with and help to support both, become more accustomed to the phrase, "School and Church," than to "Church and School," and the phrase—common enough in the south—"He attends such and such a church," finds a substitute in, "He attends such and such a school."

Clearly, however, this is but one of the drawbacks of that which is good, the possibility of which ought to render no one blind to the hopefulness of the work wrought under such favourable conditions.

A. J. B.

A WHOLESOME LESSON.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. BY ANNIE S. SWAN, AUTHOR OF "AN AMICABLE ARRANGEMENT," ETC. ETC.



CHAPTER I.

JOHN PRESCOTT rang the bell impatiently. It was a quarter past eight, and his breakfast not on the table. Perhaps because it was such an unusual occurrence he felt unusually irritated.

"It's that Patty, Mr. Prescott," said Mrs. Binks, bustling into the room with the coffee-pot in her hand. "She's never come in with the rolls; she's been gone a good twenty-five minutes. If I don't give it her when she comes in!"

"Never mind the rolls, Mrs. Binks; let me have the bacon, please. Has the paper come?"

"No, sir. Patty brings it too, you know, when she goes for the rolls," said Mrs. Binks apologetically; and moving up to the head of the table, she managed to get a peep out of the window. "There she is now, runnin' fit to break her neck. But, I say, what a lot o' people in the street! What can be up?"

Mr. Prescott sat down at the table and put the sugar in his cup. He felt cross and out of sorts—a circumstance so unusual with him that his landlady gave him rather a concerned glance as she retired to swoop down upon the offending Patty. In about two seconds she was back, with the rolls in her hand.

"Sir, an awful thing's happened, if it's true what Patty says. The bank's broke!"

"Nonsense!"

"That's what all the people are doin' standin' about. Dear, dear! it'll bring a heap o' trouble on many a one in Wimberley."

Mr. Prescott was very much astonished; but not wishing to encourage the voluble Mrs. Binks, he merely remarked that if it were true it would be a bad business, and opened out his paper. Mrs. Binks felt herself dismissed, and retired to put Patty through her catechism. Her lodger did not waste much time over his breakfast that morning, and before nine o'clock was striding down the village street.

Not many yards from Mrs. Binks's door he met Mr. Britton, the surgeon, on his cob.

"Good morning, Prescott. Heard the news? Bad look-out for Wimberley this morning!"

"Is it true?" John Prescott asked, looking incredulously into the surgeon's round, good-natured face.

"True as Gospel. I wish it wasn't; I'll be three hundred pounds the poorer for it, and that Braithewaite so much the richer. He's off, the scoundrel!—off by the mail on Saturday, at two o'clock, and not a soul the wiser,"

"I can't believe it," said John Prescott. "Is Braithewaite the defaulter?"

"Why, yes. I'm not surprised, either—nobody is, when they think of the extravagance that's been going on up yonder," replied the surgeon, pointing to an imposing red-brick mansion on the face of a little hill overlooking the town. "I'm going there now; Madame has sent for me. Do you think I'll get credit for my magnanimity in obeying the summons? I'm keeping myself under, and no mistake, this morning! I feel as mad as can be."

"Is Madame ill?"

"I suppose so—prostrated by the shock. She wrote me herself, poor thing! and said she knew nothing of it, and that he left home without saying where he was going. He'll be in Spain by this time, laughing at us for a lot of simpletons. That comes of passing over the folks we know, and giving positions of trust to strangers."

"It's abominable! If it's true, it'll bring a lot of distress to the folks in Wimberley."

"True? I wish it wasn't. But I'll tell you who it is I'm sorry for above the most: poor Mrs. Furnival. She trusted Braithewaite with everything, and I believe that she won't have a penny left—not a penny."

"It won't affect them much, I should think, if Miss Furnival's marriage is to take place in the summer."

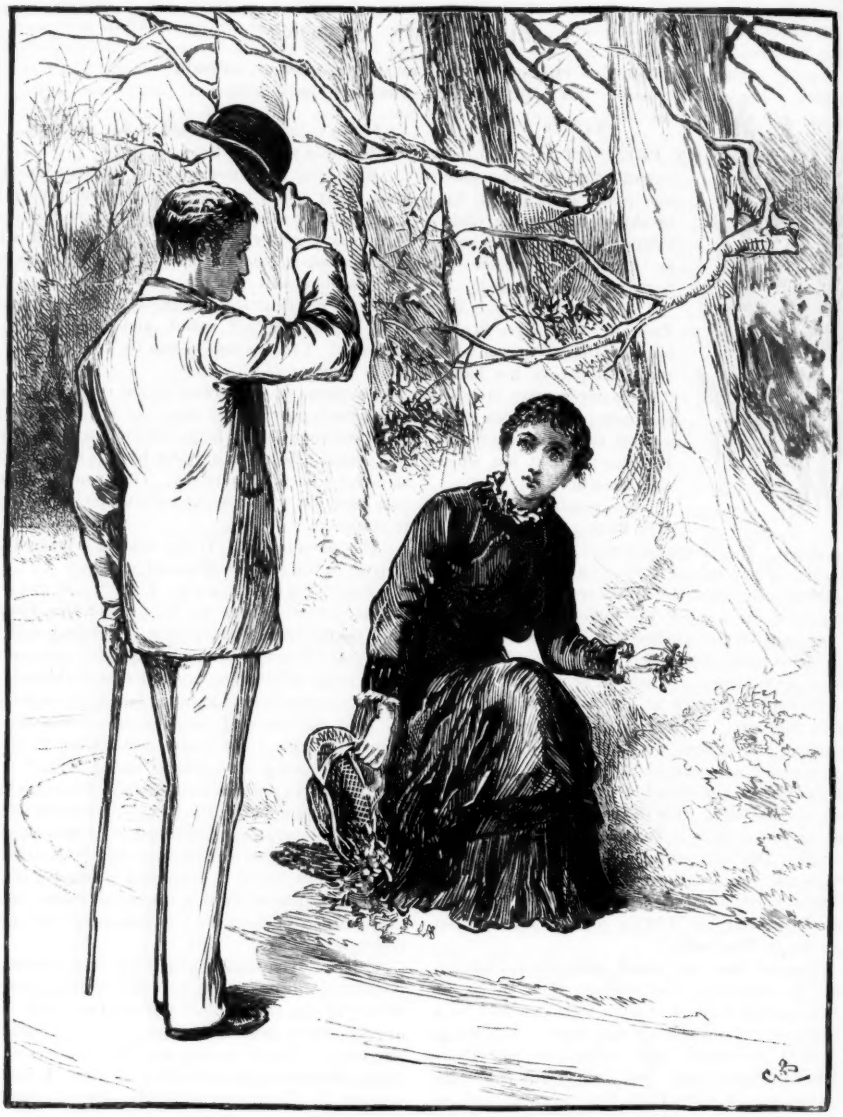
"*If* it is!" nodded the surgeon significantly. "I have my doubts. The squire was willing to swallow the pill because it was gilded; but we'll see."

A curious expression crossed John Prescott's face—an expression noted by the shrewd eyes of the surgeon. He was not surprised. He had long known of the solicitor's hopeless love for the beautiful Miss Furnival, and in his own mind had marvelled that she could have passed by this grave, handsome, honourable gentleman for a rival so inferior as the squire's empty-headed son.

"I'll tell you what: sometimes these reverses are blessings in disguise. My wife will have to forego her winter at the Riviera, and I'll need to walk instead of ride when Dobbin goes to grass!" laughed the surgeon. "But if we can content ourselves without these things, we've learned a lesson. I shouldn't wonder if Miss Lucy Furnival learned something worth keeping, out of it all. Well, well, we'll see."

So saying, with a nod and a smile, cheery as usual, the surgeon rode away.

John Prescott walked slowly down the street, with his hat over his brows, and entered his office without speaking a word with any. From his window he could see the closed doors of the bank, with the group of disconsolate folk gathered on the pavement discussing the calamity which one man's ill-doing had brought upon them all. The solicitor sat down to his letters, but his attention was distracted. The surgeon had given him food for reflection, and he found it difficult to tear his thoughts from one subject. But



"'Have you a button-hole for me to-day?'"—*p.* 587.

shortly people began to flock in, eager to ask his advice, and to hear what he had to say about the treachery of the banker, Abel Braithewaite, who up till Saturday had been the uncrowned king of Wimberley —whose word was law. But John Prescott had very little to say; he was a man of few words at all times, and he did not audibly join in the general condemnation of the runaway agent. He had a busy morning, but at lunch-time he left the office, and said he would not be back till four o'clock.

Wimberley was a quaint, quiet little town, clustered on the right bank of a sleepy river, while on the left the ground rose in a hilly slope, and was dotted here and there with fine houses, the residences of the richer section of Wimberley society. Across one of the picturesque foot-bridges and up the hill John Prescott took his way that summer afternoon, and after sundry wanderings through leafy lanes, entered a large and pleasant garden surrounding a pretty, rambling house, built after the fashion of an Indian bungalow. From

the wide terrace there was a fine view of the river and the town in the distance; altogether, it was a charming and winsome abode—one of the most desirable on the hill.

John Prescott looked about the trim, well-kept garden as he walked towards the house, wondering in his mind whether the calamity of the morning would end in the inmates of the Bungalow having to leave their pretty home. In answer to his ring and his question for Mrs. Furnival, the maid ushered him into the drawing-room which was so familiar to him, and which he thought one of the most beautiful rooms he had ever seen. He was not surprised that afternoon to find it empty. "I'll see, sir, if Mrs. Furnival can see you, but she has not been out of her room since morning," she said, as she turned to leave him.

"Is Miss Furnival at home?"

"Yes, sir; I think she is in the garden somewhere. She went out in the boat after lunch, but I saw her come back."

Before many minutes, the door of the drawing-room opened quietly, and a lady entered—a widow with a slight figure and a refined, delicate-looking face. She was paler that day than John Prescott had ever before seen her, but appeared to be quite self-possessed.

"Dear Mrs. Furnival, forgive me if I intrude," he said, in his earnest, manly way. "I came off in the impulse of the moment."

"I am glad you did. I should not have come down to anyone to-day, John, but you," she said, with a faint smile, as she returned his warm clasp and took the chair he placed for her. His face flushed slightly; it was the first time she had called him by his Christian name.

"This is a sad business for Lucy and me," she said quietly, before he had time to speak. "It will take us a little time to realise it: it has come upon us so suddenly."

"It is of that I came to speak, Mrs. Furnival," John answered at once. "Surely it cannot be possible, as Mr. Britton told me this morning, that you are seriously involved with Braithewaite?"

"Seriously indeed!" re-echoed the widow, with her slight smile. "We are ruined—positively ruined. I trusted that man to the uttermost. He has been investing money for me since ever he came to Wimberley."

John Prescott looked profoundly surprised.

"It was scarcely like your usual prudence to trust such a stranger as Mr. Braithewaite."

"No; it was in a measure Lucy's doing—Lucy's and Madame's together. She has not been a good companion for my daughter, John. It is she who has put all the foolish ideas into her head."

"I confess I have regretted to see such a close intimacy between Miss Furnival and Mrs. Braithewaite," John admitted slowly; "but it will be broken now. How has Miss Furnival accepted the news of the disaster?"

"It does not appear to be vexing her. I hope—I hope she has not built her house on a frail foundation. It was at Madame's she first met Philip Saye, and there the whole mischief was done. Yes, I call it a mischief, because I had other views for her."

The lawyer did not ask what these views were. Perhaps he guessed.

"I am going to speak out quite plainly to you, John, because you are a true friend, as your father was to me and mine. I do not believe Philip Saye will fulfil his promise of marriage to Lucy now."

"He must, Mrs. Furnival. The young fellow has his faults, but surely he is a man of honour."

"I doubt it. I am positive that it was the belief that Lucy would be well dowered that won the squire's consent to his son's engagement."

"It's impossible that you should be right, Mrs. Furnival," exclaimed John Prescott fervently, out of the unselfishness of his heart. "That would be the hardest of all."

"At first it would, but I am perfectly sincere when I say I should not greatly regret it. I have never entirely approved of it, and the attentions of the squire's family have been too condescending to be agreeable. I am amazed that Lucy has not resented it."

"I hope, I hope, for both your sakes, that the Sayes will prove themselves friends at this trying time," said John sincerely. "Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Furnival?"

"Not to-day. Soon, perhaps, when things begin to arrange themselves, I shall be asking you for advice. You will help me to dispose of the Bungalow—that is, if it is not already sacrificed."

Her lips trembled as she looked round the familiar room, and John Prescott rose hastily to his feet.

"Dear Mrs. Furnival, I hope it will not be necessary for you to leave the town in which you have lived so long. Rest assured that everything I can do will be done most gladly."

"I can—I do trust you with all my heart, John," she said, with emotion. "Ah! there is Lucy. She has watched all day long for Philip; I think he might have come, unless he is away from home."

"He is not. I saw him ride past my office windows about eleven o'clock this forenoon," John said sternly. "Well, good-bye, Mrs. Furnival; God bless you. I shall see Miss Lucy as I go out."

As Mrs. Furnival watched the fine manly figure step across the lawn to the flower-bed where Lucy was listlessly picking some dead leaves from a favourite plant, a quick impatient sigh passed her lips.

To see John Prescott and Lucy husband and wife had once been the dream of her life. Her daughter's womanhood had disappointed her; she had not fulfilled the promise of her childhood, except in physical beauty, which was of a very rare and winning kind. Lucy gave a quick start, and her lovely colour rose when she heard the heavy feet on the gravel; but her face grew listless again when she saw that it was only John Prescott. He read that expression as easily and correctly as if it had been a printed page, and his heart bled for her.

"Good afternoon, Miss Furnival," he said, pausing in the path before her, and raising his hat. "I have been spending half an hour with your mother. Have you a button-hole for me to-day?"

He smiled as he proffered the request. Not so long ago they had been John and Lucy to each other—before the new lover had parted them.

"Don't be absurd, John," she exclaimed, her colour rising again. "You can have the whole gardenful of button-holes if you like. Isn't this an awful thing which has happened to poor mamma?"

Her manner had all the old-time freedom, but it pained him to hear her speak as if the calamity could not possibly affect her. In his own mind he greatly feared that Mrs. Furnival was correct in her estimate of the relations which existed between Aston Hall and the Bungalow.

"I trust it may not be so bad as it looks just now, Miss Lucy," he said cheerfully. "Your mother is wonderfully composed."

"Oh yes, I daresay she knows it won't make a great deal of difference," she said carelessly. "But what a wretch Mr. Braithewaite must be! Do you know, I never liked him much, and I was always sorry for poor Madame. What will become of her now?"

"I don't know. Everyone is sorry for her. In spite of her faults, she is a likeable person. Will you go and see her, Lucy?"

"I? Oh no: at least, I must see what the squire says. Of course it would not do to go and see a person whose husband has acted so wickedly. One has to draw the line somewhere."

John Prescott looked graver than his wont. Although it was the world's opinion, he did not like to hear it fall from Lucy Furnival's lips. A year ago she would not so have spoken.

She intuitively felt that her old friend disapproved of something in her rather heartless speech.

"Of course you are so dreadfully good, John Prescott: you would think it quite proper for me to go and see Madame, even if her husband were in gaol. Of course I am very sorry for her, but there is a great deal to be considered besides one's own feelings."

"Yes, you are quite right. Why on earth has Mr. Philip Saye not been here to-day? I'm your brother now, you know, and I have a right to ask the question. Has he sent you any message?"

"No; why should he?" Lucy's flaming cheeks warned John that he had injudiciously presumed. "You have no right to ask me anything about Mr. Saye, John Prescott; and you are not my brother at all. They don't approve at Aston Hall of your presuming so much on an old friendship. Philip has complained of it several times, and I do think he is right."

"Very well, Lucy," replied John Prescott quietly, as he turned to go. "I shall take care in future how I offend you and Mr. Philip Saye."

CHAPTER II.

IN the gloomy sitting-room of a small house in the vicinity of Bedford Square sat the beautiful Miss Furnival, towards the close of a dark winter day.

The table was littered with gay sewing silks and other paraphernalia indispensable to "fancy work," but it was very real work to Lucy Furnival as she plied her tired fingers over the gay piece of satin in her hand: it was daily bread for her mother and herself. She sat very near to the window in the fading light, with her golden head bent low over her work, and an expression of anxious care on her face.

A lovely face it was still, although the bloom had left it, for there had come in its place a sweet seriousness, a grave tenderness, ten thousand times more beautiful than the old coquettish smiles, because they revealed something of a woman's tender heart awakened to all the responsibility of life.

"Lucy!"

A weak, weary voice came from the inner room, and Lucy sprang up with evident relief; for the last stitch had been put in, and the work in her hand was now a finished and perfect thing.

"Coming, motherie; it is done, and well done too; is it not, now?"

She went into the other room, holding the dainty morsel in her hands, and the invalid on the old couch before the fire smiled upon her with a loving pride.

"My darling, it is exquisite; it is a work of art. I do not think that they pay you fairly for your work."

"No, they don't; but we can't afford in the meantime to quarrel with our bread and butter," Lucy answered soberly. "Now I am going to give you a cosy cup of tea, and leave you to your reflections while I take my work to Bond Street. And if they are less stingy with me than usual, I'll treat you to some fruit and a new magazine. Won't that be fine?"

"You mustn't go to any extravagance for me, my Lucy," said the mother fondly, as her hand touched the bright head bent over her. "See if they have anything easy I could do this time, dear; I am much better. I should be easier in my mind if I were helping you again."

"Yes, but I shouldn't; and I'm the chief person to be considered, as I heard of a bridegroom saying on his marriage-day," said Lucy, with a touch of her old gaiety. "Don't look so doleful, mamma dear. If I regret the Bungalow, it is only for its dear old mistress."

"My child, I am amazed at God's dealings with us. What appeared so black and hopeless has been most precious in its uses. The new daughter I have found is far dearer than the old, though she was very dear. Before I was laid aside I believe I was contented enough even to look back upon the Bungalow without regret."

"I have a dream, motherie," said the girl quietly, but with a dawning smile on her lips—"a dream I shall not tell even to you. But I have a great ambition—an ambition which would astonish even you; and perhaps I may reach it some day."

"God grant you may, my darling, if it is a worthy one, and will make you happier or reward you for your unselfish devotion to me," said the mother in faltering tones.

"Mother, look at me quite straight till I tell you something," said Lucy, dropping on one knee beside her mother's couch. "I want to tell you that I am quite cured and heart-whole; there is not even one tiny little bit of heartache left for Philip Saye.

There is only a little touch of wounded self-respect, and perhaps my great ambition may have something to do with that."

"You have made me happier, dear, than I have been for many a long day," was the mother's answer.

"And, mother, I can truly say I am not sorry, except for your dear sake, that we have got away from it all. I was a selfish, wilful girl, and I believe God sent it to me as a lesson; only it is hard that you, who have always been so good, should have to suffer too."

"Hush, my Lucy; hush! As long as I have you, I cannot suffer very much."

"Now," cried Lucy, springing up, "we'll have tea, and then I'll run up-stairs for Madame to come and sit with you. Poor dear Madame! I am so sorry for her. After her gowns from Paris and her smart jackets, it is hard to come down to teaching French in a school. Isn't it terrible, mother, to think she has never even heard of Mr. Braithewaite? But she is very cool over it."

"It was not a marriage of affection, and I believe myself that Madame is happier here than she was at Wimberley. She, too, is a better woman. I love you for your tender consideration towards her, Lucy."

"That costs nothing, and we have a bond between us in our opinion of our friends at Aston Hall, mother," said Lucy, with a light laugh.

Mrs. Furnival had never seen her daughter so bright since they had left the old life behind, and she thanked God for it in her heart.

"I think, Lucy, there is one thing I regret: we have not acted fairly to John Prescott," she said suddenly. "He earned the right to know something about our circumstances."

"Mother, we can't agree about John Prescott, and I don't think we ever shall. He thought so meanly of me at one time, and told me so with such unblushing candour, that I mean to punish him," said Lucy, with a heightened colour. "And I believe if he had been very anxious he could have found us out."

Mrs. Furnival sighed. John Prescott was indeed a vexed subject on which they could never hope to agree. She mourned in secret over Lucy's lack of appreciation of that fine character—not discerning that underneath that somewhat bitter indifference lay a sore, sore feeling of disappointment that John Prescott had not found them out long ago.

The lively little Frenchwoman who for the brief period of her married life had led the fashion in Wimberley had indeed accommodated herself with all the grace of her nationality to her changed circumstances, and was perfectly happy in the "two-pair back" in Eardley Place. She had made quite a little circle of friends in the neighbourhood, and when Lucy ran up to her room that evening she found she had gone out to drink tea with a neighbour. Mrs. Furnival, however, insisted on being left alone, and Lucy set out upon her errand to Bond Street, delightfully conscious of a buoyancy of spirits to which she had long been a stranger. They had had a hard struggle at first, as those who are unknown and unfriended in a great city must have; but Lucy's perseverance and artistic skill had won recognition at last, and she was constantly employed at one of the most exclusive and expensive of the art-needlework stores.

They lived very quietly and plainly in their lodgings, seeing no one but Madame and a young music-teacher who boarded in the house; therefore it was somewhat of a surprise to Mrs. Furnival to be disturbed, about an hour after Lucy left that night, by the announcement that a gentleman wished to see her.

"Ask his name, Phœbe, and tell him I am not able to leave my sofa," she said to the little maid; then she raised herself on her elbow, and listened with strained ears for the result. She knew the footstep which presently came striding through the outer room, and next moment her hands were in John Prescott's firm, fervent grasp, and his true eyes, with something of reproach in their depths, were looking into hers.

"At last, dear Mrs. Furnival! Was it fair to me that my search should have been hopeless so long?"

"Scold as you like, John. I don't mind—I am so very glad to see you," she said tremulously. "Your very footfall has music in it. My dear boy, I *am* glad to see you!"

"Oh yes; but *why* have I been kept in the dark so long?" he asked restlessly. "What had I done that I should be considered so unworthy of confidence? Why, if I had not happened to see Madame the other day at Paddington station, I might never have found you."

"Sit down, John, and I'll tell you all about it," she said, smiling through her tears.

He looked with compassion on her worn face, and then round the poor little room.

"Don't pity us too much; we are very well off, and I am fast recovering from an illness—the first I have had since we came to London," she said quickly. "And Lucy—Lucy is a heroine, John."

"So Madame told me. Where is she?"

"Gone out with the work she has been busy with all day."

"What kind of work?"

"Art-needlework. Lucy is making quite a little fortune by it, her taste is so exquisite."

"And has she to carry this work, wherever it is, to and fro?" John Prescott asked; and his voice sounded very stern.

"Yes; but don't look so grieved. She rather enjoys her independence. We have a great many blessings, John, and we were telling each other only this very night that we did not in the least regret the old life. Tell me about the Bungalow. Who lives in the dear old place? We heard that a client of yours had bought it."

"Yes; but he doesn't care to live in it, in the meantime."

"Why? He must be very difficult to please if he has any fault to find with it," said the widow; and it went to John's honest heart to see the look in her eyes.

"He hasn't got any womenfolk, in the meantime, and I suppose he thinks he would be dull in it."

"Well, he would, of course. The Bungalow was built for a family house. But can't he marry?"

"Yes. He intends to do so soon," John replied briefly. "But you have not told me yet why you

took French leave of Wimberley and of me as you did."

"It was Lucy's doing, John," answered Mrs. Furnival, with a smile, the brightest which had touched her lips for long. It was like the strong shining of the sun to see before her once more the man who had always been to her like a son.

"Well, am I to wait till Lucy comes home for further explanation?" he asked, as he sat down beside her. "Do you think, now, that it was fair to your boy to steal away from the place when business called him out of it, and then to live here like this, when you knew that that boy was a rich man, and would have thought his money honoured by your use of it?"

Mrs. Furnival's eyes filled.

"I knew all that, but I had my daughter to consider, John; and she needed tender consideration just at that time. We have not regretted it, but I promise you I should not have suffered myself or allowed her to suffer too hardly. I knew where you were to be found."

"Humph!"

It was not a common exclamation with John Prescott, but he was difficult to appease.

"Is she fretting after that mean scoundrel Saye yet?"

"No; the cure, if sharp, has been very effectual. She is heart-whole, John; she told me so herself."

"Just as well, seeing I'm going to marry her so soon," said John bluntly. "Do you think it could be done the day after to-morrow?"

"Oh! John Prescott, you headstrong boy! you don't know anything about Lucy. She may not even speak to you when she comes in. You were rather hard on her, you know."

"Not half so hard on her as she was on me; and don't you suppose I want some recompense for all this?"

He waved his arm rather vaguely round the room, and Mrs. Furnival understood him.

"Lucy has had her own way too long, Mrs. Furnival—that's a fact: and it's going to be *my* way now," said John, with an assurance he was far from feeling.

They were still talking of the past and all its memories, when Lucy's voice disturbed them. John sprang up, stepped hastily into the outer room, and shut the door between. Mrs. Furnival hid her face in her pillows and prayed.

"Mother, I'm perfectly rich!" the sweet voice rang out, and then came to a sudden stop at sight of the tall figure, which seemed to fill up the little sitting-room, and make it appear narrower and meaner to Lucy than it had ever appeared before.

There was a moment's silence, a moment's irresolution on the part of honest John, during which he kept his eyes fixed on the sweet face of the only woman he had ever loved. Then Lucy spoke.

"So you have found us out, John Prescott!" she said saucily; but there was the loveliest light in her eyes, and the colour flushed in her pale cheek like the blush of the sea-shell.

"Yes; and a pretty dance you have led me, my lady! But it will be the last, I promise you," he said quite quietly; and when she held out her hand to him, he calmly put it aside, and laid both his on her shoulders. "Lucy, what was the use of running away?" he asked, with a kind of passionate tenderness. "Don't you remember how faithfully the rose-leaves at the Bungalow told us every year that we *had* to marry each other, my own wife?"

And Lucy was so surprised that she forgot all the sarcastic speeches she had privately made up to pour forth on him at the earliest opportunity, and, without any ado whatever, laid her head down on his breast, saying only once, "Oh, John!" in a breathless kind of way; but it appeared to convey a great deal to the mind of honest John.

And so he won his wife.

* * * * * *

"Well, now that the owner of the Bungalow has got some womenkind," he said, in that queer quiet way of his, when he got up reluctantly, quite late, to take his leave, "I suppose he may set his house in order. I don't think you'll find anything out of its place. I'm a very methodical sort of person, so I told Anne she might fill the glasses with Christmas-roses for you: there's a perfect wealth of them. We'll do it, Lucy, on Friday morning, then; and mother can go down to the Bungalow in the afternoon, and be ready against Christmas Day, when we shall be back. Are you surprised? Well, you know, I made up my mind long ago that I liked the Bungalow better than any other house in Wimberley. It was the only point on which Lucy and I agreed; wasn't it, Lucy? Well, well, good-night, mother. Yes, Lucy is going to the door with me; she promised, and she has a new character to uphold."

But all his pleasant banter died away the moment they were alone, and he took her to his passionate heart and blessed God for His good gift, which had come to him at last.
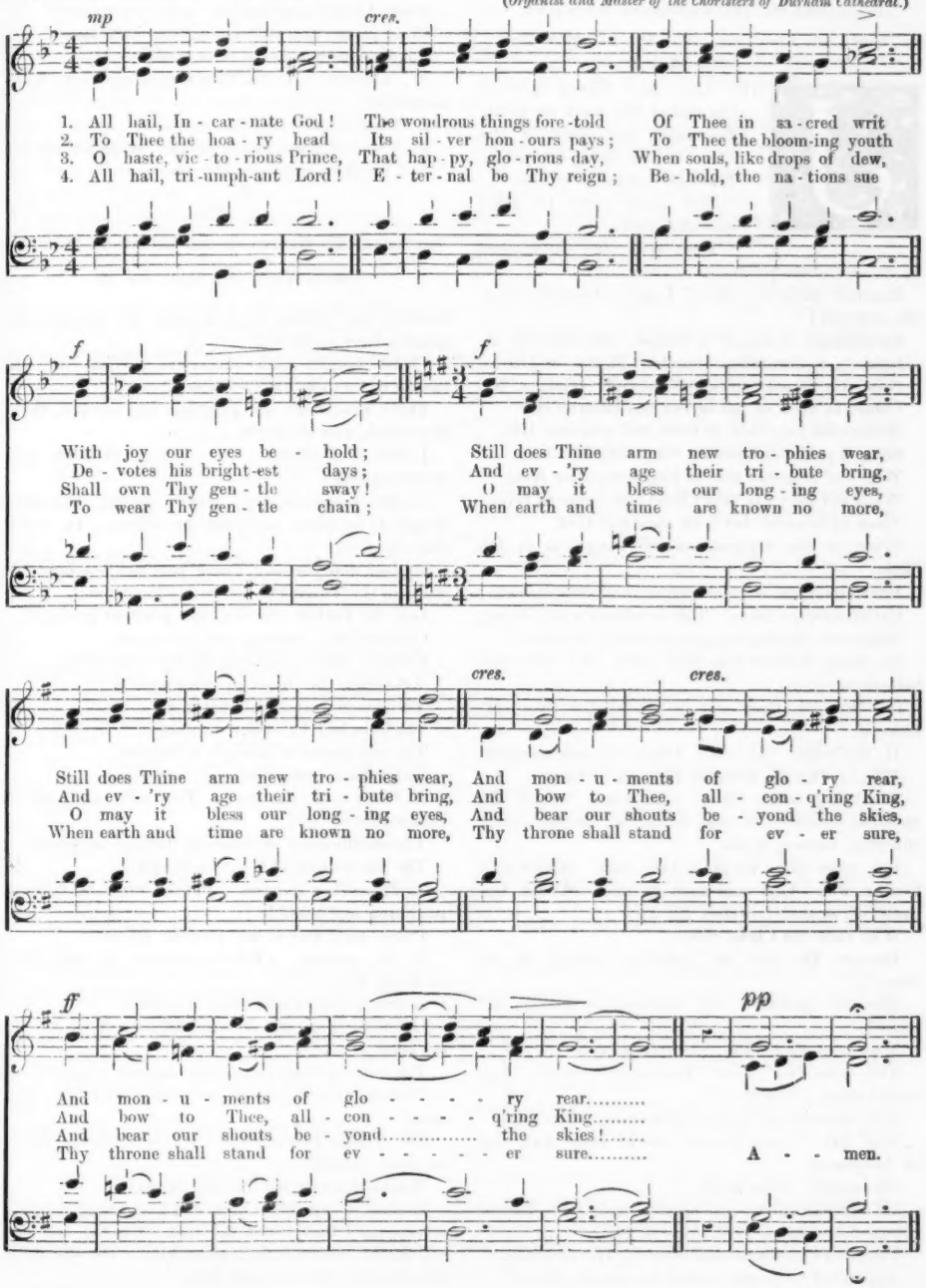
That brief sharp discipline was not lost on Lucy Furnival; it had its rich uses, which bore fruit in the happy after-life these tried hearts shared together.



All Hail, Incarnate God!

Words by Elizabeth Scott, 1764.

Music by Philip Armes, Mus.D., Oxon.
(*Organist and Master of the Choristers of Durham Cathedral.*)



SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

September 21. Jesus entering Jerusalem.

To read—St. Luke xix. 37—48. *Golden Text—verse* 38.

I. JOY. (37—40.) Christ now at the end of His work on earth. Beginning last week of His life. Comes near Jerusalem. Trace the course of events.

Had given sight to blind man at Jericho.

Been seen and entertained by Zacchæus the publican.

Reached Bethany—raised Lazarus from the dead. (St. John xi.)

Entertained at supper by Simon. (St. John xii. 2.)

Starts for Jerusalem—reaches Mount of Olives.

Sends for an ass—to ride in triumph. (Judg. v. 10.)

Comes in view of the sacred and beloved city.

Multitudes come out to meet and welcome Him.

Song of praise ascends for what they had seen.

Words of welcome also to long-looked-for King.

What did they say that Christ was come to bring?

Peace in heaven—between man and God.

Glory in the highest, angels' songs, as at His birth.

Pharisees alone silent—envious and complaining.

Christ rebukes them. This is indeed a day of joy.

What was all this designed to teach the Jews?

(*a*) Their Saviour was with them—did they only believe it.

(*b*) This was their day of grace—did they only know it.

II. Sadness. (41—44.) Christ the only mourner.

Why? Did He weep for Himself or them?

What lay before Him? Desertion by all the apostles, treachery of one, denial by another—pain, suffering, torture, death.

But also—the world saved—man pardoned—heaven won—God and man at one. Would this cause joy or grief? (Heb. xii. 2.)

Why then did Christ weep?

Because He saw the *suffering* coming on the Jews.

Enemies around—city destroyed—nation dispersed.

More than that—He saw their great *sin*.

The Jews now shout "Hosanna!"—in five days would shout "Crucify!"

Now welcome as King—would then reject Him.

Now day of mercy—soon would come their day of judgment.

No wonder Christ wept.

III. Reverence. A second time the Temple cleansed by Christ. (St. John ii. 14.)

Profaned by sellers—hallowed by His presence.

Appointed for prayer—used for unholy objects.

There Christ taught daily—with what result?

Chief priests and rulers sought to kill Him.

Common people heard Him gladly.

IV. Lessons. 1. To Christ as King every knee must bow.

2. What think ye of Christ?

3. A day of grace comes to all. Shall we use it?

4. "Ye shall reverence My sanctuary."

September 28. Review of the Quarter's Lessons.

Golden Text—St. Matt. vii. 29

Taking the Golden Text, see how the Lessons this quarter have verified it.

Christ taught with authority. What has He taught us in these twelve lessons?

There have been six parables, one miracle, three discourses, two incidents.

I. Six Parables. Try and recall them and their teachings.

1. *The great Supper.* God's loving invitation, despised by some, accepted by others. In which class are we?

2. *Lost and found.* Three parables teaching the work of the Three Persons in the Godhead:

God the Father—meeting the penitent prodigal.

God the Son—seeking the lost sinner.

God the Spirit—lighting up the conscience.

Also show the sinner in three aspects:

The sheep strayed in ignorance.

The coin lost by others' neglect.

The son sinned of his own wilfulness.

In all three restoration, joy, happiness.

3. *Dives and Lazarus.* The folly and sin of living only for self.

The insufficiency of riches for lasting happiness.

The blessedness of the poor in spirit.

4. *Prevailing prayer.* Prayer must be earnest, incessant, and humble.

Praise must follow, not precede, prayer.

5. *The pounds.* Christ's servants all have work to do for Him.

A future day of reckoning is certain.

II. *Miracle of ten lepers.* Christ's pity reaches the most degraded.

The duty of thankfulness for mercies received.

Christ's best blessings for those who love Him most.

III. Three discourses. 1. *The Sabbath.* Made for man's benefit.

Works of mercy on this day lawful.

2. *Taking up the cross.* All entering Christ's service must first count the cost. On the one side self-denial, cross-bearing, opposition. On the other side blessings present and future.

3. *Entering the Kingdom.* What does Christ require?

The docility, love, and gentleness of children.

Parting from all likely to come between the soul and Him.

IV. TWO INCIDENTS. 1. *Zacchæus.* A rich publican converted.

Shows kindness and hospitality to Christ.

Receives special blessing from Christ.

Exhibits marks of true conversion by public confession of wrong, and restoration.

By their fruits ye shall know them.

2. *Christ entering Jerusalem.* The Teacher and King come to His own.

Honoured and welcomed by the fickle crowd.

His heart torn with grief for their future.

V. From all these may learn the character of Christ.

1. *Merciful* to all who need and seek His help.
2. *Yearning* over the lost—leading to repentance.
3. *Teaching* the ignorant the truths of His Kingdom
4. *Loving* those who come to Him.
5. *Warning* to use the present day of grace.

OCTOBER 5. PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD.

To read—St. Luke xx. 9—19. *Golden Text—Isa. liii.* 3.

I. CIRCUMSTANCES. Christ now at very end of His ministry.

Had been going about teaching more than three years.

Been received fairly well in Galilee, especially by the common people. But in Judæa, head-quarters of learned and upper classes, always been rejected.

Now plots against His life increasing.

Jesus knew all, yet did not hesitate to denounce those who refused to receive Him. Hence this parable.

The place—one of the Courts of the Temple.

The audience—scribes, chief priests, and people.

The time—Tuesday before the Crucifixion.

The subject—Christ despised and rejected of men. (Golden Text.)

II. THE PARABLE. (9—16.) A common custom in the East.

A vineyard planted by owner—let out to husbandmen, who must send the owner a certain share of the produce.

A servant sent to fetch the owner's part is beaten and sent away empty.

Many servants in succession treated in like manner.

At last sends his Son—hoping he will be treated differently.

He is treated worse than all—is cast out and killed.

How does the owner treat the husbandmen?

Destroys those wicked men and gives inheritance to others.

III. THE MEANING. (17, 18.) So plain that they understood at once.

The owner is God—King of all the world.

The vineyard is His Church—designed for His honour.

The husbandmen are the Jews—God's special, chosen people.

The servants are the prophets sent in God's name.

Elijah was persecuted by King Ahab. (1 Kings xix. 14.)

Jeremiah was imprisoned. (Jer. xxxvii. 21.)

Others were sawn asunder, etc. (Heb. xi. 37.)

The Son is Jesus Christ sent into the world.

His own people received Him not. (St. John i. 11.)

He was despised and rejected of men.

He was scourged, mocked, crucified.

But were His enemies not punished?

Jerusalem, over which He wept, was destroyed.

A million Jews died by the sword or famine.

The nation was dispersed in all lands, and became a bye-word to all people.

Thus Christ's words were fulfilled. He was the stone refused at first by the builders, afterwards the head-stone joining together all nations. (Eph. ii. 21.)

Will crush sooner or later all opponents. (1 Cor. xv. 25.)

LESSONS. 1. Shall we accept or reject Christ?

2. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and so ye perish.

3. What fruits are we rendering?

OCTOBER 12. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

To read—St. Luke xxii. 7—20. *Golden Text—1 Cor. xi.* 26.

I. THE OLD FEAST. (7—18.) Christ, as a Jew, kept all the Jewish feasts, viz., Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles.

First kept Passover when a boy aged twelve. (ii. 42.)

Now keeps it with disciples for last time.

Passover lamb to be killed on 14th day of first month at even. All leavened bread to be put away—hence other name of the feast. (Ex. xii. 6, 18.) Two disciples sent to prepare the feast.

Would meet a man carrying pitcher of water—unusual sight, that being women's work—were to follow him and prepare the meal.

So the "Upper Room" is made ready.

Christ and other ten disciples come in from Bethany in the evening.

They say the appointed prayers—sing the "Proper Psalms" (cxiv.—cxviii.), called the "Great Hallel"—eat the roasted lamb.

Christ tells them how He had looked forward to this "Last Supper." This night was all the Type to be fulfilled in Him. How?

(*a*) He the Lamb was to be taken by His enemies.

(*b*) He was without blemish or spot of sin. (1 Pet. i. 19.)

(*c*) At even the same day (3.0 p.m., Jewish day counting from sunset to sunset) He died.

(*d*) His bones were not broken. (St. John xix. 36.)

(*e*) He put away sin by His sacrifice (Heb. ix. 26), as all leaven was put out of the houses.

So He blessed this Jewish feast, telling them it was His last on earth, and thus ended all the Jewish rites.

II. THE NEW FEAST. (19, 20.) Now Christ appoints a new feast, called by Christians "The Lord's Supper." How does it differ from the Passover?

	THE PASSOVER.	THE LORD'S SUPPER.
(*a*)	Looked forward to Christ's death.	Looks back to it.
(*b*)	Was confined to the Jews.	Is for all.
(*c*)	A lamb was killed.	Bread is broken.

But they have some things in common, viz.—

(*a*) Both commemorate a deliverance—the Passover, from Egyptian bondage; the Lord's Supper, from bondage of sin.

(*b*) Both were feasts of thanksgiving.

(*c*) Both were to be observed in all generations.

And so the Lord's Supper is celebrated by all Christians. Why? (Golden Text.)

1. It shows forth in outward sign the Lord's death till He come again.

2. It is a means of receiving grace. (1 Cor. x. 16.)

3. It is not to be partaken of unworthily, *i.e.*, carelessly. (1 Cor. xi. 27.)

4. It is to be preceded by self-examination. (1 Cor. xi. 28.)

III. LESSONS. 1. *Gratitude* to Christ, who not only has died, but also provided for nourishment of our souls.

2. *Self-devotion.* What can I render to the Lord? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. BY THE AUTHOR OF "GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE."

CHAPTER I.

"REALLY," said Mrs. Beckford, "it is very curious!"

She had been sitting so silent for two or three minutes, gazing across the valley from her seat on the verandah of the Swiss hotel, that the young man who was occupying the chair beside her gave a little start of surprise at the unexpected remark. He was tall and well built, with a brickdust complexion that Nature had evidently intended to be fair, and a pair of frank blue eyes that gave attractiveness to a face not otherwise remarkable. His companion was perhaps twenty years his senior; a fine-looking, grey-haired woman, with a clever, humorous face.

"What is curious?" he asked her, smiling.

"Why, that you should turn out to know all these Dönisfield people: the Fenwicks, and Thoresbys, and Greys, and the rest. Why, ages ago, when I was a little girl, I remember seeing Mr. Fenwick driving down to the town in his high dog-cart, with his little son Tom perched up beside him. He had only been married a few years then, and now he's dead, you tell me, and she's dead, and Tom's children are all growing up. Dear, dear!"

"I have not had much news of them myself for a long time," said Leslie Rutherford; "I have been away five years this spring."

"How glad you must be to think that you are going to-morrow," continued the lady. "No, don't deny it! Why shouldn't you be? I don't know how you can forgive us for letting you stay on here, waiting on Mr. Beckford hand and foot."

"Don't, please," Leslie put in. "It is a privilege to do anything for Mr. Beckford, and if he wants me in the least——"

"He doesn't want you!" Mrs. Beckford cut him short in her turn, with an emphatic nod of her handsome elderly head; "and if he did, I hope we are not so unconscionable as to let you stay any longer. I know just how you are feeling. You are dying to get home and see how the land lies."

Mr. Rutherford meekly owned the soft impeachment.

"Well, now, let me give you one parting caution. Don't hold yourself too cheap; don't be afraid of asserting yourself. It always tempts people to tyrannise over you. If it hadn't been that you are far too amiable, we should never have taken advantage of you in such a base way, and kept you three weeks in this tomb of a place waiting on two old people. That was what did the mischief in the beginning, I have no doubt. A little more confidence in yourself is what you want. Good-bye! You will be off early, of course. And I wish you every success."

Mrs. Beckford went up to her own apartments, whither her invalid husband had already retired, and left Leslie Rutherford to enjoy the Alpine prospect by himself.

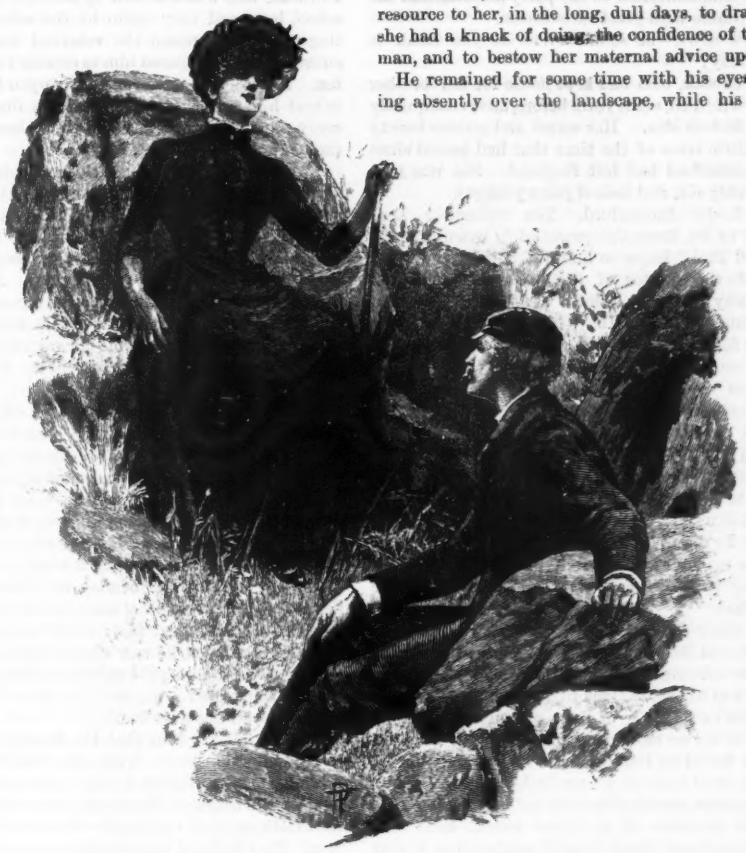
In spite of the confidential terms on which he was with both of them, their acquaintance was not of very long standing. Returning from an exploring expedition into Eastern Africa, he had met them at Cairo, and afterwards at Alexandria. Mr. Beckford

was a veteran R.A., and an accomplished man of the world; Mrs. Beckford, a bright, conversable woman, who wore her years lightly. Less interesting companions would have fascinated him after his long exile from civilisation; while they, on their part, took a strong liking to the intelligent, modest young fellow. They agreed to travel home together, taking Switzerland in their way; and all went well till Mr. Beckford was seized with sudden illness at a miserable little Swiss inn.

He lay for some days in a precarious state, and then began slowly to recover. During all the time, Leslie felt bound to remain, and be of what service he could—which was not a little—and in their common isolation and anxiety so thorough a confidence had grown up between Mrs. Beckford and himself, that there was little of his history that she did not know. She knew that he was a scientist and of independent means; she had heard how he had been to school in Donisfield, and lived there up to young manhood; how he had lost his heart to his old playfellow, May Fenwick; how some foolish misunderstanding had prevented him from declaring himself; how he had joined the African expedition, half in pique and half in despair; and, finally, how, hearing by chance from a Donisfield man that Miss Fenwick was still free, he was returning home, determined to "put his fortune to the touch, and win or lose it all." It was quite a resource to her, in the long, dull days, to draw out, as she had a knack of doing, the confidence of the young man, and to bestow her maternal advice upon him.

He remained for some time with his eyes wandering absently over the landscape, while his thoughts were hovering about that smoky seat of industry (on the borders of one of the most picturesque counties of England) in which resided the object of his affection.

"I wonder," he said to himself, "if she is right." (He meant Mrs. Beckford.) "I wonder, if I had made up my mind to have it out with her before I left, what would have come of it." (This time the perspicacious reader will divine that it was not Mrs. Beckford to whom he alluded.) This question absorbed him to such an extent that he continued to sit on the verandah until the night air had positively chilled him through. At last it occurred to him that, as he was leaving at a very early hour in the



"'Can't you be an individual for a moment?'"—*p.* 867.

morning, it would hardly do to sit up all night; whereupon he sought his couch, and dreamed of pursuing a blonde-headed figure, that fled as fast as he approached it, through miles and miles of equatorial forest.

A day or two after this, Tom Fenwick, the brother of Leslie's *inamorata*, received a letter, whose contents he communicated to the party assembled at the breakfast-table with great satisfaction.

"Here's news," he said. "Who do you think is coming, May?"

May Fenwick, who had kept house for her brother since his wife died, eight years before, answered quietly that she had no idea. Her sweet and serious beauty showed little trace of the time that had passed since Leslie Rutherford had left England. She was now about twenty-six, and looked years younger.

"It's Leslie Rutherford. You remember Les? 'Coming to Dr. Burnet's—promised to lecture for the "Lit. and Phil." hopes to find old friends all well,'" continued the master of the house, quoting in a random way from the letter. "Well, I'm very glad he's coming. We must have him here, and get some scientific fellows to meet him. Eh, May?"

Miss Fenwick assented so very calmly that Tom was more than ever confirmed in his impression that women were difficult to understand. An old friend, who had come through such strange perils—quite a hero in his way—and May took it as coolly as if it did not interest her in the least. However, it mattered the less, as all the rest of the family, not excepting his eldest daughter, who was eighteen, and just "out"—a fact he never could realise—were enthusiastic about the explorer; whom some of them remembered as having been intimate at their house before he went abroad.

A few more days went by. It was a warm April afternoon, and Miss Fenwick's eldest niece was practising in the drawing-room, or ought to have been doing so. She was a conscientious little person, and kept up her studies as a matter of duty, although the school-room knew her no more; but this afternoon Chopin's *nocturnes* failed to interest her. She was sitting on the music-stool with her plump little hands in her lap, and a dreamy, speculative look in her brown eyes, when the entrance of a visitor roused her. She turned round and found herself confronting a very sunburnt gentleman, who was deferentially hoping that he had not interrupted her. There was not much changed about him except his complexion. She knew him almost at once.

"I am afraid you don't remember me," she said, with a touch of pretty shyness.

"I don't think I had the pleasure——" he began, and then caught himself up, and exclaimed, "Why, it isn't—yet it must be—I suppose I mustn't say Bobbie now!"

"Well, it *is* time people stopped, I think," she assented; "but you see, my proper name is the same as auntie's, and that makes it so difficult. I know I'm too old for it."

"Oh! it's nice to find something that isn't changed," he said. "And now I look at you, I see the old Bobbie, though she is so young-ladified."

"I knew you directly," she answered. "We are all so glad you have come back safe."

"Thanks," he said cordially. "I am glad enough to be back, I can tell you."

And then he launched into inquiries about the various members of the family and their doings, which were soon interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Fenwick, who was followed by a couple of grammar-school boys, and they again by the school-room contingent. They greeted the returned wanderer with enthusiasm, and engaged him to remain for five-o'clock tea. Leslie's eyes were constantly upon the door, and it cost him an effort to conceal his disappointment every time it opened and closed without admitting the figure he was looking for.

"By-the-bye," Mr. Fenwick suddenly exclaimed, "where's May? Hasn't she come in? Bobbie, child, run and see if you can find your aunt anywhere."

In her own room at this moment Miss Fenwick was struggling with a disinclination to present herself, that she felt to be quite preposterous. At last, after Bobbie had knocked at her door and announced that it was nearly tea-time, and that Leslie Rutherford had come (a fact she was well aware of), she gave a hurried finishing touch to her pretty hair, and resolutely descended.

Leslie was beginning to feel as if the world had moved on five years while he had been sleeping. The change he found in his old friends in spite of their hearty welcome; the new surroundings in which he found them; the children who were children no longer; all gave him something of a saddened and bewildered feeling, as if he had come back to find himself unchanged in a changed world. Suddenly he looked up, and saw her coming in. She at least had not altered; it was the same sweet face. For a moment his heart beat fast; there was a mist before his eyes; and then he saw clearly again. She came up and spoke to him quite calmly—coldly, he thought.

"She is not glad to see me," he said to himself. "I might as well not have come."

It was well for him that the family party was a large and lively one. When they were not asking him about his adventures, they were giving him the news of the neighbourhood; and as soon as one stopped for breath, another took up the thread of the conversation. They induced him to relate some of his "hair-breadth 'scapes," which he did very modestly and well. And once, when in the midst of a particularly thrilling account of his danger at the hands of a hostile tribe, he saw by the flush on Miss Fenwick's cheek, and the light in her blue-grey eyes, that she was not so indifferent as he had supposed her.

After tea Mr. Fenwick proposed to show Leslie the hot-houses; and accordingly they set out, and made the grand tour of them, accompanied by the family in procession. Leslie watched his chance for a word with May, and found it at last when she lingered behind the others for a moment to look at a favourite plant.

"You can't think," he said, "how strange I feel it, not to find you in the old house."

"Yes," she said; "this will never be like it to me, though of course it is better in many ways. So you thought of the old place while you were away?"

Her first embarrassment had passed off; she looked at him very frankly and kindly.

"I seem to have been always thinking of it, and of you all. It seemed such a haven, out there, May—I can't call you anything else."

"Why should you, Les?" she said brightly; and added in a graver tone, "I never realised what you must have been through till I heard you to-night. I am glad I didn't know."

"You would have cared then, a little?"

"Well, one doesn't exactly enjoy thinking of one's old friends being hotpotted and that sort of thing," she answered, laughing lightly, as she followed the others. Leslie thought she was laughing at the sentimental emphasis he had laid on his question. Gallant fellow as he had shown himself in face of the perils to which she alluded, he found it impossible to summon up any kind of confidence when he was with the woman he loved.

Besides, he soon found out that Miss Fenwick's devotion to her young nephews and nieces, beautiful though it was, had its drawbacks to a lover. Wherever she was, or whatever she was doing, some of them were sure to be haunting her steps. Bobbie especially, who worshipped her pretty aunt, was her inseparable companion. He laughed, too, when he thought of the course of action he had planned for himself in Africa, if on his return he should find May Fenwick free; how no obstacle should deter him from rushing to lay his heart at her feet. It had seemed to him then a simple, matter-of-course proceeding, a thing to be done out of hand. Now day after day passed by and he got no further. He met her constantly, it is true, but hardly ever where there was an opportunity for private talk. Her own manner to him was uncertain; sometimes cold and retiring; sometimes frank and friendly; but now and then with a touch of something about it that was neither *camaraderie* nor coldness, and more favourable to his hopes than either.

At last he found himself obliged to go up to London for two or three days, to attend meetings of certain scientific societies. On the day of his departure, the Fenwicks and some of their friends had arranged for a picnic, and he had promised to join them for the earlier part of the day, leaving by an afternoon train in time to keep an appointment to dinner in town. He rose that morning with the fixed determination that the day should not pass over without a declaration on his part.

A little way from Donisfield, the high-road is crossed by a tiny brook, which trickles down from the high moorland through a steep and beautifully wooded glen. It is by no means a despicable feat to ascend the brook till one emerges close to the road that runs along the summit of the ridge. This was the plan that the picnic party had decided on. They had driven out from Donisfield, sent on the carriages to await them at an inn on the upper road, and were just entering the glen, when they met Leslie descending to meet them, flicking at the catkins with his riding-whip as he came.

He was hailed with enthusiasm, especially by the juniors. "Have you been here long, Les? Have you been riding? What have you done with the steed of steeds?"

"Put him up at the inn and told them you were coming on."

He found himself at once in request for all sorts of things. To reach down catkins for one girl, get moss for another, and help a third over stepping-stones, to see that the acrobatic feats of the boys did not bring their careers to a premature close, and to make himself generally helpful and pleasant, would have been quite in accordance with his ordinary mood. But on this occasion he could not enjoy it. He was irritated to see how persistently the children clung round May; and began to feel that, after all, he should miss his opportunity.

It came at last, however, when, the other members of the party having fallen behind, they two stopped to rest just where the narrow glen opened out on the moor. Below them was the steep path up which they had climbed, overhung by the budding birch and hazel, and with great boulders, moss-grown and lichen-stained, marking the course of the hidden stream. They were out of sight of the others, whose gay voices, nevertheless, sounded clearly through the bright stillness of the afternoon.

"I hope they are all right," said May, after a moment's rest, preparing to rise and look after the invisibles.

"Oh, don't move. They are all right; you would hear soon enough if they were not. Can't you be an individual for a moment? It is always May and Company!"

"Well, here I am," she said. "What do you want with the individual?"

She glanced up brightly at him, and met a look in his face that made her flush and drop her eyes.

"What do I want?" he said. "Ah! May, need I tell you? I have wanted it for so long!"

Here a sudden scream and clamour of voices from below reached them. May turned pale, sprang to her feet, and rushed down the slope, followed by Leslie. They found an excited group round Bobbie, who was crouched in a heap at the bottom of a great boulder.

"There goes my opportunity!" thought Leslie, ruefully, as the group opened to admit him, that he might use his scraps of surgical knowledge to decide what was amiss.

"It's my ankle, I think," said Bobbie, sitting up, with a very white face, and winking hard to keep away the tears.

And a sprained ankle it proved to be. The rest of the picnic-party crowded round May, explaining how the accident had happened. Instead of crossing the brook on stepping-stones, and taking the easier path on the other side of it, she had ambitiously preferred to scramble over the rocks, with the sad result we have seen.

The only thing to be done was to get her up the hill to the carriage (not a great distance, fortunately), and then home as fast as possible.

"You are going away this afternoon, are you not?" May asked, when Bobbie had been lifted into the carriage.

"I must," he said. "Dinner to-night, and my paper to-morrow, worse luck!"

"I know. What I meant was: if you wouldn't mind calling at the doctor's on your way into the town. You are riding, are you not? You will get to Donisfield before we shall, and if you *would* leave a message, it would save some time."

She was evidently absorbed in Bobbie for the moment; and if she had not been, he felt that he could hardly finish his interrupted declaration before a carriageful of people.

"Certainly, I'll send him," he answered her; and added, in a low voice, "I'll write you to-night from London."

The look she gave him in return was like a cordial at his heart during his ride to Donisfield, and the three hours' railway journey that followed passed like a happy dream.

CHAPTER II.

THE doctor was at Mr. Fenwick's house almost as soon as they reached it themselves. There was not very much the matter, he said, but condemned the patient to her own room for a day or two. May spent the greater part of the following morning with Bobbie, reading and chatting; but after lunch, as the invalid complained of a headache, she drew down the blinds, and left her in the darkened room to sleep it off—not without a sense of relief. She wanted to be free to think of her own affairs: to remember Leslie's look and tone on the previous afternoon, and to watch for the letter that he had promised. By-and-bye she heard the postman's knock; but nothing came for her. After a few minutes, she rang the bell.

"Was not that the postman?" she asked.

"Yes, miss," was the answer; "a letter for Miss May."

This was Bobbie's title with the servants, while her aunt's was Miss Fenwick. It was not technically correct, of course; but while Bobbie was such a child, anything else would have been absurd.

"Nothing for me—are you sure?" May asked.

"Nothing else, miss; only that."

And with this May had to content herself. She had expected that he would write at once; but it was easy to imagine how he might have been prevented; and, after all, what did formalities matter? She felt sure that they understood each other; only she would have liked to be able to tell him how that first foolish quarrel had distressed her; how hard it had been for her to see him go away for so long, and not to know if he cared for her; how her heart had leapt when she heard of his return; how she had hoped, and feared, and hoped again. Ah! there was a good deal she never could tell him—not for a long while, at any rate. And so she sat musing pleasantly by herself, till it occurred to her to wonder who could have written to Bobbie. It was so unusual for the child to have a letter, except it were a note from some friend in the town. She had been to school in Donisfield, and had no correspondents elsewhere. She decided to go up to her niece. Whatever it was, Bobbie was sure to want to show it her.

She went into the room, and found her patient with feverishly bright eyes, and cheeks that glowed from their nest in the pillows.

"Is that auntie!" cried Bobbie in a strange voice.



"She came in holding her head very high."—*p.* 871.

"Oh, auntie, come here; I want to tell you something."

But when May approached, instead of revealing anything, she merely caught her round the neck and kissed her several times.

"Well, Bobbie, what's the matter? Whom is your letter from?"

"I don't think I can tell you. And you'll never guess—never. I can't believe it. I think I must be dreaming. Oh, auntie, auntie!"

And here Bobbie burst into tears, but evidently not tears of grief.

May petted and soothed her, and finally restored her to something like calm.

"I am a goose," she admitted. "I don't know what he would think if he knew what a goose I am. Only it was such a surprise, you know."

"I don't know anything yet, dear," May reminded her.

"Well, I'll show you his letter. Oh, no! I can't do that."

"His letter?" repeated May. Something caught at her throat; the room went round her. Bobbie's elated little voice sounded as if it came from an infinite distance.

"Yes, Leslie's. He says he would have spoken yesterday if it had not been for the accident. And—oh, fancy!—he says he has thought of me for so long. I can't take it in."

"You say he has written to you?" said May, and her voice sounded hard and strange.

"Yes, dear, I told you," and here Bobbie enfolded her aunt in another hug. "He wants me to marry him."

May drew back, and sat rigid. "Well?" she said, with dry lips.

Bobbie looked up anxiously at her: but she could see nothing, for the blinds were still down, and May's back was turned to the little light there was. Still, the tone and gesture told her plainly that something was wrong.

"What is the matter?" she said piteously. "Don't you like it? Aren't you glad? Oh, I know I'm not good enough."

The stupor into which May had been plunged by the shock of discovering that Leslie's letter to her had fallen into wrong hands, was penetrated by a sudden pang. Bobbie's tone pierced her: it meant that she was acting unkindly to the child who had been her pet.

"I am glad, dear, if you are glad. I am surprised, that's all. Somehow I never thought of you in this light."

"I never thought of it myself, that's the joke," laughed Bobbie. "Of course, I admired him, and thought him splendid; but as for his caring for me, that never entered my head. When I think," she went on softly, "of his choosing me, I feel as if I wanted to be so charming, and clever, and delightful every way, instead of what I am. You, now, would have been much better. Why didn't he think of you?"

But it was evident from her manner that she did not at all deplore the direction which Mr. Rutherford's thoughts had taken. If May's life had depended upon it, she could not have said anything to damp Bobbie's happiness. Besides, she had no right; she knew nothing. She responded with all the warmth she had at command to her niece's confidences, and got away as soon as she could, to face a situation that only grew more miserably perplexing the longer she considered it.

Two days afterwards, Leslie arrived from London. He was shown by some chance into the breakfast-room, where May was arranging flowers for the table. She had not heard him arrive, and when she looked up and saw him enter, all the trouble of her heart seemed written on her face. She had no time to think of conventional concealments.

"Oh, Les," she cried to him; "what does it mean?"

"That is what I want to know," he answered. "Something has gone frightfully wrong. I wrote you—I said I should."

"It was not Bobbie, then? You meant it for me?"

"How could it be Bobbie?" he broke in, almost savagely. "Why, May, *you* knew." And then, as if he had just been struck by the traces of pain and trouble in her face, "My darling," he said tenderly, "you look ill. No wonder; what must you have thought of me?"

He came round the table to where she was sitting, and tried to take her hands.

"No, no!" she said, drawing back; "don't talk like that."

"Not if I love you?"

"Bobbie has written you, has she not?"

His face darkened again.

"I don't know what to do," he said; "or how to get out of it. But somehow I must. You love me, May?"

"Leslie, don't you see you are bound?"

"What! by a mistake?—by a thing I couldn't help? I am exceedingly sorry. I'd have given ten years of my life to have it different. I say so deliberately. But it's infamous to marry one girl when you love another. I should be wronging her horribly. Don't you see that I should?"

"She need never know, Leslie," May answered, looking up at him wistfully. "And you know in time you couldn't help caring for her. She is a dear child."

He started up at this, and began to pace the floor distractedly.

"May! is it you who are saying these things? You seem to think it doesn't matter; that a man can put away a feeling like an old coat. I thought you knew what love was, May."

"Don't I?" she said softly.

Something infinitely pathetic in her voice touched him almost with remorse. He flung himself on his knees at the side of her chair, and spoke passionately, without any diffidence now, of the love he had nursed through years of exile, not, surely, to be frustrated by a mere blunder at last.

She listened, but her face was hidden in her hands. He tried again to take one of them in his own.

"Don't, dear," she said, without moving.

"May, won't you speak to me?"

"I am trying to think," she said, looking up. "Oh, it is so difficult!"

"We have one thing to hold by," he answered, "if we love each other."

"I can't see it like that," she replied. "I can't make my happiness out of the child's misery. After all, is it necessary that we should be happy?"

"Oh!" he cried, rising with an impatient gesture, "this is your altruism. This is the stock motive of the third-rate novels. May, do let us look at the thing rationally. They say you women see clearly in these matters. You know the vows I shall take to the girl I marry; have you thought what it would be to take them to her, while all the while I love you—always shall love you?"

They were both so absorbed by the subject that they did not notice certain sounds without, as of someone being assisted along the passage. The words just quoted had hardly left Leslie Rutherford's lips when the door swung open. Bobbie stood there, stick in hand, leaning against the door-post. Having heard from one of the maids that Mr. Rutherford was in the breakfast-room, she had had herself helped along the hall from her sofa in the dining-room; and there she was, blushing, happy, excited, and never doubting but that he would be delighted to see her.

May gave a faint little cry, which Bobbie attributed to horror at seeing her on her feet.

"It's all right, auntie," she made haste to explain; "I haven't stood on the lame foot a bit. They told me Leslie was here," she added, blushing deeper than ever, and looking blissful. Leslie went to her at once, and helped her to the sofa; and May knew better than to suppose that he would be able to undeceive her now. She slipped out of the room, and left them together; there was nothing else to be done.

* * * * * *

It had occurred some time before this to a local magnate, that it might be as well to increase the attractiveness of the town, and his own importance to it, by presenting it with an Art Gallery.

This, of course, had to be formally opened; and "everybody who was anybody" in Donisfield received an invitation to be present. A peer of the realm had been captured for the occasion; and he was to be supported by persons eminent in various walks of life. Among others by Mr. W. Beckford, R.A., the well-known painter of Eastern subjects, who had quite recovered from his recent illness.

Mrs. Beckford, who had accompanied her husband, sat behind him during the speech-making, in a place reserved for the notables; but after it was over, her attention was claimed by one old acquaintance after another. She was talking to some of them in the small room where tea and coffee were being served, when one of the ladies with her called out, "Why, there is Bobbie Fenwick, I declare!"

They were sitting on a sort of divan against the wall, hemmed in by an increasing crowd; and waiting till the efforts of their attendant cavaliers to get some refreshment for them should be crowned with success. Bobbie came up to them looking hot and anxious, and dropped into a seat that had just been left vacant next to Mrs. Beckford.

"We all came together," she explained to the lady who had addressed her; "but there was such a frightful crowd in the Gallery that I got separated from them. I've been trying to find them everywhere."

"It's of no use trying to run after people here," her friend remarked. "You look dreadfully hot, child. Sit still, and have a cup of tea, and they are sure to come for you."

She then introduced her to Mrs. Beckford, who was very gracious indeed.

"You are Mr. Tom Fenwick's daughter, are you not?" said the artist's wife. "I used to know your father as a boy. I'm so pleased to meet you. I heard a great deal about you all from Mr. Rutherford in Switzerland. We became rather confidential, you know. He was so kind all the time my husband was ill! Oh! I can't tell you how good he was!"

"He is always good," said Bobbie, very decidedly.

"So few young men, you know, would have stayed to wait on an invalid as he did, when he was simply dying to get home to his lady-love. I am so glad that it is settled. I just heard that he was engaged—no details, or anything. Of course we only got here in time for the function. I have not seen your aunt yet. I am hoping to. I have seen her photograph, though. Such a sweet face!"

"Isn't it?" Bobbie assented warmly, though wondering a little at the connection of Mrs. Beckford's ideas.

"He used to talk to me about her for hours—he had no one else to talk to, poor fellow! How good she was, and how unselfish, and like a mother to you children. He used to say that he thought he should have some difficulty in persuading her to leave you. But then I said to him, 'Mr. Fenwick has a daughter, hasn't he? old enough to take charge of things——' My dear, are you faint?"

"It is so frightfully close!" Bobbie said faintly.

"You must get into the air. Ah! here he is!—Here is your little stray sheep, Mr. Rutherford!"

Leslie looked rather anxious as he was making his way through the crowd, but his brow cleared when he saw Bobbie.

"Take me outside, Les!" she begged; and he led her away at once, after a brief, pleased recognition of his old acquaintance.

"Call a cab, please," she said, when they were outside. "I want to go home now; my head aches."

She looked so pale and strange, and was so peremptory with him, that he obeyed without demur. The cab was called; he handed her in, and was about to get in beside her.

"No!" she said; "go back to the others. I don't want you. I won't have you come."

"I can't let you go alone," he answered.

"I will go alone!" she cried imperiously, the tears starting to her eyes. "How can you be so disagreeable?"

Leslie bowed without a word, gave the cabman his orders, and walked back to the Gallery, feeling, it must be owned, somewhat savage. He was in a false position, and it made him irritable. He had lacked

the cruelty or the courage to explain the real state of things to Bobbie when he met her after her accident, and the consequence was, of course, that he had to accept the situation and make the best of it. He tried loyally and sincerely to do his duty to the child, but her open, innocent fondness afflicted him with a sense of treachery; and May's face, as she went about the house with that look of suppressed sorrow on it that only he understood, shunning his presence, avoiding his gaze, was a continual torment to him. One of the simplest of men, he had constantly to appear with a mask on. His life was a lie; he despised himself; and yet there appeared to him to be no way out of it. If it was impossible to tell the truth to Bobbie at their first meeting, it was tenfold impossible now.

As to Bobbie, she went home, took Leslie's letter out of a certain cedar-wood box where she kept her treasures, and read it over carefully several times. She had a quick little brain, and it was not difficult for her to see that the letter confirmed what Mrs. Beckford had said. As she read it under this new light, expressions that she had hardly noticed before came into sudden prominence. It seemed all at once obvious that it could not have been meant for her. It was not written to a girl, but to a woman; it was the language, not of a sudden fancy or passion, but of a long-cherished love. Then she remembered her aunt's manner when she heard the news, and the change that had come upon her since. She had grown wan and silent; and once, on going into her room, she had found her crying.

Bobbie's pride was deeply hurt. It was perhaps a salutary thing for her that she took it in that way; but she spent some very bitter hours that evening by herself, bolting her door against the outer world and refusing to admit anyone.

Towards twelve o'clock, May, who had retired for the night and was reading in her own room, was surprised by the sudden apparition of Bobbie, still in the white dress she had worn in the afternoon. She came in holding her head very high, and with a letter in her hand.

"That is for you," she said, laying it on the table. "I suppose it is all a mistake, my having had it. And —and will you tell him, please, auntie?"

She was going away, but May stopped her.

"Why, what has happened?" she said. "Don't run away, dear. Tell me."

"There 's nothing to tell," said Bobbie, still holding herself very stiffly; "only I 've made a mistake. What business had he to let me think he liked me?" she cried, breaking down suddenly in a passion of tears. "Did he think I should want a man to marry me who loved someone else? He ought to have told me—he ought—he ought!"

And this was the view Tom Fenwick took, when, as was inevitable, he became acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. Lovers of poetic justice may be assured that Leslie did not go unpunished for the weakness that had closed his lips and made him determined to abide by his mistake.

"It is a comfort that it can't very well come over again," said May.

"Yes, indeed," he assented; "the most awful ordeal I ever went through! Africa was a joke to it. I can't conceive what would have become of us all if Mrs. Beckford hadn't been at that place that afternoon."

"You see, virtue is sometimes rewarded," she said, smiling at him. And then a shadow crossed her face, and she murmured, "Poor Bobbie!"

Bobbie went to Germany after these events, and developed a musical enthusiasm which kept her there two years. When she returned, there was no further danger of confusion between her and her relative, as May Fenwick the elder had for some time been Mrs. Leslie Rutherford. There are rumours that Miss Fenwick is not likely to retain for long her ownership of that euphonious name. Mrs. Beckford, who keeps up her interest in the family, is positive about it. But time will show.

D. M. J.

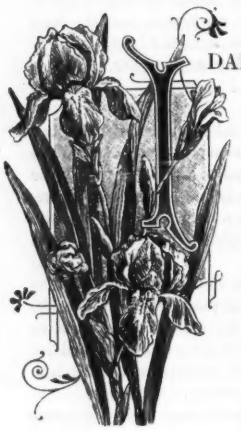
YOUTH AND AGE.

BENEATH a spreading tree, whose shade
A covert from the sun has made,
Lucy, a maiden sweet to see,
The best of all good company,
With gay, bright looks that banish care,
By grandmamma's snug garden chair
Assumes her place, and, closer still,
Fearing, perchance, a sudden chill,
She softly draws the warm shawl round
Her shoulders. Ah, when Youth is found
A graceful minister of Age,
The lesson on the poet's page
May shine in characters of light!
It is indeed a pleasing sight
To see the strong assist the weak;
To see against the faded cheek
The rosy lips of girlhood pressed!
The tender, loving words addressed
To grandmamma, in fancy seem
To bring to her a golden dream,
In which the long years roll away,
And she is once more young and gay,
With all life's storms and griefs untried,
Like that fair vision by her side!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

"OUTSIDE OVER THE LEA."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



I DARE say you often picture how the world is looking *outside*. By reason of weakness, your vision is bounded perhaps by the table and chair, the cupboard and the fireplace and window, all so familiar to you. But when somebody brings you a fragrant, smiling flower, or you catch the notes of the birds that seem so bright and brave even when the weather is grey, your thoughts go out, out to the scenes that once you knew, the bracken stirred by the freshening breeze, the hills where you gathered cowslips in the days of old, the grassy glen, the sweet, shadowy path beneath the woodland trees.

As just now you cannot well see Nature's peace and glory with your *own* eyes, will you use *mine* instead to-day, and let me show you my favourite resort, so calm and fair that no hand but that of our Father could have created its beauty? To reach it one must cross a breezy common where there are all sorts of fragile, wonderful grasses; such tiny, feeble things they seem to be as they bend to the breath of the wind, and yield to the little children's tread, yet before God they are not forgotten, and the sunshine and dew come down to them even as to the gayest garden-flowers. The sermon of these little wind-blown lives comes to us full of cheer and comfort as we pass them by; if God so clothe the grass of the field, is He not thinking of *you*, even though you be poor and lonely?

We now reach a couple of corn-fields, making "waves of shadow" as the sun-kissed gold sways to and fro; and then we enter a copse dear to the spirits of the singing-birds and to our own. It seems the inner temple of peace, the sort of place where infirmities and cares and anxieties can be forgotten, as we look up to Heaven between the branching pines, the cool, whispering leaves that shadow our path like a benediction, and down to the flower-stars of the hedges, the wild strawberry and blackberry blossom. "Ah, yes," perhaps your heart is saying, "one *can* be at peace in a glade like that; but the cares seem so dark, so very near us, shut up in a room of sickness." There is One who is nearer than the cares in that sick-room, friend; it was He who touched the glade and clothed it with loveliness—it is "this same Jesus" who can be to you a truer, surer peace than Nature's beauty can bestow. Come onward in your fancy a little further still. Yonder is the gleam of water, a tiny streamlet at first, and then a broad, radiant sheet, garlanded with spreading leaves and white and golden water-lilies. These waters, that bedew the grass and lave the feet of marigolds and forget-me-nots, may well remind us of those waters of quietness, beside which the Lord our Shepherd leads us: there is here a great hush and stillness—amid the discords of earth the Master has struck a silence—we have come apart with Him and entered into rest.

What do you know of His peace just now? What you *may* know of it He only can show you; no language can tell how the Good Shepherd rests and comforts and satisfies His weary ones who have fainted and fretted in loneliness, but steal away from self and over-anxious care into those arms that for them knew the Cross of Calvary. Here, by the water-lily river, your soul could know no real resting apart from the Lord: there, in your quiet room, He is "closer to you than breathing"—His love, His strength, His peace will respond to your feeble cry. Will you make trial of His leading now, and learn how the Lord gives quietness, and prove by what living waters—calm, bright, and eternal—He will lead the soul that trusts Him?

Do not let care and unrest hold your heart as in a prison. I read once of a bird that flew into a church during a service, and tried hard to escape by roof and window, while a sad heart amid the congregation was thinking: "Foolish bird, why strive thus in vain? Is not the door wide open?" At last with weary wings the bird drew near that open door, and soon outside was chanting a song of rest and praise. Its freedom reminded the troubled heart of another Open Door—even the Lord Jesus Christ—and, seeking Him, she escaped from the burden that oppressed.

Seek Him anew to-day; prove anew that with God nothing is impossible. Underneath your every infirmity and worry the everlasting Arms abide: amid your many perplexities let Jesus take you by the hand, and bring you to the waters of quietness. There is a river the streams whereof make glad God's people—a river that flows to you now in blessing and radiance and healing: more glorious than my water-lilies are the fadeless trees of strength it nourishes—"the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

M. S. H.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

(A NEW SERIES OF QUESTIONS, BASED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL SCRIPTURE LESSONS.)

QUESTIONS.

121. What marks of sincere repentance are mentioned in connection with Zacchæus the Publican?

122. What event took place at the raising of Lazarus which has been a source of great comfort to many persons?

123. In what way are the words used by the disciples to welcome Christ on His entry to Jerusalem worthy of special attention?

124. In what way is Our Lord's Parable of the Vineyard illustrated in the Old Testament?

125. What was so remarkable in the teaching of Christ, whether by miracle or by words?

126. How often did Christ cleanse the Temple?

127. Why did Our Blessed Lord weep when entering Jerusalem in triumph?

128. Our Lord, in the Parable of the Vineyard, applies to Himself the words of the Psalmist, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." Which of the Apostles speaks of Christ as the "Corner-stone of the Church"?

129. Which of the twelve Apostles were sent by Our Blessed Lord to prepare the Passover for Him?

130. What is the special event associated with the last Passover feast kept by Our Blessed Lord and His disciples?

131. What Psalms were sung at the Feast of the Passover?

132. What similarity is there between the Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 793.

109. Because by the Law of Moses they were not to come near to any person, the plague of leprosy being infectious. (St. Luke xvii. 12; Lev. xiii. 46.)

110. Because the people of Samaria were the descendants of those heathens whom the King of Assyria placed in Samaria after he had taken away the Israelites as captives. (St. John iv. 9; 2 Kings xvii. 6, 24.)

111. The Prophet Isaiah, where he says, "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." (Isaiah i. 5, 6.)

112. The duty of continuing instant in prayer, lest we lose faith in God. (St. Luke xviii. 1, 8; Rom. xii. 12.)

113. In the spirit of humility and faith in God's mercy. (St. Luke xviii. 13, 14; St. James i. 5, 6.)

114. Confession of sin, faith in God, and prayer for pardon. (St. Luke xviii. 13.)

115. The blessing of bringing people to God, and the wrong we do if in any wise we hinder them. (St. Mark x. 16; St. Matt. v. 19; St. James v. 19, 20.)

116. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." (St. Luke xviii. 24.)

117. The sin of *selfishness;* for while the Ruler had outwardly kept all the Commandments, yet in his heart *self* ruled. (St. Luke xviii. 20—24.)

118. That if we trust in Him, He will give us all things that we need in this life—as is seen in the case of Abraham, Job, and others. (St. Matt. vi. 33; Gen. xii. 1, 2, and xiii. 2; Job xlii. 2, 6, 12.)

119. That God's love is ever seeking the salvation of souls. (St. Luke xix. 5, 10.)

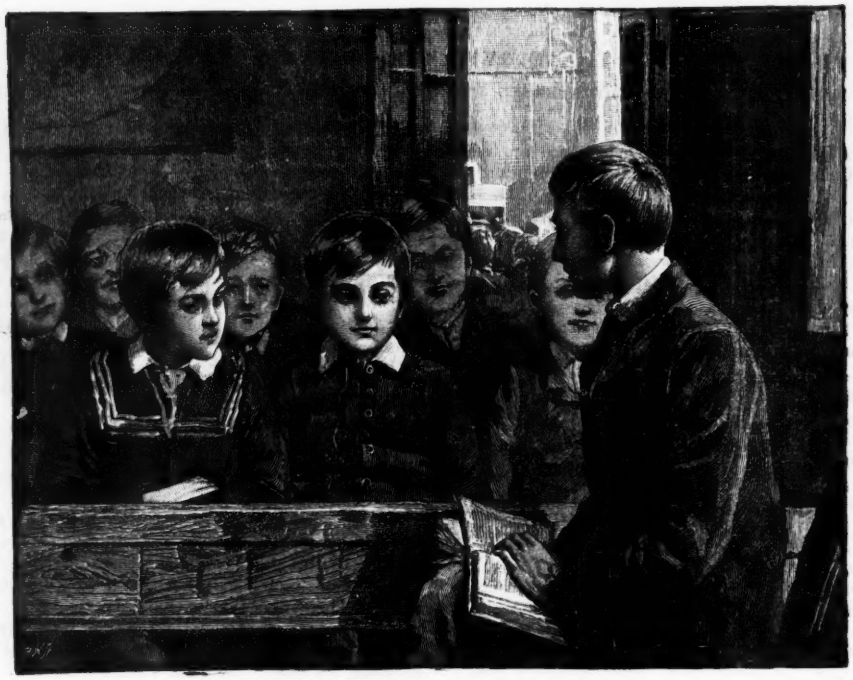
120. That sins of *omission* will condemn us at the last day as well as sins of commission. (St. Luke xix. 22, 26; see also St. Matt. xxv. 41—43.)

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

PREACHING IN CHAINS.

THE Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation wherever it is faithfully proclaimed, and it can work as mightily, as gloriously, in men's hearts and lives to-day as in bygone ages. There are heroic Christian souls in these later times who follow in the train of the Son of God and of the early martyrs, heeding not the claims of self, but loyal to the heavenly call. A missionary from Madagascar told in our hearing an impressive narrative of a Christian man who unfortunately gave offence in high quarters, and was exiled to the coast, loaded with chains, and watched by guards continually. He had been enjoying the comforts of life and the esteem of those around, but he did not give way to despair or selfish repining; he asked himself if it might not be that the Master had a work for him to fulfil even in that strange, dreary place of exile. How should he, how could he, loaded with weighty irons, become the herald of salvation? He commenced by speaking of Jesus to his guards, who brought their friends to hear his message, till at last he was instructing a little meeting of attentive listeners. The desire took possession of them to build a chapel, and they asked him to become their preacher. He shrank from the notion of a ministry in chains; would not his fetters be revealed while he stood in their chapel preaching



WHAT PATIENCE WILL DO ("A VETERAN'S COUNSEL").

the Gospel? But prayerful meditation caused him to ignore the matter of the chains, and he became their preacher. By-and-bye the chapel had to give place to a larger one; and years after, when reinstated in his position and set at liberty, he left behind in his place of exile a congregation that had been brought to God by means of a fettered prisoner. With such an example before us, never let us think despairingly that we are shut out from opportunities of serving the Lord, that we can do nothing in our disadvantageous circumstances to spread His Kingdom!

A VETERAN'S COUNSEL.

An American writer on Sunday-school work, advocating patient perseverance, says: "You sometimes have to *drill* an entrance for the truth; steady, faithful drilling, with an occasional drop of oil of kindness and love, will surely succeed." These drops of oil work wonders in Sunday-school machinery, both as regards fellow-teachers and the young spirits, mischievous, careless, or defiant, who for a short space weekly are entrusted to Christian guidance. It is true enough that "order must be maintained," but personal goodwill towards the scholar is far more likely to effect such a result than scolding, threatening, or the hasty "box on the ear." "How is it you never report a boy for dismissal?" asked the head of a large firm of a new manager; "we used to hear frequently of rebellion, disobedience, and the like."—"Sir," was the answer, "I am here to manage the lads; if I cannot do so, *I* (rather than the boy) am the one to go." It is a question whether the Sunday-school teacher who cannot manage the class without the hand of force is the right man in the right place. "I have had many a flippant, troublesome scholar to deal with," said a white-haired Sunday-school veteran, "and I advise, for such, a quiet talk in private. I have found rough, careless natures moved and awakened as I showed them whither they were tending, and pictured to them two opposite lives and characters in the future, and solemnly bade them choose. My endeavour is always to set before such lads a higher ideal than their present selfish, careless existence; let us lovingly show them something better, and, though they may even at the time appear unmoved, the impression of such an appeal remains, and will, with God's blessing, bear fruit to eternity."

STRANGERS IN A GREAT CITY.

Manchester folks are wont to uphold their town as the greatest and best to be met with. "Other places seem to me to look so cheap and second-rate," remarked an appreciative denizen. "When once

you have seen Manchester, you will think there is no place like it. Talk of country! I could show you some fine country round Manchester; and have not people got the park as well?" Whatever in the way of smoke this great city could do without, it is blessed with many a kindly Christian mission; and not the least important of these is the scheme to look after young women who travel thither as strangers. The Female Strangers' Lodging House is an outcome of a speech made by the late Dr. Fraser at a meeting of the Young Women's Christian Association. He suggested that rooms should be secured near the London Road station, and a motherly woman engaged on behalf of strangers. Here respectable young women find a refuge when homeless, perplexed, and in trouble through missing trains, running short of money, and the like. A girl of thirteen came to visit a married sister, but arrived at an empty house; the police brought her to the Lodging House, and she was looked after till the right address was found. A respectable workman brought a servant who had run short of money while travelling, and she was safely sent to her employer. Such are illustrative cases of this kindly agency.

THREE HELPFUL VOLUMES.

We assume that the Expositor's Bible is published for the benefit of a specially intelligent and discriminating class of readers, and that certain expressions which occur in the volume before us will be taken and appraised in the sense intended by the author. With this understanding we may most heartily welcome Dr. Monro Gibson's exposition of the Gospel according to St. Matthew (Hodder and Stoughton). This volume well maintains the high character of the series for freshness of treatment, based upon scholarly research and devout meditation. We hope that pastors and teachers will acquaint themselves with Dr. Gibson's original and thoughtful volume without delay.—The most interesting life-study in the New Testament, after the record of the earthly life of our Lord, must ever be that of the Apostle of the Gentiles. It is only natural, then, that there should be added to Messrs. Nisbet's series on the "Men of the Bible" a volume on "St. Paul: his Life and Times." The Rev. James Iverach, M.A., is the author of this latest accession to the already long list of helpful works, and he has succeeded in the marshalling of his facts in an eminently instructive manner. Of course he has been obliged to base his work upon the scattered hints of autobiographical detail to be gleaned from the apostle's letters. But he has made a scholarly use of them, and the result is a handy work, at once thorough and easily mastered.—A new edition has just been issued, by Mr. Elliot Stock, of Canon Eden's "Churchman's Theological Dictionary," a work which gives in small compass a vast amount of information on ecclesiastical and theological matters, alphabetically arranged for ready reference.

THE WORLD'S SNEER ANSWERED.

In a letter to Sir Horace Mann, Horace Walpole wrote:—"Your friend Doddington is so reduced as to be relapsing into virtue." This was no doubt suggested by the common saying, that the last resource of people who have become disappointed with the world is to turn saint. A great preacher has answered the sneer in these words: "Let the world curl its lip if it will, when it sees through the causes of the prodigal's return. If affections crushed in early life have driven one man to God; if wrecked and ruined hopes have made another man religious; if want of success in a profession has broken the spirit; if the human life lived out too passionately has left a surfeit and a craving behind which end in seriousness; if one is brought by the sadness of a widowed life, and another by the forced desolation of involuntary single life; if, when the mighty famine comes into the heart and not a husk is left, not a pleasure untried, then, and not until then, the remorseful resolve is made—'I will arise, and go to my father:' well, brethren, what then? Why, this: that the history of penitence produced, as it so often is, by mere disappointment, sheds only a brighter lustre round the love of Christ, Who rejoices to receive such wanderers, worthless as they are, back into His bosom."

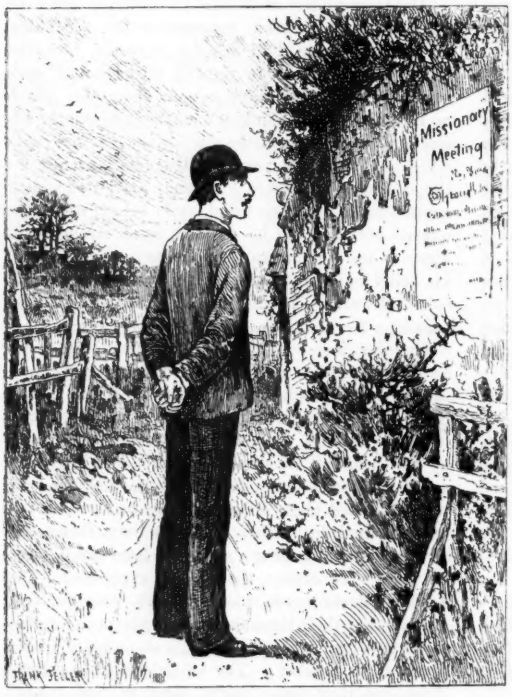
ASIATIC INDIFFERENCE TO PAIN AND DEATH.

The insensibility of Asiatics to suffering and even death has often been commented on. Medical missionaries have told us, for example, how the Chinese can undergo, in the full possession of such sensibilities as they have, severe operations which no European would think of enduring without the administration of anæsthetics; while the readiness with which an aggrieved person will commit suicide for the sake of being before his enemy at the yamen or courthouse of the Purgatorial world below, where the quarrel will have to be decided, is as strong testimony to the Chinaman's indifference to death as to his belief in the corruption of the mandarins in that spiritual world. Having occasion the other day to consult a file of Indian papers, we were reminded of a singular instance of this promptitude to throw away life, on what seems the most insufficient provocation, that took place some time ago in the native State of Rajputana. The taxes of a certain village being demanded, the religious devotees, instigated by the head of a monastery, refused to pay. A number of brother devotees from the neighbouring villages joined them, till there were in all some one hundred and fifty threatening to bury themselves alive unless they were exempted from paying this tax levied to defray the village expenses! The Thakoor declining to yield to their demand, they showed that their threat was no empty one, for they at once began to carry it out, and actually buried two of their number. The officials tried to prevent them, but they drew knives, daggers, and swords,

and defied interference. Ultimately assistance came to the authorities, and a number were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, the abbot receiving a sentence of three years. Whether this was enough may well be doubted, seeing he had been the cause of considerable trouble before. It appears that some time previously he had been arrested, and nearly a hundred of his followers had rushed into the compound of the British Political Agent threatening to kill themselves unless the abbot were released. They dug four graves, and in each a man sat himself down, ready to be buried alive forthwith if their leader were not set at liberty. On that occasion the Political Agent thought it best in the end to give way, so murder was thus averted for a time. With such facts before us we may almost hope that the barbarous penances and mutilations which Eastern idolaters sometimes inflict upon themselves are not so severe to them as they seem. Nevertheless, the state of things is too horrible as it is, and shows the absolute need of the blessed Gospel of love and good-will as the only true civilising force in the world.

HANDING ON THE TORCH.

Readers of Christian biography often realise that divine leading of the worker to his work is still a fact. The torch is handed down the centuries, often through the ministry of what seems, but is not, adventitious incident. A young gardener, out on a summer evening's walk, stops before a placard announcing a missionary meeting. To him it is a complete novelty. The passion of a lifetime is born, and the band of missionary pioneers has then and there Robert Moffat as a recruit. William Fleming Stevenson told the story of bright Christian faith kindling gladness by its reflection in dark places. His book, "Praying and Working," was a literary success—and more. It handed on the torch. Away in the Australian bush a thoughtless young settler was seized in the grip of fever. He recovered; and during the weary time of convalescence a copy of these tales of true modern marvel—of holy, successful effort made in the Lord's strength and for His sake—came in the young man's way. He read it first as one who seeks any cure for *ennui;* but soon the beautiful white light of love, trust, and self-abnegation beamed out. He was aroused to deep interest. The question came: Had his life hitherto been a help or a blessing to anyone? From sad communion with the past he turned his glance upwards to the hills. He would turn over a new leaf, and, like these heroes of faith whose records were before him, live for a noble aim. He became a loyal and earnest pleader for his Master. What he had strangely received, that he tried to give to others—handing on the torch.

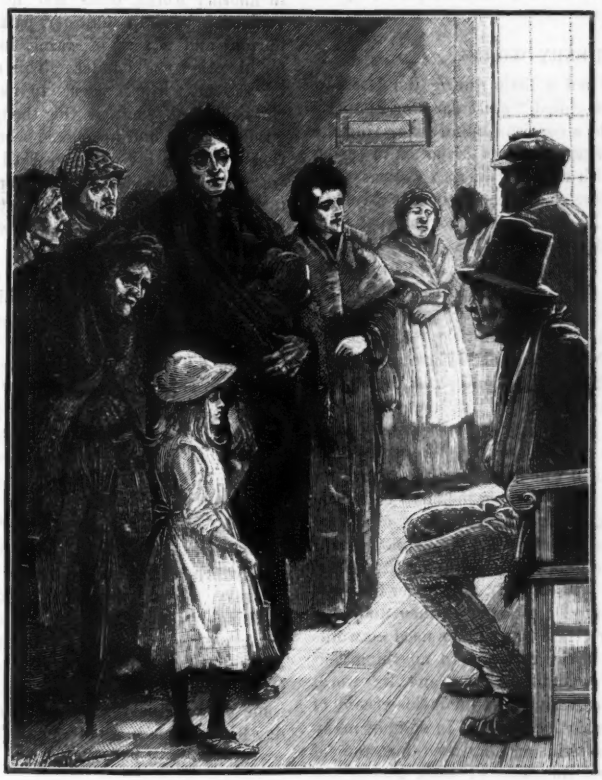


"To him it is a complete novelty."

MAHOMMEDANS IN CHINA.

A friend lately travelling in Kansuh, Shen-si, and Honan, has met with a considerable body of Mahommedans, "Arab-Chinese," as they are called, concerning whom he writes: Their physical superiority to the Chinese around is marked, while their habits are much more cleanly. They dwell chiefly in cities, nowhere engaged in agriculture; neither do they show any interest in literary pursuits. From their ranks petty military officers are largely drawn, while in many large towns they own the principal shops, distinguished always by the Chinese characters, "Pure, True." It seems, however, that this advertisement is not quite trustworthy, but that if a Mahommedan traveller finds any stopping-place destitute of such an orthodox restaurant, he presents a Chinese landlord with a slip of wood thus inscribed, and when this is suspended he has no scruple in taking food on the premises. But some, to avoid all risk of using utensils which have contained pork, carry their own culinary apparatus, from the stove to the tea-cup. In some of these

Mahommedan settlements the women worship once a year, when the mosque is reserved for them. Although, among the earlier colonists, intermarriage with Chinese women was not unknown, the daughters of Islam homes have never been given to Chinese husbands. Strange to say, they are more rigid and inhuman than the natives in the matter of foot-binding. The residence of these foreigners in China dates from the middle of last century, when some natives of Mongolia, in which region the Chinese Emperor, K'ien-lung, had been at war, accompanied him as an escort home to Peking, and at his invitation settled in his Empire.



WAITING TO SEE THE DOCTOR.

"SICK, AND YE VISITED ME."

It is a grand thing when prayer and faith get "down to the finger-tips," and set people doing as well as planning on behalf of the poor. The patients who come up for treatment to the dispensary of St. Luke's Gospel Mission say gratefully that if they were ever so rich they could not have better attention; sympathy and consideration have planned all things for their benefit, the waiting-time being spent in a well-lighted and well-warmed hall. This mission stretches out arms of compassion to the aged, the infirm, young children, the decent struggling poor, and those brought low by drink and shiftlessness. Here has come the poor factory girl, standing long hours at a time, sorely needing the benefit of good food and seaside homes; pale children with "school headache" are brought too often for treatment, and the doctor has had to write many certificates of unfitness for school. It is not easy to study unless good food be building up the growing frame. The trained nurse connected with the dispensary is constantly busy in the district, and that her work calls out a good deal of Christian patience may be judged from the example given of a little boy needing a wash, where the only adjuncts available appeared to be a piedish, a kettle, and a saucepan. The kettle was also the teapot, so the nurse chose the saucepan, and the little fellow received as much of a bath as was possible. She

was unaware that one of her patients was a Jew, and to him she said one day, "You are not safe if you rest on any foundation but Jesus Christ." The wife told her they were Jews, and she must not speak to her husband in this way. However, they showed pleasure when she called again, as they had not expected she would continue her care of a Jew, and she went on telling of the Saviour's love, till, while arranging the pillows during her last visit, she heard the dying man whisper, "*I believe in your Jesus.*"

CHEERY WORDS.

We have heard not a little during the last few years about what is called "muscular Christianity," which we take to be a concise form of expressing the work done by earnest Christian labourers in caring for the bodily health of young men as well as their spiritual needs. One of the leaders in this excellent movement is Mr. F. A. Atkins, who has just published, through Messrs. Nisbet, a little work on "Moral Muscle," which, for its straightforward, manly, Christ-like teaching, ought to be in the hands of every young man, and every leader of young men. The work is well called, in its sub-title, "A *Brotherly* Chat with Young Men." Its tone is brotherly in the best sense, and, while it is evidently and thoroughly earnest, no one could feel that he was being "preached down at" from its pages. It is to misspent evenings in their first years of freedom from "home-lessons" that many young men who have gone astray look for the first false steps. Show young men how to redeem the evenings, then, and not the evenings alone, by forming this "moral muscle" that Mr. Atkins speaks of, and shows so well how to shape.—Another cheery work from Messrs. Nisbet is Mr. Alexander Gordon's story of the Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen, under the title "What Cheer O!" Our readers need no words of ours to attract their attention to anything connected with this valuable society and its work. Brightly told and cleverly illustrated, this record of faithful service, heroically rendered in spite of many obstacles, ought to win an increased measure of support and interest for those at work among the North Sea fishermen.—Messrs. Morgan and Scott send us another of the Rev. F. B. Meyer's thoughtful and suggestive volumes of expositions. "Tried by Fire" is the title he gives to the present work, which is devoted to the study and explanation of the First Epistle of Peter. The work is one which should be of service to preachers or teachers, and of equal value to those who cannot get out to hear fresh discourses for themselves. With such a work as Mr. Meyer's their thoughts may still be profitably guided and directed. In "*The Christian* Bible Readings," issued by the same publishers, will be found a series of useful notes to accompany the reading of the Pentateuch. If any of our Bible-class friends should be thinking of studying this part of God's Word, they cannot do better than accept the guidance proffered them in this little volume.

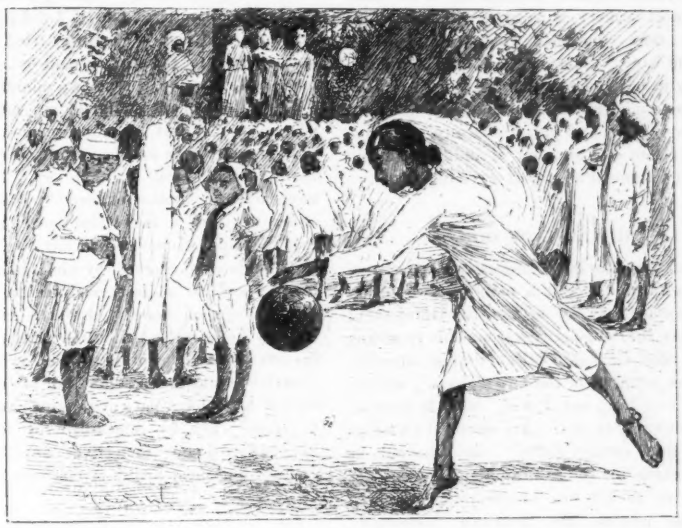
"WHAT PROVISION HAST THOU MADE?"

During a recent voyage between Malta and Tunis, when at the latter place we visited the site of the ancient Carthage. We were shown there a museum in which we saw the skeleton of a man, said to date back three thousand years. In the tomb with him—or coffin, we forget which—were found the bones of a chicken which had been provided by thoughtful friends in case he should wake up hungry in another world, coins lest he should be inconvenienced by impecuniosity, part of a bag, a little mirror, and a sort of razor, intended, no doubt, for his other-world toilet. This sort of preparation for the next world seems to us to be mournfully childish; but what is the thought of those more wisely warned and instructed who make no preparation at all for it? Bishop Hall tells us that there was a certain nobleman who kept a fool, or jester, to whom he one day gave a staff, with a charge to keep it until he should meet with one who was a greater fool than himself. Not many years after, the nobleman was ill, and near death. The jester came to see him, and his lordship said to him, "I must soon leave you."—"And where are you going?" asked the fool.—"Into another world," replied his lordship.—"And when will you come again? within a month?"—"No."—"Within a year?"—"No." "When, then?"—"Never."—"Never!" said the jester; "and what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there where thou goest?"—"None at all!"—"No!" said the fool, "none at all? Here, then, take my staff; for, with all my folly, I am not guilty of any such folly as this." But what is the provision that should be made for that other land into which, sooner or later, we must all journey? It may be summed up in a single sentence. Nothing but a good life here can fit us for a better one hereafter. The way to prepare for our departure is, long before the time comes, to take Jesus as our individual Saviour, and try to serve Him, not in some extraordinary way, but in our ordinary everyday life. Then, if we die, we shall go to God; and if we live, He will be with us.

SUNSHINE IN THE EAST.

Pleading for cheeriness in dealing with the young, a Sunday-school worker related the anecdote of a child who was visited by a gleam of light during a meal, and placed his spoon within the golden rays, exclaiming, "I've eaten a spoonful of sunshine!" That our little neighbours across the sea may partake of sunshine is the aim of many a mission-worker anxious to bless soul and body, and teach "God's possible by His world's loving." An interesting letter from Bengal tells of a mission-treat to about four hundred children, many of whom arrived at 6 a.m. for festivities timed to commence at 1.30. Greenery and flowers twined the verandah, and flags of red, white, and blue delighted the

company; ringing "salaams" greeted the appearance of the missionary and his wife, and then came prayer and singing, followed by gifts of fruit and sweets, and a hearty romp and scrambling for balls. The distribution of the prizes was the great event of the day. The best boys received a flannel jacket, a cap, a comforter, a bag of marbles, a top, a whistle, and a box of pins; the best girls obtained two garments, hairpins, a pincushion, a needle-book, and a doll. All seem to have come in for something; and all see the justice of the awards, for their behaviour is noted each Sunday on their own cards, and the prizes are thus adjudged. Several Brahmin parents looked on at the scene, and must have owned in their hearts that the followers of Christ delight rather in giving than in receiving. Next morning, soon after daylight, most of the guests reappeared to exhibit their presents and renew their thanks. A good deal of loving patience is needed with these little ones, most of whom have had no training of any kind; but that Christian solicitude is fruitful is shown by the instance given of one little maid of ten who clasped the hands of the missionary's wife, saying, "Mem Sahib, Jesus is the Saviour of my soul; I say this from my heart."



SUNSHINE IN THE EAST.

"GOOD WORDS COST LITTLE, AND ARE WORTH MUCH."

It was said of Edward the Confessor that he could deny a request so sweetly that his "No" was pleasanter than the "Yes" of other people. "The love and admiration," says Canon Kingsley, "which that truly brave and loving man, Sir Sidney Smith, won from everyone, rich and poor, with whom he came in contact, seems to have arisen from the fact, that without perhaps having any such conscious intention, he treated rich and poor, his own servants, and the noblemen his guests, alike, and alike courteously, considerately, cheerfully, affectionately—so leaving a blessing wherever he went." "Sir Walter [Scott] speaks to every man as if he were their blood relation," said a Scotch peasant seventy years ago of the great story-teller.

HOW THE FOREST FALLS.

The East has always been the land of metaphor and imagery. Palestine had its parables from sacred lips. Missionaries to-day succeed best as they talk in picture language. And sometimes they listen to wise words that take the figurative form. "India will be won to Christ; our religion is fated to pass away," said an observant Hindoo to an ambassador of the Cross; "and this is how it comes about. A great, dark, terrible forest of heathenism shuts us in. We cannot see our path. And cruelty is in the darkness. But you come to us with the axe of love, and you cut down a few boughs. Only a few boughs. You are not many. You cannot do much. It looks as though the light will never get through the forest. But it is a mistake to despair. The boughs are lopped from the trees here and there, and as they drop they are shaped by the truth, and an axe-head is fitted to each one, and each bough becomes a weapon, and strikes in its turn. You make other workers as you work. The ones are soon the tens, and will be the thousands, and so the forest falls."

It is an inspiring, helpful thought, precious to those who toil for the Master at home or abroad. The dense forest seems to mock the weak efforts of single toilers, or of the Christian Churches. But every lopped bough becomes in its own place an axe, and so the work widens. Every changed heart and new life is a witness to other captive souls. And if by earnest effort we can win one brother, one sister, we do well. For so the axes multiply; for so the forest falls.

"WHERE'S THE BAR?"

Going on a Rhine steamer through one of the most beautiful bits of scenery, a Yankee "globe-trotter" slept all the time, and then woke up and asked, "Where's the bar?" Too many of us act in much the same way in our journey through life. We pass by without noticing, much less using them, opportunities of the highest and purest pleasure, and then we wake up from our slumber of indifference and ask for some excitement as if that were happiness.

"LET HIM ASK OF GOD."

The Biblical Museum has a suggestive narrative of two friends conversing about a man who would not plough and hoe his field, for he said the Omnipotent Lord could give him prosperity without his troubling to bend his head in toil. "But that is tempting God," said the younger of the two; "have you told the man so?"—"Nay, but I will," was the answer, "for my words apply to *you*. Are spiritual blessings of less worth than earthly fruits? He who bids us stoop to the earth for the sake of the harvest, does He not tell us to lift our heads towards heaven in prayer to receive His heavenly blessing?" *Prayer and expectation* are channels we neglect at our own peril. Our communion with the Master should be deepened by humble thanksgiving that when we have seemed to forget Him, or give Him but the second place in our lives, He has still been caring for us, and held us in everlasting remembrance.

A CHANCE FOR THE BOYS.

Christian friends in connection with the Dublin Mission are looking after the waifs and strays to some purpose. They have a Home for needy boys, which reports that in its history the promise has been fulfilled—"The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands." Old boys, we hear, are constantly turning up with good accounts of themselves; as a rule, they are employed as servants, but in cases where a boy shows a special mechanical gift, efforts are made to apprentice him suitably. How many a young life drifts hither and thither uselessly and too often injuriously, which might be won for right and for the Master if sympathy reached as far as his loneliness and need, and gave the boy a chance! Of course, in dealing with young waifs there are many discouragements; still, faith and prayer remove mountains, and no endeavour made for Christ's sake shall be put forth in vain. We are told of one such waif whose mother was an invalid, and his father spent time and money at the tavern, so the boy grew up neglected, wild, and idle, ready for any mischief. In the school he was prevailed upon to attend, his tricks greatly amused his comrades, but his restless and foolish habits prevented his learning much. At last an emphatic remark made by a speaker at one of the meetings seemed to impress the little fellow: "He said I was always making a fool of myself to please the other boys, and if I did not stop I might become a real fool." So Harry tried hard to reform, and entered the Home. By-and-bye he discouraged his friends by departing; two months later, begged for "another chance," stayed six months and went off again. At last he really seemed to understand how ungrateful he had been for the benefits extended to him, and he was heard to say, "I suppose now I never *will* get another chance!" His regret seemed so sincere that a lady tried hard to get him back into the happy Home he had left, and from that time his friends were cheered by his steadiness, and, best of all, they had at last good reason to believe in a real change of heart. From a situation in the country he sent a contribution to the Home, and in his letter was the sentence, "Please tell Miss S—— I am so thankful to her for that *last chance*." Shall we not have long patience with those we are trying to train, when we remember the forbearance and long-suffering our own lives experience from the greatest and most loving of teachers?

MODERN DINNER-PARTIES

were disliked by General Gordon because at them "people say what they don't mean, and eat what they don't want." Indeed, our entertainments are in great need of being Christianised. (See St. Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.)

THE "QUIVER" FUNDS.

List of contributions received from June 18th, 1890, up to and including July 18th, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs Fund:* E. R., London, N., 2s.; Mrs. McIntyre, Duror, 15s.; J. W., Camden Town (10th donation), 10s.; S. A., Duncannon, 6d.; A. M.V., Southsea, 10s.; a Glasgow Mother, 1s.

For The Children's Country Holiday Fund: Belfast, 2s. 6d.; Two Friends, 7s.; M. Moore, Birkdale, 5s.; Reader of THE QUIVER, 2s.; Mrs. McIntyre, Duror, 5s.; Avice, Eastbourne, 5s.: which have been forwarded. Also 5s. from Miss Bodkin, Highgate, to the *Coastguards' Mission*, and 10s. from G. W., Bishop Auckland, to the holiday fund of *Dr. Barnardo's Homes*.

Dr. Barnardo asks us to acknowledge the receipt of 10s. from J. G. L. K. towards the funds of his Homes.





EARLY LESSONS.

(See p. 934.)

THEIR BRIGHT EXAMPLE; OR, HALF-HOURS WITH THE WORTHIES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E., ETC., ETC.

IV.—ELIZABETH PRENTISS, AUTHOR OF "STEPPING HEAVENWARD."



"In Bible-readings she especially excelled."—*p.* 884.

IT is not easy to write even a brief sketch of Elizabeth Payson, afterwards Mrs. Prentiss, without lingering over her sainted father, Edward Payson, who for a quarter of a century carried on a wonderful ministry in Portland, Maine. Payson was one of the most seraphic saints America has produced. The New World has not been very prolific of such saints; it has not produced many names to rank with St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Madame Guion, Richard Baxter, Samuel Rutherford, or Archbishop Leighton; but Payson deserves a place in the honoured band. The late Professor Calvin Stowe (husband of Mrs. Beecher Stowe) said of his prayers, and the gushings of his heart in familiar discourse, that they were altogether higher and more touching than anything he wrote. "It was my custom to close my eyes when he began to pray, and it was always a letting down, a sort of rude fall, to open them again when he had concluded and find myself still on the earth. His prayers always took my spirit into the presence of Christ, amid the glories of the spiritual world; and to look round again on this familiar and almost misty earth was almost painful."

Among the other remarkable qualities which were

exemplified by Edward Payson, and in some degree shared by his daughter, was the combination of humour with devotion, and the power of the spirit to triumph over the body under intense pain. "Without effort, or any appearance of incongruity, he could in turn be grave and gay, playful and serious. . . . Nature and grace had full play in him, and as it were ran into each other. . . . His facetiousness was ever a near neighbour to his piety, if it was not a part of it; and his most cheerful conversations, so far from putting his mind out of tune for acts of religious worship, seemed but a happy preparation for the exercise of devotional feelings." As to his triumph over pain, though his bodily sufferings during his last illness are said to have been indescribable, he seemed, like one of the old martyrs in the midst of the flames, to forget them all in the intensity of his spiritual joy. His farewell letter to his sister might be set down as a great exaggeration if those around him had not amply verified its description of his condition: "Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ear, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. The Sun of Righteousness has gradually been drawing nearer and nearer, and now He fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants; I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion."

Elizabeth Payson was but nine years old when her father died (October 22, 1827). Not only his mental qualities, but some of his very ailments and weaknesses, reappeared in her. The "lost will," which he extolled on his death-bed, when he spoke of the blessedness of having his own will lost in God's, became to his daughter a lofty ideal, representing a style of spiritual life after which she strove most assiduously. With her father's ill-health, she inherited his exuberance of animal spirits, and her love of fun and frolic kept her heart as young and blithe as a girl's, even when the snows of age had fallen on her head and her face was furrowed with marks of suffering. Her nature was nimble and elastic, full of grace and delicate beauty; yet there was in her a natural tendency to sadness, which was not altogether overcome either by the flow of her spirits or the joy derived from fellowship with her Saviour. Her emotions were full and lively, and the warmth of her affections drew to her many a heart.

Her apparent contradictions were really due to her many-sided nature. A martyr to ill-health, yet full of the vivacity which sickness usually kills, and of the cheerfulness that comforts and brightens the sorrowing; dreadfully sleepless, so that often for weeks together she hardly knew a good night's rest, yet fresh as a lark and "happy as a grig;" profoundly earnest in all the aims and exercises of the Christian life, yet translating German tragedies, and reading and enjoying "Adam Bede," and "Les Misérables," and "Adventures of a Phaeton," and the cream of our better light literature; finding much enjoyment in all the lawful avocations and recreations of life, yet so cherishing the thought of the life eternal that at any time she could say it would be a pleasure to her to die; fascinated by the theory of the "higher Christian life," and wistfully eyeing "perfectionism" as a vision of delight, yet compelled to give it up by the hard logic of facts, which showed her that neither in herself nor in any human being had she ever seen it, or anything like it—Mrs. Prentiss was a remarkable character, as she was a lively companion and most useful friend. Natures like hers, of such width and sympathy, are not to be judged by the common standard. Readers of her biography may find some things that do not altogether please them, but in her nature there was room for many things that could not be accommodated in a narrower heart.

The centre of her religious life was the person of Jesus Christ. For dogma she had little appreciation, and of logic she made but little use. Truth was apprehended by her intuitions more than by her logic. Her great criterion was that word of our Lord's: "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Wherever she found a soul thrilled by the glory of Christ, she was attracted and charmed.

To a profound delight in Christ, she added an intense love for the Bible. The longer she lived, the more fresh material she found in it. In Bible-readings she especially excelled; not in any particular attractiveness of manner (for she rarely looked round, or even looked up), "but a sort of magnetic influence attracted every eye to her, and held all hearts in breathless attention." Her style was entirely conversational; the tones of her voice, full of fine, subtle, womanly quality, were touched with much tenderness and depth of feeling; the audience listened as if the voice were the voice of an angel. The last Bible-reading she ever gave was on "Witnesses for Christ." She began, as usual, with reading passages and references; then spoke of the many ways in which we may bear witness for Christ, especially in the family, in the way in which we fulfil everyday home duties. So, also, in services rendered to others. She spoke of the trials of life, and the shortness of them at the longest. "We are all passing away," she said, "one after another. Our intimate friends will mourn for us when we are gone, but the world will move on just the same. And we should not allow ourselves to be troubled lest, when our time comes, we should be afraid to die. Dying grace is not usually given until it is needed. Death to a disciple of Jesus is only like stepping from one room to another, and far better, in our Father's House. And how little all the sorrows of the way will seem to us when we get to our Father's House! I suppose St. Paul, amid the bliss of heaven, fairly laughs at the thought of what he suffered for Christ in this brief moment of time."

XUM

But it is full time for us to give a brief account of the course of her life. At the early age of twelve she joined the Church, and publicly devoted herself to the service of the Saviour. Her friends thought her a girl of decided piety; but to herself it seemed, during a time of religious interest, five or six years afterwards, that she was not then a Christian. At one time she shrank from the Lord's Table as a place of absolute torture, and for a whole fortnight omitted all exercises of private devotion. Then a sense of sin overwhelmed her, and for four months she lay in the depths. Again and again she read the first twelve chapters of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress;" the rest of the book she abhorred. At last she heard a sermon on the ability of Christ to save to the uttermost. The thought of His grace and love, which she had hitherto rejected, now began to be relished, and on going home, she could at first scarcely believe in her own identity: the feeling of peace and love to God and all the world was so unlike the turbulent emotions that had long agitated her soul. This experience took place in her twenty-first year. It is not known what she thought of it in after-life; but her husband, in his biography of her, expresses the belief that she would not have regarded her former condition so unfavourably as she did then. Her friends could not but mark during this time her tender interest in the welfare of her friends and pupils, while the books she delighted in, her filial devotion, and the absolute sincerity of her character, seemed to exclude the idea that she had not been a Christian. The ebbs in the spiritual life, amounting sometimes to apparent lifelessness, are often perplexing; but the recoveries are not less remarkable. There seems to have been no such serious relapse during the remainder of her life.

Her first employment from home was as teacher in a boarding-school in Richmond, where she showed a remarkable power of influencing girls and moulding their character. At the age of twenty-six she married the Rev. G. L. Prentiss, who had just been ordained pastor of the South Trinitarian Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The early years of married life were saddened by the loss of children and other trials; but this laid the foundation of that power by which she was able to enter so tenderly in some of her books into the feelings of the afflicted, and minister to their sorrows.

In 1851 Mr. Prentiss became minister of Mercer Street Presbyterian Church in New York, and in this larger sphere his wife had a fine field for her gifts. In 1858, both being worn out, he resigned his charge, and for two years they lived delightfully in Switzerland. In 1861 a new church was built for him, called the Church of the Covenant; and in 1873 he was called to a chair in Union Theological Seminary, New York.

The birth of her children and the publication of her books were the chief external events in her life. In 1853 she wrote "Little Susy's Six Birthdays," "the book," as her husband remarks, "that has given such delight to tens of thousands of children wherever the English language is spoken." Like most of her books, it was an inspiration: the writing of it occupied but ten days. "Stepping Heavenward" was published as a book in 1869. As a well-known clergyman remarked, in a funeral sermon, "The response to it was instant and general. Others of her books were enjoyed, praised, laughed over; but this one was taken by tired hands into secret places, pored over by eyes dim with tears, and its lessons prayed out at many a Jabbok. It was one of those books which sorrowing, Mary-like women read to each other, and which lured many a bustling Martha from the fretting of her care-encumbered life to ponder the new lesson of rest in toil. The circulation of the book was very large." Her husband says: "It was read with equal delight by persons not only of all classes, but of all creeds too—by Calvinists, Arminians, High Churchmen, Evangelicals, Unitarians, and Roman Catholics." The name was got in this wise:—One morning Mrs. Prentiss came to the breakfast-table with her face all lighted up. "I have got a name for my book!" she exclaimed; "it came to me while I was lying awake last night. You know Wordsworth's 'Stepping Westward?' I am going to call it 'Stepping Heavenward.' I think I will put in Wordsworth's poem as a preface."

"Golden Hours: Hymns and Songs of the Christian Life," was her next publication. It was a very real transcript of her own experience. It was sharply criticised by some as conveying too dark a picture of the trials of the Christian life. But Mrs. Prentiss felt that it was through suffering she had acquired her best blessings. "Never could I have known Christ had I not had large experience of Him as a chastiser." It might be very pleasant to picture the world as healthy and happy; "but," said Mrs. Prentiss, "you may depend on it the world is brimful of pain in some shape or other; it is a *hurt* world. But no Christian should go about groaning and weeping; though sorrowing, he should be always rejoicing."

"Urbane and his Friends" followed next. "Urbane is an aged pastor, and his friends are members of his flock, whom he has invited to meet with him from week to week for Christian counsel and fellowship. Among the topics discussed are the Bible, Temptation, Faith, Prayer, the Mystics, the Higher Christian Life, Service, Pain and Sorrow, Peace and Joy, and the Indwelling Christ." The book contained a memorable allegory of a blind beggar-boy, beautifully fitted to bring out the unreasonableness of man in disbelieving the love of God, even when he has had abundant proofs of it, and the marvellous quality of that love. A blind beggar-boy is rescued and adopted by a kind man; yet the boy cannot believe that he is really loved. By-and-bye he is cured of his blindness. He sees ever so many other boys sharing the father's kindness; but then they are his real sons, and he is not his son, and cannot be loved as they are. To his amazement, he learns that they were just like himself, and that they were loved not because they were affectionate and obedient, but because they were wretched and miserable. "Then you must be made of love!" the boy exclaims; he gets a new view of the whole situation, and a new, and henceforth unwavering, confidence in the father's love.

Her next book was "The Home at Greylock." It was the outcome of her own experience in the

management of a home. "She placed religion and love alike at the foundation of a true home: the one to connect it with heaven above, the other to make it a heaven upon earth. She enjoined it upon her young friends, as they desired enduring domestic felicity, to marry first of all for love." To a friend she wrote on this subject: "Oh, if you knew the sacredness, the beauty, the sweetness of married life as I do, you would as soon think of entering heaven without a wedding garment as of venturing on its outskirts, even, save by the force of a passionate, overwhelming power that is stronger than death itself."

Her last book was "Pemaquid; or, a Story of Old Times in New England." Of this a lady friend wrote, that over it she had "laughed and cried, then cried and laughed again;" for Mrs. Prentiss knew how to appeal alike to the tragic and the comic in our nature, and she gave full scope to both in her picture of old New England.

It was but a short period after the publication of "Pemaquid" that her end came. There was but short premonition of the coming change; and when it did heave in sight, she thought of it as too good news to be true. Yet even in her last weeks there was no abatement of her interest in nature, in flowers, in books, in playful jest, and very specially in considerate interest for the comfort of all around her. Suffering from a severe gastric affection, her pain was often fearful. Her habitual sleeplessness, and the dreadful nervous suffering that followed from it, would have been hard to bear without any superadded torture. She died on Tuesday, August 13, 1878.

Her much-honoured friend, Dr. Vincent, in committing her body to the grave, dwelt on the beautiful words, "They shall rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." "Bethink you of the long life marked by the discipline of sorrow and by those unwearied labours for others. Still is the busy hand, at rest the active brain, completed the discipline, the pain ended for ever. Her works do follow her. Think you that because she will no longer meet you at her weekly Bible-readings, because her pen will no longer indite the thoughts that have made many so patient under life's burdens, and helped so many to make of their burdens steps on which to mount heavenward—think you her work is ended? Nay! Go into yonder field, and pluck a single ear of wheat, and plant the grains, and you know that out of each grain which falls into the ground and dies, there will spring up an hundredfold. Shall you recognise so much multiplying power in a grain of wheat and not discern the infinitely greater power of multiplication enfolded in a holy life and in a holy thought? No. Through the long years in which her mortal remains shall be quietly resting beneath this sod, the work of her tongue and pen shall be reproducing itself in new forms of power, of faith, and of patience."

With a Christian lady of such gifts and graces it would be good for us to spend not a few half-hours.

THE OTHER SON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NOT ALL IN VAIN."

CHAPTER XII.

REST AFTER WEARINESS.

"What messenger
Ran from the door of heaven to bring her home?"
GEORGE MAC DONALD.

SARSFELD came into the schoolroom, and closed the door noiselessly behind him. He carried in his hand a steaming cup of fragrant coffee. Theodora was just where he had left her an hour or so before, in the corner of the sofa, her cheek resting wearily against the hard horsehair covering.

"Drink this," he said, with tender insistence; and she roused herself and obeyed.

"Where are they all?" she asked, speaking in the hushed tone one uses in the house where Death has come.

"Sleeping, except Polly. She made this coffee and bade me bring it to you."

"Does she know?" asked Theodora.

"Yes, poor child, she knows," was the brief reply.

"How is Beth?" she said.

He made no answer, and she repeated the question.

"Beth is sleeping also," he replied.

"I think I will go to her, if you do not mind," she said, rising to her feet. Sarsfeld put her gently back in the sofa corner.

"I would rather you did not, just yet," he said. "You need to rest a little after the long night's vigil."

"Who will tell mother?" she asked him presently. "I shrink from it. I suppose she loved him. She must, at least, have loved him once."

"Harold will tell her; I have just now been talking to him. All the hard things must not come upon you."

"Do you remember, long ago," she asked him, looking at him with pathetic eyes, "how young and glad we used to be, and how impossible a thing sorrow seemed? It was only something we read of in books, or heard of as touching other people. I often think of those days. Do you remember how full of sunshine the days used to be, and the sky was always blue, and the nights were always lit with stars? And now, wherever we turn, there is sorrow, and sorrow, and yet again sorrow."

Her head drooped forward sadly as she sat with clasped hands, and tears rolling down her white cheeks. Sarsfeld came and sat by her, and took one of her cold hands in his.

"The bright days will come again, dear," he said, with the deep tenderness of perfect sympathy in his voice. She shook her head.

"And there is something else," she said, raising her eyes to his face. "I know by the way you look at me that there is something else you want to break to me."

Sarsfeld's face was almost as white as her own. Her eyes gazed pleadingly into his. "Tell me, whatever it is, tell me; knowledge is less cruel than suspense."

"Can you, then, not guess what I have to say?" he said, in a voice scarce more than a whisper. "When Death came last night, he took two away with him."

"Beth!" she cried, with a wail of such deep heart-anguish that he never forgot it. She sank back half-fainting from the shock and the grief of it. There were tears in Sarsfeld's eyes as he put his arms round her and held her to his breast. He murmured tender caressing words as his lips touched her hair.

"I would have died to save you this, dear heart," he said, as at last she raised her head, and looked at him with haggard eyes, and mute, quivering lips. Under this fresh sorrow and pain, even as his arms held her, so his love and his strength were ready to enfold and protect her; but she put his hands away, and sat up straight facing him.

"And after all these years I was not with her at the last," she said.

"She did not know; she went away in her sleep, quite painlessly, quite peacefully. Your sister watched her all the night, faithfully. She did not cry, or moan, or need you, dear. It is well with her; and can you not be thankful that the long pain of that little life is over at last?"

The door opened softly, and poor Polly, with tear-stained eyes, and haggard, frightened face, came in. Theodora opened her arms to her, and Sarsfeld went out and left the sisters alone in their grief.

None of them ever knew how those dreary, dark, terrible days went over. But what they all knew was that Sarsfeld did all for them that man could do. He made all the needful business arrangements, he settled everything, he went hither and thither in the house to whomsoever wanted him most—comforting Mrs. Ansley, cheering the children; and hundreds of times each day Harold declared that what he would have done without him he did not know. But he hardly ever saw Theodora. On the evening of the second day he asked Harold where she was.

"Up-stairs," said Harold, with a significant up-lifting of both shoulders and eyebrows.

"She must not remain there," said Sarsfeld, masterfully.

"Polly has tried her best, but she will not come away."

"I will go up and talk to her."

"I am sure I wish you would," said Harold, rising and going with him from the room. "It's enough to kill her, or at least cause a serious illness, to have her fretting as she is. I don't want to be a savage, you know, Sarsfeld, but I can't help thinking death has been a merciful release to the child. She must always have been a sufferer. But women don't think this way. I believe they rather like a child they can cry and fret themselves to fiddle-strings over. This is the room; I will wait outside."

Sarsfeld went in. The little attic room was flooded with the light of the setting sun; the rosy light rested upon Theodora's bent golden head, and touched the dead face of the child with a transient glow. Sarsfeld went forward, and put his hand upon her shoulder as she knelt by the bed, her face buried from sight.

"Come with me, Theodora," he said gently.

She made a gesture of dissent, then looked up with her brown eyes glistening with tears. "Let me stay," she murmured brokenly. "They will take her away to-night."

"Come," he repeated, still with his hand on her shoulder. "I wish it."

She rose obediently, and kissing the little face that was so much paler than the snowy flowers about it, turned away.

"I am ready," she said gently.

"Does not the peace of her face comfort you?" he asked, pausing and looking down with folded arms upon the marble, smiling pallor of the child. Theodora walked to the window, and stood there looking at the far golden glory of the sunset sky.

"Yes," she said softly, speaking more to herself than to him. "I am glad that she is at rest; all the little questions she so often mutely asked are answered now; and she has found her home where at last she is welcome and happy. She can run, and leap, and laugh, and sing now as Alice does. She used to smile when I told her that one day she would go there beyond the sunset, and be quite happy, with the pain all gone. People used to think she did not understand anything, but I know she did. And whether she understood or not, the patience and the silence of her life helped me to be patient and silent, and helped me often to look up out of this maze of pain and difficulty, to where there is gladness, and peace, and joy."

CHAPTER XIII.

A PAINFUL TASK.

"Wear thy yoke, endure thy lot,
Bear thy burden and do thy best."—ANON.

"YES, my dear Theodora, I'm going back to town in the morning—the very first train that I can get. I am worried beyond endurance. I have put up with her as long as I can, but there's an end to everything; and an end has come to my patience," exclaimed Mrs. D'Albert, speaking with unusual energy. Theodora had met her aunt in the village street, and Mrs. D'Albert instantly plunged into the subject of her woes.

"When that poor man died," went on Mrs. D'Albert, "I thought it only my duty to invite my sister-in-law to my lodgings, being in a measure my own house for the time; but I never meant her to

stay all this time. A fortnight to-day since the funeral, and there she is still, and I cannot get my own maid or man to attend to my own wants and requirements, so taken up are they with her whims and oddities. Such a trying woman! And to think she got two men to marry her, and one of them my brother, who ought to have known the difference. Dear, dear! the mischief a pretty face does in this world is incalculable—absolutely incalculable. I cannot stand her another day, that is the truth."

"You've been very good," said Theodora.

"Yes, I have indeed," returned her aunt, with energetic assent. "Quite too good, in fact. She is the most trying person I ever met. You've no idea of it."

"I think I know a little about it," Theodora answered, smiling, "after eight years, aunt!"

"She is so absolutely selfish. She talks as if the poor man went and got himself killed just on purpose to annoy her. She complains that widow's mourning never became her, and she consults with Hales all day long as to how soon she may wear grey, and mitigate her affliction with white ribbons. There, there! don't talk about her; it makes me angry: and at my time of life it does not do to waste one's vital forces getting angry. What I really want to know is, when will you come to me? There is no hindrance in the way now, and I want you so much. I am too old now to be left so much alone. I want someone young and bright constantly with me. We must go abroad for the winter. Travelling will do you good and distract your thoughts, and you used to like it, Theodora."

"And Harold?"

"Oh, Harold! Harold can take care of himself. Harold can fall on his feet better than any young man I ever met, and it is a quality all the young men of the present day possess. Very largely possess, too. A young man of to-day has only one idea, and that is himself and his own comfort. Not that I want to say anything unkind of Harold. Why should he not look after himself? But he is not you, that's all. So it's absurd of you, when I ask you when you'll come back to me, to purse your mouth, and say, 'And Harold?' as if I were neglecting my duty, and as if it were your business to tell me so, even if such were the case. No, Harold is Harold, and he can mind himself; I have taken a lot of trouble to get him this appointment, and he can get on well enough now if he likes. And then there's this Nora of his. I've got to ask her to visit me, and I can't do that unless you will come and help me to entertain her. Besides, she's going to be your sister, and you must meet her. So you must let me know at once when you can come to me, so that I can make my arrangements."

Before Theodora could reply, Dr. Sarsfeld passed them. Mrs. D'Albert knew him by appearance as the Raylington doctor who had been so kind to the Ansleys in their affliction, and as she caught sight of him now she audibly bade Theodora introduce her, and with a smile on his handsome face Sarsfeld stopped and raised his hat courteously.

"Aunt Florence!" cried Theodora, in amazement—for would not she herself have known him after any number of years, and through all and every disguise of change?—"do you not remember Dr. Sarsfeld? We knew him long ago in Germany and Switzerland. Don't you remember how kind he was that winter you were so ill?"

Mrs. D'Albert stared. She had met a vast number of young men "long ago in Germany." There had usually been a phalanx of them wherever the beautiful Miss Holbrook went. And she had been ill so many winters, and so many passing strangers had been kind to her, that it was no wonder if she now felt a little puzzled. But as she looked at the young man closely, remembrance came back. She put out her hand affably.

"So delighted to meet you again! and how really odd when you think what a poky little place this is. I am getting away from it to-morrow. And I want you to use your professional influence with my niece to join me immediately in town. She is looking so very far from well, you know."

Sarsfeld looked at Theodora. She coloured and looked down.

"I am not going to permit my niece to bury herself down here any longer," said Mrs. D'Albert vivaciously, bestowing a very keen glance upon the young doctor's face as she spoke.

"Indeed, I think you are quite right," he said, in his decided way. Theodora went home feeling a little aggrieved.

A few days later he called to see her, and found her in the garden in her favourite seat under the chestnut-tree. She looked up and greeted him with a glad, shy smile, moved her work-basket to make a place for him, then remembered that she was a little offended with him, and consequently became a little stiff. Sarsfeld apparently did not notice these feminine variations of manner. He spoke about the business which had brought him, Theodora listening, and in her secret soul thinking how clever he was, and how capable.

"Everything is turning out so happily for us all," she said, when he had finished. "Mamma has heard from General Ansley, an uncle of my stepfather's. He offers her and the girls a home. He lives near London, and is very wealthy, but he quarrelled some years ago with Mr. Ansley, so has kept up no intercourse with us since then. He will send the boys to school."

"And you?" asked Sarsfeld. "Are you free at last to choose your own life?"

"I begin to hope that I am," she said. "And yet I don't like to hope too much, for when one has often been disappointed one forgets to hope, or one thinks it is too daring."

"Yes;" he quoted softly, "'Hopes apace were changed to long despair.'"

"Oh, not so bad as that," she began, then stopped short, convicted by the remembrance of the "long despair" of the spring day when William had met her on the Hinkley Road, and the many other days, and months, and years in which she had seen no faintest gleam of good.

"What, then, will you do?" he asked.

There was an imperceptible pause, then she said, slowly, without looking at him, "I think I shall go to Aunt Florence."

He said nothing as he leant forward, and seemed absorbed in making patterns upon the gravel at their feet. Theodora stole a glance at his face. It was grave and resolute.

"And so we all go," she said presently, "and leave that little grave behind. . .

"And you? What are you going to do?" she asked, breaking a silence which had fallen on them.

"Oh, my daily work, I suppose. See after my patients, and endeavour to amass a fortune. I think the Raylington practice will turn out well enough."

"But it is such a little, unimportant place for you to stay in," she said.

"It is well enough. I am not ambitious, and I like this neighbourhood."



"'I have my story yet to tell you.'" *p.* 892.

He seemed to have no interest in the topic of his own prospects, and presently he started another.

Theodora sat and listened, and tried to smile and respond at the right places, while all the time she was wondering was this indeed the same man who had held her in his arms and comforted her in her sorrow? Now he was calmly discussing her life in the future as one to be spent far away from his. Before he went away he asked her when she would

leave, and when she said "Soon," he said he was glad to hear it.

The sooner after that she went the better, but she must wait to see the Hardens. In about three weeks she saw Johnson undo the knocker from its wrapping, prune the box borders of the garden walk, and the windows were opened wide, and the steps whitened, so she knew that they were coming home. The next day she sent Vincent over with a note, asking an interview with the doctor.

She looked calm enough, but her face was white, and her limbs were trembling, as she entered the room where the old gentleman sat in state to receive her. She did not know how to frame her lips to the dreadful words of shame which she had come to speak. Something in her white face and pleading eyes, and the sight of her heavy mourning, softened the doctor, and he shook hands more warmly than he had done since she had declined William's attentions.

"Sit down there, my dear," he said kindly. "You do not look as well as I could wish to see you. Mrs. Harden will be down directly."

"I want to see you alone," she said.

"So I gathered from your note. We shall not be disturbed. Sit down."

She unloosed a scarf from about her throat; her lips were dry, and her eyes burning. She stumbled for words to begin. All her natural graceful ease of manner forsook her, and she sat there stiff, and silent, and quivering.

"My stepfather is dead, as you know," she said at last. "He gave me a message for you."

"For me?" said Dr. Harden, with evident surprise.

"There was some money of yours taken," she went on stammeringly, a flood of cruel shame overwhelming her. "It was not your son who took it: it was Mr. Ansley."

Dr. Harden, a hand on each arm of the chair, leaned forward staring at her, with an ashen hue spreading over his ruddy old face. Then a flash of anger such as she had never seen came from his eyes, his nostrils dilated, the veins stood out on his brow like cords. There was a long and terrible silence.

"He took it," he said, in a low tone of the most intense and burning scorn. "For fifty pounds he ruined the boy. He broke my heart. He nearly killed my wife."

"He is dead now," she murmured, shrinking before the old man's wrath. "He is gone beyond the reach of man's forgiveness or blame." He sat transfixed, his eyes staring, his breath coming in hard short gasps.

"And he kept silence," he said presently. "He has looked me in the face day after day, every day for all these years, met me, talked with me, and in his heart the black bitter secret that his was the hand that had ruined my boy." He rose, and paced the floor.

"A word from him would have been enough. Did he think it was the money, the paltry few pounds, that I minded? It was the dishonour and the disgrace. I have never had the shame of it out of my heart since then. He was a good lad until your stepfather came. He took the boy, without my knowledge, to races; he taught him to bet; he taught him to play cards. Both of these things I had strictly forbidden my sons. On the morning of that day Jack came to me and confessed that he had lost fifty pounds—and he not seventeen years of age. I was very angry. What father would not be? I spoke to him very sternly. The next day I went to the drawer of my writing-table to get a roll of notes I had left there. The drawer was unlocked and the money was gone. It was fifty pounds exactly. Jack had spent the evening in that room, a thing he rarely did. He said he had been drawing a map to help William. I accused him of taking the money. He denied fiercely. The thing went on from bad to worse. He had a hot, impetuous temper, and I a hard one. He took me at the word which I never meant, and left the house. I let him go; I let him suffer in silence. I wanted to frighten him and give him a lesson. I thought he would come back. I have waited for him during the long years since. And now to know that he was innocent! Could any man forgive the sin your stepfather has sinned against me?"

"He said," said Theodora gently, "he said that Jack—that your son is living."

"Did he say where he is?" the father asked, a sudden light of hope dawning in his face.

"No," replied the girl. "Those were his last words—'Jack is not dead.'"

"He is dead to us," the old man sighed, and resting his head on his hand he broke down and wept.

Theodora went to him and stood beside his chair, holding his hand and stroking it with her own gloved one.

"I hope I have not been hard to you, my dear," he said presently, looking up into the sweet fair face so full of sympathy and suffering. "He sinned against you, too—forgive me."

"There is nothing to forgive," she said. "With us is the blame and the shame."

"Not with you. Your hand took away the covering from Jack's picture which I had placed there in my anger. And now you have cleared Jack's good name from the cloud which has hung so long about it."

"I think I would almost give my life to bring him back to you," she said passionately.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN A PICTURE GALLERY.

"Oh, let us walk the world, so that our love
Burn like a blessed beacon, beautiful,
Upon the walls of Life's surrounding dark."

G. MASSEY.

"YES, I am tired, and my head aches. You and Harold will forgive me, dear Nora. I am sure, if I stay here and let you go and see this show by yourselves. I will wait for you here," and Theodora sank luxuriously into the corner of one of the velvet-covered lounges in the picture-gallery attached to the exhibition.

"Poor Theo!" said Nora affectionately. "You do look rather pale, and I daresay the noise and the dust, and the Wild-West war-whoops, would be very trying to a head that ached."

"But we shall be quite two hours away," demurred Harold. "You will be wearied at waiting for us, and this is a room full of daubs. There is an Ophelia in the next room which would simply make you shudder. She has green hair and a purple complexion."

"Well, I shall not go near her, so you need not imagine me shuddering. I shall rest here and look at the people passing."

"All right, please yourself, old girl.—Come, Nora: she was always of a rather hermity disposition. We had better go, or we shan't get good places."

And with a good-bye smile from Nora, Harold and his betrothed hastened off and left Theodora alone. She was glad to sit quiet and think, and it was true that her head ached. She was pondering, as she had pondered many an hour since her stepfather died—how Jack Harden could be found. She spoke about it to Harold; but he was not Harold now, he was Nora's shadow. That morning she had told the whole sad story to General Ansley, and the old man, shocked and grieved, had hastened away to consult his lawyer on the subject. Now, as she sat in the almost deserted gallery, she thought, and her thoughts took the one form only—how to find Jack Harden and bring him home. Just in front of her was a very gaudy canvas representing what the catalogue called "A Moorish Interior." Through the deep shadows of an archway struggled in the slanting rays of the sunlight which filled the narrow street just dimly seen beyond. Under a swinging lamp reclined, much at ease, a bey in gorgeous Oriental apparel, with slaves bending before him and rich rugs and skins piled about in luxurious confusion. Years after, Theodora felt she could close her eyes and conjure up every line of that picture.

A few straggling sightseers came and went. Two loudly dressed young women sauntered by with a small boy clinging to the silken skirts of one. Theodora was attracted by his wistful pretty face. The ladies with him paid him no heed; one was volubly telling the other what she had said to someone else, and what that someone else had actually had the audacity to reply. A low-hung painting attracted the little boy: a weird dark picture, with the body of a drowned woman swept in and left by the tide upon a beach of desolate sands. He looked at it with large, frightened eyes. Clutching his mother's dress still tighter, he called to her in his shrill little voice: "What for dey put her in the water, mamma—what for?"

The mother neither heard nor answered, and they swept on to another room, the child's face still turned to the picture, his plaintive voice still calling, "What for, mamma, what for?" Theodora felt sure the ghastliness of that dreary picture would mingle with the child's dreams to-night.

Then a light, firm tread came along the gallery. She looked up, and a bright colour leaped to her face as her eyes met the smiling ones of Sarsfeld.

"You here!" she cried, springing up.

"Yes. Why not? I adore shows."

And he sat down comfortably beside her.

"Will you not tell me you are glad to see me? I do not want you to strain truth for the sake of politeness, of course, but——"

"I am glad," she said, offering him her hand with a frank and pretty welcoming gesture.

"And I am very glad to see you," he said, holding it an instant in a close, friendly clasp. "Are you lost in rapturous admiration of yonder picture? I was almost afraid to interrupt you."

Theodora laughed as her eyes went back to the turbaned head of that gorgeous bey.

"I was thinking of Algiers," she said. "We are going there this winter. Harold will be married in October, and then we start."

"I hope you will like Algiers," he said. "Send me home some flowers of the Star of Bethlehem, won't you? They grow there in profusion, and travel well, they are so wax-like. You can send them to me at Christmas, just to show you have not forgotten me."

"You have been in Algiers?" she asked.

"Yes. I have been pretty well everywhere," he said carelessly. "It is time for me to settle down now quietly. And so Harold is to be married soon?"

"Yes."

"Have you quite decided to live with your aunt?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I am sorry to hear that, for I know, when you do decide upon a certain course of action, how very decided you are."

"What do you mean?" she asked, looking at him with a little surprise.

"Just what I say." And the blue eyes laughed into hers.

"I don't understand you," she said.

"Do you not? I thought I spoke plainly enough. I said I was sorry you had made up your mind so firmly. For you are a very decided young woman, now, aren't you? And I wanted you to do something quite different."

"What?" she said, with a faint pink colour rising to her face.

"I wanted you to come and live with me at Raylington. I am lonely there, rather. And besides, you don't look well: you are thin and pale, and there are hollows in your cheeks that used not to be there, and have no right to be there, and I want to see them vanish. I think plain, simple country life, and rural living and rural fare, would do you far more good than rushing about backwards and forwards from Europe to Africa. I told Mrs. D'Albert just now that I thought so."

"Well, and what did she say?" asked Theodora, trying to look quite at ease and totally disembarrassed, but she did not raise her eyes to Sarsfeld's, and the pink colour in her face grew deeper.

"She said, 'Ask Theodora.' So having found out from her where you were to be found, I started off at once. Well, Theodora, what do you think? Will you go with Aunt Florence, or will you come with me?"

Theodora stared at the Moorish picture. She almost wished she were already in Algiers at this present moment.

"You spoke slightingly of Raylington the other day in the garden. It is a dull little place, but if you

were there it would be the nicest place in the world —to me. Seriously, Theodora, you know—you must know—that I love you—that I have loved you for years. And I have sometimes hoped that you cared a little for me. Do you, dear? I am not good at pretty speeches, but I can only say straight out, I love you. There is nothing to come between us now—there need be nothing. I know why you were silent that day in the churchyard at Raylington. I knew you felt your duty lay at home; I understood it all, my darling. True, there is an ill story attaching to my name, but I do not think it need come between us. You will believe my word if you love me. If you do not love and believe in me, I do not want you. Long ago, at Chillon, I was nearly telling you both my story and that I loved you, but the words you spoke, the look of high resolve upon your proud young face when you said that no disgrace should ever come near you, silenced me. I was hardly more than a boy then, and easily silenced; I am a man now, and I want my answer. I love you, Theodora, and I ask for your love; and your love, if given at all, must be accompanied by trust in me and belief in me."

Theodora raised her earnest eyes to his.

"I do trust in you," she said.

He put out his hand, and with a happy smile she laid her own in it. His fingers closed on hers, and held it fast under the friendly folds of her parasol lying across her lap. His eyes were very blue and smiling.

"I have my story yet to tell you," he said, after they had sat thus silently for a time.

"Do not tell it," she said, "now or any other time, if you would rather not. I can believe in you and trust you fully. I know that disgrace in the true meaning of the word has never touched you."

"But its shadow has been over all my life," he said gravely. "I would rather that you knew all. In fact, you must know all."

He folded his hands on the top of his walking-stick, and rested his chin on them. A ray of sunlight came slanting in and fell upon his head. Theodora leant back in her corner and looked at him. By a sudden inspiration, swift and clear and surprising, she at this moment made the discovery that every reader of this little story has made long ago. The colour ebbed from her face, her eyes shone with a very eager light as she sat straight up and put her hand upon her lover's arm. Some of the tremor she felt communicated itself to him, and with a smile he turned towards her.

"What is it now?" he asked. "Have you suddenly thought of some specially splendid reason why you should not marry me?"

"I know you now," she said excitedly. "I know who you are, and everything!"

"What do you know?" he said, still with a smile upon his lips.

"You are Jack Harden!" she said, with triumphant conviction going straight to the heart of the matter, without reasoning, or preamble, or explanation given or asked.

Sarsfeld stared at her.

"How do you know? Who told you?"

"No one. I guessed it just now."

She laughed, and clasped her hands in glee.

"Then you are Jack? You acknowledge it?"

"Certainly; I intended to tell you. But I am puzzled. I did not know you so much as dreamt of the existence of Jack Harden."

"Do you suppose your mother never told me?" She sprang to her feet eagerly. "Your mother—your father—how glad they will be! Come, let me take you to them now at once. Think of the years in which they have waited for you."

"Think of the years in which I have waited for you," he said, in his masterful, smiling way. "Sit down, and let us talk the thing out."

She obeyed meekly. She had got into a habit of obeying him.

"I feel so puzzled," she said, putting up one hand to her brow. "I can't think how it has all happened as it has. I only know that I am very glad. Shall I ever understand, do you think?" she asked, smiling at him.

"Yes, with a little pains I hope to make you do so. But it seems to me you've found out everything there is to find out already."

"You left your home so long ago—and oh," as a sudden recollection struck her, "you know that it has all been cleared up, don't you? Your father is only waiting and longing for your return."

"He was rather hard with me," the young man said, frowning.

"But he has suffered," pleaded Theodora. "Oh, yes, he has suffered. If you had seen him as I did, you would forgive him."

"I do forgive him. But I cannot understand all you say, dearest. That my mother, God bless her! should have spoken to you of me and confided my story to you does not surprise me. But my father, what made him unbend—a man of flint?"

"I do not think your father was nearly so much to blame as you," she said severely. "To go away and nurse your anger and spite all these years! To let their hearts bleed and break for you—why did you not come back? You might have known that they would forgive you."

"I wanted no forgiveness," he said, throwing his head back with a quick, proud gesture. "I wanted justice. I wanted my father to believe my word. He would not. And before you blame me so readily, Theodora, perhaps you do not know that for some years after I left home I made many overtures to my father. He took no notice of my first letters; he then returned them unopened. I did not write to my mother. I knew how her tender soul would be torn in twain between her love for me and her love for my father, so 't was better she should think me dead than know my father was still implacable towards me."

"Forgive me," she said timidly. "I had no right to blame you."

"Yes, you have every right to say exactly what you think of me, dear heart. I like you to do so. You said once you did not like mysteries. Henceforth there shall be no thought of mine you do not know. But you have not told me yet why my father spoke to you."

"When I went to him to tell him that you were innocent—about the money. You know, don't you?" she began.

"I know I never took it. But what you know on the subject is still a mystery."

"You remember that night—that dreadful night that Mr. Ansley died?" A shudder passed over her at the very remembrance, sobering her joy in the present. "He said to me that he took the money."

There was a long silence. Theodora could say no more. Sarsfeld's face flushed scarlet, then slowly paled, his eyes flashed, and his hands were clenched until the veins stood out upon them.

"I always thought so," he said in a low, bitter tone. "I always suspected him. I went to him and begged of him to confess if he had done so, and clear me from the charge. He drove me from his house with evil words."

"But the truth is known," she said slowly, her face turned away. "You can go home now freely. Strange, is it not?" she added with a wistful smile, "strange that the disgrace which has separated us so long—you and me—was on my side after all, not yours."

"No, never on yours," he said quietly, taking her hand. "Never on yours. But I was a fool not to tell you all that time in Switzerland—a young quixotic fool. I might have known that if you loved me you would have believed that I was innocent. I have looked for you since then far and wide, my Theodora, and it was only after I gave up the search and settled at Raylington that I found you. I little thought, when I used to steal over to Drueling to gaze furtively upon my mother's face, that you were so near."

"I do not know why I did not guess the secret long since. Now that I know, it seems very stupid not to have guessed."

"That is always the way with puzzles after you find them out," he said smiling. "But I can't imagine what made you jump at the conclusion now that I and the missing man are one and the same."

"Your mother showed me a lock of your hair once," she said. "I think it was that. Now, when you leaned forward and the light fell on your hair, it seemed to make me recognise you."

He laughed.

"A woman's instinct is a wonderful faculty," he said. "It is better than reason and logic any day. I suppose there are thousands of men in London alone with hair just the same as mine."

"Oh," she cried, a new idea striking her, "how can I ever unlearn that your name is Sarsfeld? How bad of you to take a name not yours!"

"My name is John Morton Sarsfeld Harden, at your service. You can call me Sarsfeld if you like. By what name used you to think of me, if you ever thought of me?"

"I just thought of you," she said, blushing rosily. "There was no need for a name. Oh, will you not allow me to go home with you to Drueling? I must take you there. I am your discoverer. I want to have the joy of saying to your father and mother, 'Here is Jack. After all these years here he is.'"

"You shall do as you like, dearest," he said, smiling at her eagerness, and the soft light glowing in her brown eyes.

"It will be such happiness!" she went on, with a gay little laugh. "And now Dr. Harden will forgive me."

"Forgive you! Why, what have you done? Oh, I know—poor William," said Jack, meaningly. "I am pleased with William. I see he has grown up a man of discrimination and good taste. Yes, father will forgive you fast enough. You will be Mrs. Jack instead of Mrs. William, and that will please them just as well."

"And me a great deal better. But I suppose I don't count, do I, Jack?"

"Not at all. And so I am to be Jack, am I?"

Before she could reply, Harold and Nora reappeared, laughing and chatting gaily, and anxious to know how Theodora had passed the time.

"I met a friend," said Theodora lamely, to Miss Craydon; while Harold sprang forward with hearty eagerness to greet the young doctor. Nora concluded from appearances that Theodora's headache was a great deal better.

"You will come back to dinner with us, Sarsfeld, won't you?" said Harold warmly.

"Yes, thank you. I made a promise to that effect to Mrs. D'Albert before I came here to look for you."

They all voted that it was pleasanter far to walk home than to drive, and they all fell into the strange delusion that across Kensington Gardens was the shortest way. It was quiet and restful there under the shadow of the great old trees, that have seen so many lovers come and go, and heavy hearts, and broken ones, too, and ruined lives pass beneath their shade. The sky beyond the trees was tinged with rose, foretelling a resplendent sunset going to be, and the leaves rustled softly above their heads. And Sarsfeld, looking at Theodora, thought that in all his knowledge of her he had never seen her look so young and radiant and lovely as now.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOME-COMING.

"Love brings all together at last.
Keep Love safe, it will guide thee well."
W. ALLINGHAM.

AGAIN Theodora stood upon the doorstep of the Clockwork Family's Mansion, and again Peter opened its portals to her. He marvelled at the joyous light in her face, for Peter was a youth of keen observation. He ushered her into the drawing-room, announced her arrival to his mistress, and then slid with an easy grace, born of long practice, down the balustrade of the kitchen stairs to seek Anne, to whom he opined that "somethin' was up with Miss 'Olbrook." Anne curtly sent him to the garden to fetch some parsley, and Peter whistled and went. When he returned, Anne informed him that without doubt there was something up. She had heard the master go into the drawing-room, and then in a few minutes rush wildly out and call the mistress, whom he addressed as "Letty," a thing Anne had not known him to do in these years and years.

Peter received the information in dignified silence. He was offended with Anne. If she would not listen to his news, but snubbed him, and sent him to the garden for parsley, was he now going to demean himself by taking any interest whatever in what she had to say? So with elaborate indifference he went on polishing knives, surveying them every moment with the deepest interest, as if his whole heart and soul and mind were absorbed by his work.

Johnson rushed hastily in. Anne turned upon him with a severe reprimand. Hasty rushes were not tolerated in the Clockwork Family's kitchen any more than up-stairs.

Johnson who had most evidently some important news on the tip of his tongue, sank silenced into a chair, and gaped with masculine helplessness at Anne's grim countenance.

Then they again heard the master's voice, rather tremulous, now calling William. Calling William at this hour of the morning, disturbing his important studies! What would happen next? Were the foundations of the world out of course, and would the stars stray from their orbits?

Then came another ring at the hall-door bell. Peter, with an air of stately indifference, disengaged himself from his occupation, and sauntered up the stairs.

Anne stopped chopping the parsley to listen. A quick and firm step crossed the hall, and went into the drawing-room. The door was shut, but not before a cry—it might be of either joy or pain—came to the listener's ears. And Peter entered the kitchen again, casually whistling a popular air.

"Who 's that, Peter?" Anne asked sharply.

"A gennelman," quoth Peter, gazing tenderly at the point of a knife.

"It's 'im! it's 'im!" said Johnson solemnly, recovering at once his courage and his powers of speech.

"It 's who?" asked Anne, fiercely turning on him.

"It 's 'im—I was agoin' to tell you w'en you took me up so sharp—it 's Master Jack come 'ome!"

"Master Jack!" cried Anne, dropping the parsley and the chopper and her dignity all at the one moment. "Johnson, you've bin drinkin'!"

"I 'aven't," replied Johnson meekly. "I seen 'im, and 'e seen me, and spoke to me. "'Ow are you' Johnson, old man?' ses he—them's 'is very words. 'E's the doctor as 'as bin mindin' of the pore man over the way."

"Master Jack come 'ome!" repeated Anne, as one stunned. "That bein' so, it 's only proper I should go up-stairs and welcome 'im; it 's only what Master Jack would look for on behalf of one as 'as knowed him from a child."

With much dignity she wiped her hands, donned a clean apron, and went. Johnson meanwhile explained to the open-mouthed Peter who Master Jack was, and how he 'd "never have knowed him—never; and he looking at him going in and out of the Ansleys, before his very eyes, and he did not know him, not nohow. And there he was sitting up-stairs again in his own mother's drawin'-room." And he "well he nevered" to such an extent that he annoyed Peter a good deal, who desired the real story, not these rhetorical accessories to it.

When Anne opened the drawing-room door, after knocking twice and getting no answer, there was her mistress, crying and laughing all in a breath, with her cap all gone crooked; and there was a young gentleman kneeling beside her, kissing and caressing her, and speaking lovingly to her; and there was the master on the hearthrug, alternately blowing his nose and setting his hair on end with his fingers; and Miss Holbrook, looking as if she had been crying, though her face was softly bright now, was standing close to him, with her hand on his arm; and there was Master William, looking very beaming and utterly perplexed, his long arms hanging awkwardly by his sides, and his pale eyes very watery and red.

Anne, who was never taken at a disadvantage, pressed forward boldly upon the family group.

"How do you do, Master Jack?" she said calmly, as if he had only been gone since the day before.

Master Jack jumped up and shook her heartily by the hand.

"How do you do, Anne? Why, I declare you are younger than when I left home! I suppose my absence was such a relief to you! I was always the bad boy, Anne, the one that gave you trouble."

"You were always wild enough, sir," said Anne, mollified by the compliment about her youthful appearance, but desirous of inculcating a moral lesson, if possible, as was her worthy wont on all occasions, joyful or otherwise. "But I hope you've tamed down a bit, Master Jack, and that the sorrows of life have taught you resignation."

"I am going to leave off having sorrows now, Anne," he said cheerfully, while Mrs. Harden dried her eyes, and Theodora came across the room and settled the old lady's cap. "I am going to be married, Anne, and we are all going to be as happy as the days are long," went on Master Jack, laughing gleefully.

"Sorrow is the lot of all, sir," sighed Anne. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. I hope she 's a good young lady that you've chosen, sir, and will be a comfort to your honoured parents."

"There she is, Anne," said Jack, with mirthful eyes, indicating Theodora, as she stood beside his mother; "there she is. Now, don't you think I shall be happy, and that the sparks won't fly up with me just yet?"

Anne was thoroughly overcome. She stared from one to the other, drawing her apron through her hands.

"Isn't it very sudden-like, sir?" she asked.

"I have known Miss Holbrook for many long years, Anne—long and long before any of you knew her here," the young man said, not sorry of the opportunity to make this explanation in the hearing of his relations, and with a special reference to William in his mind.

"Please, m 'm, lunch is ready," was Anne's characteristic rejoinder, and she bowed herself from the room.

Jack laughed, and offered his mother his arm.

"Anne is unchanged," he said, as they crossed the hall to the dining-room.

"We are all unchanged," replied his mother,

looking up into his face with fond pride; "only you—you have changed, my darling: grown so big and strong and manly; and you were always handsome. But your blue eyes are just the same, and your hair has the sunshine in it still."

"It was by my hair that Theodora recognised me," said Jack, laughing across the table at her. "There must be something remarkably beautiful about my hair. I thought heaps of fellows had hair just the same."

"And how did Theodora know?" asked the doctor, his ruddy face all smiles and benignity once more.

"I showed her a curl of Jack's hair," said the mother fondly, "so of course she knew it again. She was always fond of you, Jack, I think. She kissed your picture the day I showed it to her."

"You must not tell him such things as that, dear Mrs. Harden," said Theodora, laughing and blushing. "I find he is quite vain and arrogant enough."

"And to think that she has known you all these years!" said Mrs. Harden, gazing at her son. "I feel thoroughly puzzled. You will all have to be very patient with me, my dears. I am a stupid old woman."

"Don't speak badly of my mother, please; I won't allow it," said Jack. "Theodora will have a few hours' conversation with you on the subject, and she will clear up everything. I believe she knows more than any of us. If you only saw how she jumped to the conclusion that I was I, mother, you'd have been astonished."

"When a woman jumps to a conclusion, she is always right," said the doctor gravely.

"Yes, I thought so; specially when Theodora jumped to the conclusion that she would marry me."

"A saucy fellow, is he not?" said the mother, with fond pride.

And they were all very merry, Anne attending table, for Peter was incapable of aught but a good large, open, candid, and unqualified stare at the returned prodigal. Anne was very gracious, for her, and took especial care of Theodora, and did not scold William once.

William—wise and orderly minded youth—did not seem in the least put out or harassed by the turn affairs had taken. He stowed away as much provisions as if the young woman of his heart were not sitting opposite him, the affianced bride of his brother. The clockwork training had not been lost upon William. The present moment was the time to eat, and he was doing his duty. Besides, if she was not fair for him, need he care how fair she was? And on the whole, perhaps, he felt Jack and she were better suited to each other than she and he would have been.

So there was no awkwardness, and there were no hidden thoughts, no stifled regrets at this banquet; but everyone was as happy as it is possible to be in this sad world. Even Anne, who held gaiety as one of the seven deadly sins, relaxed somewhat the grimness of her face and manner.

Then, after luncheon, Theodora went home; and presently in came Mr. Dobson, with beaming face, to see Jack. He had heard the good news, he said, and wanted to be the first to call and shake him by the hand. Then came the vicar, slow and pompous and well-meaning; and so, in the eyes of those who had known him as a boy, Jack Harden was cleared from the shadow which had so long clung about his name.

Jack stayed with his mother and father with willing and loving duty all the day. All the past years since he had left them he unfolded before them, telling of his struggles; how he had gone abroad and studied medicine; how he had met Theodora and left her again; how he had been backward and forwards to Australia several times as doctor on board a steamer; how at last he had saved money enough to buy a small practice, and how he had come to Raylington.

And so in happy unity the long August day went over, and there was the peace of mutual unspoken forgiveness, and the past was put away for ever by these three who so truly loved each other.

Late in the evening he went across to see Theodora. She was out, Alice told him, but would he come in and see mamma? The young man declined—he did not feel any very special affection for Mrs. Ansley—and hastened down the village, and he found his beloved where he told himself he might have sought her first—at the grave of little Beth.

The yellow light of the setting sun still lingered on the cold grey walls of the great old gloomy church, and on the quiet graves. Theodora had fashioned a little cross of lilies, and it lay now upon Beth's tiny grave, filling all the evening air with fragrance. She greeted Jack with a quiet smile as he came to her, and, drawing her hand through his arm, led her away. They went slowly along the road where William had found Theodora gathering primroses in the spring. Now the hedgerows were a tangle of reddening blackberry brambles; and tall meadow-grasses, and daisies waving their white faces in the breeze, peeped at them, as they passed hand-in-hand, talking about the happy future which lay before them.

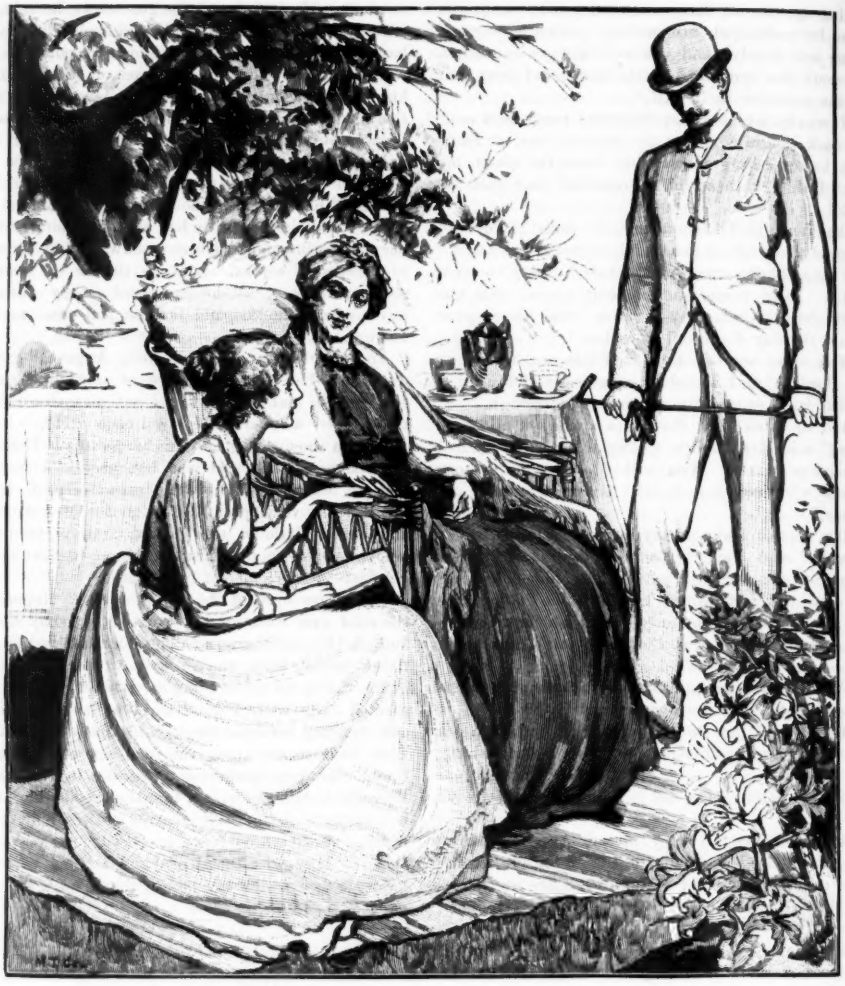
CHAPTER XVI.

THEODORA IS THANKFUL.

"A man's best fortune, or his worst, is his wife."—ANON.

MRS. HARDEN was in a great flutter—so much so as to be perfectly incapable, and Anne let it be plainly understood that for her part she wished her mistress would retire to the drawing-room and let her see to things; or that Mrs. John would come over from Raylington: she was of some use, Mrs. John was. And presently Mrs. John did arrive, perched up beside her husband in his high gig, and with a flutter of white muslin and ribbons she ran up the Clockwork steps, and knocked with both knocker and irreverent knuckles upon the Clockwork door, smiling over her shoulder at Jack as he drove off.

Peter opened the door with an affable smile of welcome, for Peter worshipped the ground covered by Mrs. John's dainty little foot. And Mrs. Harden rushed from the dining-room to embrace her, and Johnson relaxed into smiles as her gay young



"He was amused to find that his wife had carried her point."

laughter rang through the house, and the doctor appeared and kissed her before he went out on what he called his rounds. And, in a word, the coming of Mrs. John completely demoralised the house, as it always had done since the day that she became Mrs. John, and was in the habit of coming over from Raylington, to see them.

"They will be here at five, my dear," said Mrs. Harden. "I am putting out extra forks."

"Let us have tea in the garden," suggested Mrs. John, in the gaiety of her heart.

Anne stared and gasped a little at this revolutionary suggestion.

"It will be so nice and bridal out there, with the flowers all looking so bright, and the place as trim as Johnson always has it. And they will be so glad of the fresh air after their journey in the train, poor things."

"So much trouble," murmured Mrs. Harden, looking timorously at Anne.

"Not a scrap. Johnson can carry out a little table or two, and Peter can run backwards and forwards for anything we may chance to want; can't you, Peter?"

"Yes, miss, ma'am—Mrs. John, I mean," said Peter.

"I suppose if Mrs. John says a thing, it has got to be," said Anne; and that was as much approbation as could be expected of Anne on behalf of any project.

And when Jack arrived in the afternoon he was amused to find that his wife had carried her point, for she had laughingly confided to him her intention

of having tea in the garden, and he had backed Anne's influence against hers. His mother was reclining comfortably in an arm-chair near the tea-table, with a pretty new cap Mrs. John had made, and a soft white shawl wrapped about her lest she should catch cold, Anne said severely. Theodora sat on a low seat near her, reading aloud, and all was evidently quite ready for the new-comers.

"Yes, Mr. Jack; tea in the garden," said Anne grimly. "I don't hold with such newfangled ideas."

"If Mrs. John is pleased, that is all that any of us live for," he said, with the utmost gravity.

Anne flounced away, but smiled broadly when out of sight. It amused her to observe Mr. Jack's adoration for Mrs. John.

"I may say adieu to my wife when her Aunt Florence comes to us next week," said Jack, throwing himself in a chair near his mother. "I expect to be cruelly neglected."

"Theodora would not neglect you, dear," said Mrs. Harden, who always took everything in an absolutely literal sense.

Jack shrugged his shoulders.

"I see there is no use in saying anything against Theodora in this house," he said.

"Anything against Theodora!" cried Dr. Harden, coming up at that moment. "I should hope so. Anyone who has anything to say against Theodora had better not come here, that's all!"

Theodora smiled up lovingly into his face.

"I should like my detractors to come to you, father," she said, laughing, "for they would never have the courage to speak against me again! However, it is only Jack who is grumbling at me this time, so it does not matter."

The year that had gone had not changed in one whit these four. But William had changed—William had done marvellously—and, above all, William had got married! And now they all rose in a body to welcome William and his bride, whom Peter was at this moment solemnly conducting forth from the house. William looked longer and more awkward and rawer-boned than ever as he advanced, arrayed in faultless attire, and his large hands pressed into bright yellow wash-leather gloves. It would not be William without a finishing touch of the kind. And poor Julia (for Julia Morley it was) clung to his arm, and blushed, and tried not to look too conscious of either her blushes or her wonderful lilac silk gown.

No one but Julia would don such attire for travelling, thought Theodora, looking at Jack for sympathy, but getting none; for Jack was so dense that he never knew what anyone had on but herself.

"It is a very hot afternoon," said William, with all his usual brilliant conversational powers.

Theodora, to whom he addressed the remark, was pouring out tea, much to Mrs. Harden's distress, who kept whispering, "The servants could do that, my dear."

Having made this effort, William relapsed into silence and sipped his tea.

Mrs. William took up the theme, not of the weather, indeed: she had a more original turn of mind.

"It is nice about Ronald and Polly!" she said, addressing Theodora. "I always knew he admired her, and now the engagement is announced."

"Yes. I am very pleased," said Theodora, with her pretty, gracious smile; "I shall like Major Morley for a brother-in-law."

"Polly is very young. Do you think, at eighteen, she can know her own mind?" inquired Julia, anxiously. "So few girls do."

"Theodora did," laughed Jack under his breath. Theodora flashed a reproving glance upon him, whereon he laughed the more. He sat down beside her, and said, in a low voice, "You had not a notion what you liked when you were eighteen, had you, Theo?"

"It was different," she said. "You are not Ronald Morley."

"Thank you," he said gravely. "I treasure any little word of praise from you; they are so infrequent."

"Do you remember, Mrs. Harden," said the bride, spreading out her silken skirts, "the party you gave last summer? Isn't it strange to think, of all the people who were there, how many are married now, or going to be: Mr. Holbrook—and Belle Casson—though I pity her with that dreadful old man; and they say he's very cross—and Theodora and Jack."

"I wasn't at the party," said Jack.

"No, but Theodora was; so it is all the same."

"Yes," he said humbly; "my identity is quite lost in hers. I acknowledge the fact."

"And me and William," she said, with a blush, but not I think, for her want of grammar.

"Dear me, it's quite interesting!" said Mrs. Harden, firmly convinced that all this marrying and giving in marriage had sprung from the fact of her having given a tea-party. "Theodora, my dear, we must have another tea-party this year."

"But all the parties in the world will not marry Selina Marks," said William, with such earnest conviction that they all laughed.

"She's not fit to look at Mrs. John," said Anne that evening in the kitchen. "And so I've bin telling you all along," she added vindictively, as if Peter and Johnson had been harassing her with contradictions.

"So I thinks likewise," said Johnson.

"You thinks!" said Anne. "You're a pusson to set up for thinking at this time of yer life. And you to have sot and daily looked at Master Jack goin' in and out in yon house, and never knowed 'im. Do you suppose he 'd have escaped me, if I'd bin home?"

"No, Anne, no," said Johnson soothingly.

"Mrs. John 's a bewty," said Peter grandly. "And I always said it."

Theodora and Jack drove home in the dusk. Since her stepfather's death she could not bear the idea of travelling over the line between Raylington and Hinkley, so Jack always drove her over when she wanted to visit his parents. Jack humoured her, Anne said, in all her whims; but indeed, Theodora was not whimsical. But it always seemed to Jack as if the utmost tenderness, the most chivalrous love, the doing of her will in all things great and small, could hardly make up to her for the long desolation and lovelessness in which her youth had passed over.

He thought with ruth of those years of long patience, unlit by hope or pleasure, and he esteemed it the privilege of his life that he had brought back laughter to her lips and happiness to her life.

"I think William and his wife will be very happy," she said, as they went swiftly over the white road in the gathering twilight.

"'Having known you to decline'—with apologies for misquoting," laughed Jack—"how a man who loved you, married Julia, beats me, as Anne elegantly says."

"A man is ever so much happier married to the woman that loves him, rather than to the woman he loves—if she does not love him," said Mrs. John sententiously.

"They are both perfectly satisfied with themselves and each other, and that I declare I believe is the true basis of happiness," her husband replied. "One is never happy if one is perpetually pervaded with a conviction of one's own shortcomings."

"Your father has given them the water-clock," said Theodora irrelevantly.

"Oh," laughed Jack. "William will like that. I was always so terribly afraid that he would offer it to us, and that you would refuse to live in the house with it."

"I shouldn't like it," she said. "But nothing could spoil a house, my Jack, where you are sure to come, and your laugh, and your footstep on the stairs. I often do not know how to be thankful enough, and glad enough, that, after all, I am a member of the Clockwork Family, as those naughty children used to say. You are so good to me, so tender of me. I wish you could look into my heart, and see how much I love you."

It was a lonely stretch of road, and as the horse walked uphill with the reins lying loose, Jack put his arm round his wife, and kissed her.

THE END.

THE HYMNS OF HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MURDOCH JOHNSTON, M.A., VICAR OF EAST TWICKENHAM.

V.—THE HYMN OF THE REIGN OF GOD.

(Rev. xix. 6, 7.)



THIS hymn is sung after the destruction of Babylon. That name stands for the world's power consolidated and upheld in State and Empire; and in the scenes of the Apocalypse it represents the Rome of the first century. It is an awful picture of desolation and anguish. Death and mourning and famine brood over her; silence and darkness mantle her as if she were a stricken field of battle, and nothing is left of conquerors or conquered but masses of the dead. Like a Hinnom of the outcast, her smoke ascends for ever and ever—a spot of ruin, sin, and plague, in a world where hills are still alight with unfading suns, where trees are waving in leafy woods, and flowers are blooming in meadow and in dale.

It is a remarkable contrast; but still more remarkable is the moral contrast that immediately presents itself in the quenchless hope and faith of the Church. There is an aspiration always living towards—always trusting in—better things. It may be found in a few like Simeon and Anna when our Lord was born, or marshalled in battle-force like the army of the Maccabees. It is the remnant that not only shall be saved, but shall bring salvation. It is the eye that penetrates the encompassing cloud of the present, and sees above it eternal brightness and repose. Silence fell upon Babylon: these burst into speech and song.

They sang with no diffident breast. It was a great voice breaking forth into syllables distinct and strong. It is the conquest-hour of faith when it feels itself and knows that it can overcome worlds. It cries no longer for an increase to its volume, but it lifts the arm of its strength. It will pluck up rooted trees of ancient growth; it will bid away mountains that oppose its progress. It is more than enthusiasm; it is stronger than ambition. It has deeds to do, and by the Might that never turned back it will do them.

They sang of the Reign of God. At last the yearned-for result has been attained. The prayer of the centuries has been, "Thy Kingdom come." The task of the good in all of them was to subdue the manifold powers of evil. At times it seemed a hopeless task. At as many times, all good seemed to lie in desperate straits. Was it not so when Israel—tribes of unemancipated slaves—stood between the cliff, the sea, and the host of their pursuers? Or when Gideon with his three hundred rushed down the northern slopes at night against the multitudes of Oreb and Zeeb? Or when the long train of captives turned from the ruin of Jerusalem to that very Babylon that had become the image and picture of death? It was one of the earliest proofs of the divinity of Christ that His first message was of a Kingdom of Heaven *at hand*. Any coward can cry that a battle is lost; it needs a hero to determine that it shall be won.

And so this Great Voice is prophetic as well as historic. It sees what will be and must be; and it casts itself in front of the generation and proclaims

that thus it actually is—"The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

I. It is the true interpretation of worldliness. The name of the world is applied in Scripture to two facts—one is transience, the other is godlessness. Because it is passing away, we are warned against loving the world: but we are told how transience may degenerate, and the feeling of insecurity infect the whole character, because "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This is a natural sequence; for the affection towards the trivial and passing destroys affection towards the great and abiding. It is a contradiction of our nature too; and any such contradiction, any continued violation of a natural law in the moral world, means weakness and disease. It seemed fit that Nero should claim the magnificence and splendour of Rome for a triumph; but it was yet more fit that he should die a miserable death. We cannot enjoy the meteor's gleam without expecting the succeeding gloom. The quicker the rush is through the heavens, the fiercer is the disruptive heat that scatters it into lightless dust.

What else could come to that great world-city of Babylon? Her delicious living and extravagance, her selfishness and impurity, could find in all the universe but one goal. Darkness fell upon her. It was no material darkness like that which suddenly wrapped the cities of Campania when life was at its fullest and pleasure laughed its merriest. But it was, and it is in all such existence, the darkness of mind and spirit when there is no light for us—direct or borrowed; when every star is blotted out and we are alone; when we grope the earth and do not find a Father or a God; when we call upon Truth and Good and receive no reply. For silence is the fellow-angel of darkness; angels of the scourge—death-angels both. There issues no sound from the cavernous world. Hushed are the voices of social happiness, of the gatherings of women and men; still as the grave the stroke of the arm of toil, and the burr of the wheels where industry works her wealth. Some of my readers may have stood at the top of one of the lofty passes in the Swiss mountains when the sun had set, and the quick darkness had fallen around; when, far above the flight of birds, and removed from the life of grass or flower or tree, he looks up to giants of rocky desolation above his head—mountains of unclothed, unbefriending stone—and feels about him only unutterable solitude and unutterable silence. They can understand then somewhat of the meaning of that silence of Babylon. Bid every London street be hushed at its noisiest hour, force every hurrying woman, man, and brute to stand like statues, and bate their breath; let the hard pavement echo no more the sound of wheel or foot; blow back to their furnaces the smoke of every chimney; paralyse every living thing and living hope; wipe out the sun and stars, and let each garish lamp be dark, and Babylon shall then be partly—and only partly—reproduced.

Nor can it be otherwise. For nations, for cities and for men, there is the one law unchangeable and irrevocable. The worldly mind, the fleshly, sensuous mind, is decay and death. Selfishness can only destroy self; luxury but ruin comfort, and passion but annihilate pleasure.

II. This hymn teaches us that Faith and Holiness are never alone. It was as the voice of a great multitude—a voice of thunder—a voice of many waters. There is much in this, as in every vision of the whole Book, to comfort and encourage. The young Christian thinks he stands sometimes absolutely by himself. In the counting-house, the school, the shop, he finds none to stand with him. There is not a voice to utter anything in harmony with what his heart most dearly loves. All have gone after their Baal, or made friends of Belial; and the danger is that he rolls himself within his own loneliness, and shrinking back becomes morbid and unhappy. But all the while others, under perhaps the colour of some worldly cant, are longing as he has longed. The same thoughts have filled their minds; the same fears have held their hearts. Had any of them the courage to speak out his own thoughts, had the voice been strong and his heart brave, he would instantly have won companions and friends. This is part of the meaning of Christ when He declares that if any man will confess Him upon earth, that man shall be confessed before the Father in Heaven. It is the holy law of the society of the good. It is the fundamental truth of the Church. It is the necessity in the very nature of things for man to be associated with man. It is the encouragement to all deeds of goodness, to all careers of duty and holiness. No one is alone; but everyone must begin his life *as if* he were alone. There is a multitude about him though he does not see or hear them: and the voice of all goes up together, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

III. It shows us the nature of True Progress. The first step therein is the marriage of the Lamb. And that this may be possible, the Bride, which is His Church, makes herself ready. She is arrayed in garments fine and pure and white: and her fair vesture is the robe of righteousness. It is a portion of heaven's hymn that we shall rejoice and be glad because the Church is pure.

And look at the magnitude of the event thus pictured. The world has witnessed many stupendous deeds, big with their own vastness, but bigger with future fates. It was a mighty action of Constantine when he transferred the seat of empire from the ancient banks of the Tiber to the sunnier shores of the Golden Horn. Destiny was big when the light cavalry of the Ottoman swept down upon the plains of Asia Minor, leaving conquest in every charge behind it, and claiming the genius, wealth, and power of the West. But this marriage of the Church with her Lord is the greatest work and event since the Incarnation. It is the fulfilment of God's pledges and the answer of Christ's prayers. It is the final security of the Church. From henceforth she stands, not in the seclusion of an

Eastern home, but revealed and evident before the eyes of the world. At present—this long present of many ages—the struggle is unceasing. It is a struggle for unity, for holiness, for celestial beauty. And the aspect of Church and world seems far off yet from even man's ideal. The Omnipotent doth not yet reign in all her thoughts. Men are not yet near to agreeing with one another. Knowledge is scanty, thought is confused, and the logic of action is often the conclusion of policy or of power. Worse still, there is in some quarters no desire for unity and peace. We are satisfied with low ideals however sweetly angels may sing, or however fervently the Master intercedes. Holiness, if assumed, becomes a mockery. A low morality is made to answer all our hopes: and, monstrous though its form may be, we trust it will produce the lovely shape, the bloom and grace of immortality. For beauty is one of Christ's attributes: and beauty must crown His Bride—the Church. The fairness of the lily, and the fragrance of the rose, the inter-blending and mixing of hill and valley in some lovely Midland scene; the uplifting of the slopes into grassy mountains, and crowning them with glistening peaks—all pale before the higher lustre of spiritual beauty, of true manhood and womanhood. It is true that

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrudes—
> By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

But equally true is it that these lead us to the conclusion of a stronger yearning and a deeper love for our fellow-men. The hermit-philosopher of the Austrian mountain, far removed above human voices and the grasp of human hands, alone the whole dark winter amid deep snows—watching Nature in her wildest and grandest play—has told us how the days seem endless; the languor and solitude grow unbearable when November sweeps her mists across the mountain's breast, and December nights lay their long length from peak to peak in maddening silence. The final beauty of earth is the beauty of holy society; the mind and heart and soul of brothers shaped, refined, and strengthened after the pattern—the true hope of beatified humanity—which was "seen in the Mount."

There ensues then an interval, wide in extent and momentous in its events, until the final hymn breaks out which shall tell us its message from our lovelier Home, of a time and a condition when death shall be no more and every tear will be wiped from the eyes of men.

OUR WILFUL BOY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A MOTHER'S CONFIDENCES," ETC., ETC.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE again! How quickly the years fly! Our eldest is fifteen, and Harry, our youngest child, is seven already; surely it cannot be seventeen years since that evening when John brought me home from the Morrises' and on the way asked me to be his wife!

I suppose most mothers have some day in the year when they take stock of their children. This is my day for looking through my old journals; and the record is not altogether disheartening. There is, of course, very much that we might have done and have omitted. Faults have cropped up in later days that we did not suspect while the children were younger. But we have this comfort: the failings we did see, and set ourselves to mend, give us no more trouble. Even Effie has become a steady little soul who *finishes*. But Harry? It is curious how little record there is of him: just a mention now and then, but no more. Harry's first tooth, Harry's hair cut, Harry's knickerbockers—but Harry's most trying little self? Is it possible that I have not a word down about him? I hope this does not mean that I am getting lax. It is often said that the youngest child is spoilt because he is the youngest, because no baby comes to monopolise for the time the fondness of the parents; but I am not sure that that is the sole reason. The task of training children watchfully and carefully is no doubt an arduous one. Whilst we are in the swing of it we go on from day to day, hardly conscious of the strain; but, comes a time when there is no baby, and we unconsciously relax: the youngest child is not brought under the same steady discipline as his elders, and has every chance to grow up wilful.

"Wilful!" How odd that I should have hit on the very word that describes Harry! The little fellow is full of sweetness and loving ways, and it is only when a *fracas* arrives we are made aware of the fact that Harry's general good behaviour means no more than that, on the whole, the child is allowed to go his own way and do what is right in his own eyes.

Yesterday we had a terrible scene. Harry has been laid up with a bad cold for the past week, and has amused himself indoors happily enough; but the news that the pond would bear led to furbishing of skates and much excitement in the family. It was only as the rest set off that we found out how much Harry's mind was set upon going too. Poor little lad! no doubt it was a disappointment when a sudden blank denial came

down between him and the joy he had been building on; and had I been alive to his small schemes, the child's min' should have been prepared. It is unnecessary to bring a child up suddenly face to face with a blank disappointment. But I thought Harry knew he was on the sick-list, until his busy preparations showed that he meant to be of the skating party.

"You can't go, Harry; why are you lacing your boots?" was followed by a moment of threatening silence, and then a display of passionate wilfulness which I am ashamed to write of. Surely it was a reproach to his parents. His terrific screams; struggles to free himself; lawless outcries—"I *will* go! You shan't keep me!"—filled me with dismay.



"'Why are you lacing your boots?'"

This was the first time I had been brought face to face with insubordination in any of the children. I quietly turned the key, bade Jane set him free—she was trying to hold him back—and, I think, cowed him a little with a steady gaze. For, truly, the child was like a mad creature—beyond rule and reason. It was more than an hour before the tempest subsided and we were both able to leave the dining-room where this trying scene took place.

I took Harry to my room, and so soon as I saw signs of softening, turned over the "picture Bible" he is so fond of till we came to the "Stilling of the Tempest."

> "But there are storms within
> That heave the struggling breast with wilder din:"

Harry listened to the heart-subduing tale till where the maniac sat,

> "Clothed and in calmness at his Saviour's feet;"

The child was moved, melted, ashamed of his ungoverned rage. But, "Mother, I didn't want to be cross; I only want to skate!" made me feel that I was only dealing with effects and not with causes: the rage was bad enough, but the fact that the crossing of his will threw Harry so entirely off his balance, was the real mischief to be dealt with.

It all came upon me like a flash. A delicate infant, Harry had not been allowed to cry. We somehow seem to have forgotten, in Harry's case, the principles we carried out with the first, and with each of our other children. How well I remember that early struggle about putting baby to bed in the dark! But then we went to work rationally. We saw what was to be done, and took our measures accordingly.

Here was bewilderment added to the miserable sense of failure. The source of the mischief was the child's intense determination to have his own way. Of course we might set ourselves to break his will, but would that be altogether a good thing? A strong will is an excellent thing in a man—indeed, I believe it is the one secret of success in life; for is it not the poor souls of feeble will and no fixed purpose who go to the wall? In breaking the child's will for our immediate comfort, should we be ruining his prospects in life?

My head grew dizzy with the attempt to think out all the *pros* and *cons* of this question.

The fact is, I had nothing to go upon: I did not know what part the will plays in the child's nature, nor what the will is, nor how it should be trained. It is very odd that the necessity of dealing with the will of a child had not occurred to us before.

"You have opened up a very difficult question," said John, when I told him of my perplexities; "I am by no means sure that the last word has yet been said as to the functions of the will in man. But of this I am quite sure: we make a great mistake in confounding wilfulness, or self-will, with the action of a strong will."

"I don't quite see what you mean. Surely an unconquerable determination to do what he wishes, have what he desires, is what we mean when we say, 'So-and-so has a strong will'? And, if so, I cannot help thinking there is some risk in breaking the will of a child. You know what poor, characterless little souls the Feyntons are; and don't you think it's because their father is a tyrannical sort of man, with whom no one may have will or way but his own? Poor, much-enduring Mrs. Feynton is as spiritless as the children. No; I cannot think it is good for themselves or society that children should be brought up as mere nonentities!"

"Then Feynton is your example of a strong will—a man who does what he likes, and gets what he chooses—that is, his own way? If there is no choice, I'm at a loss to know whether I should

prefer the children to grow up big or little Feyntons! But, don't you see, Annie, we have not touched the difficulty yet? Feynton, poor fellow, does not thrive, notwithstanding his strong will; masterful ways and an obstinate temper are not the qualities to win success; and, moreover, they are not to be confounded with strength of will."

"Then what does 'will' do for one? And do try to explain to me what 'will' is."

"I doubt if philosophers are agreed as to what 'will' is; and more, I am not sure that we can be divided into *parts*—heart and mind and will, and so on. These seem to me different ways in which the man—the thinking, feeling man—acts, or expresses himself. Skating, sewing, playing the piano, are trained and instructed ways of action; and, in like manner, we have need to be trained and instructed in the inward and spiritual exercises of thinking, willing, and loving."

"I'm afraid all this is beyond me; and I get no nearer to the point—what are we to do with Harry?"

"I am going too fast. You say that a strong will is the secret of success in life, and I agree: only I think I should rather say, 'the power of willing.' Now, compare the wilfulness or waywardness of a child like Harry, or a man like Feynton, with the qualities which have made Mr. Winter the successful man he is. Now, Mr. Winter, I believe, owes his success entirely to his strength of will. Notice the self-controlled set of his mouth, the thoughtful attention of his glance, and you will see what I mean. Give such a man a strong purpose, and desire will not draw, emotions stir, appetite drive him out of his course; he goes on steadily, and accomplishes his aim."

"A man without natural feelings! I do believe I should be better pleased that Harry should fail in life than grow up without a heart!"

"There you are wrong, my dear: the man of strong will is usually he of the deepest and tenderest affections. But we won't contend for that; he may be a bad man or he may be a good man—all I maintain is that for some end, good or bad, he has the power of keeping himself in order. Mind, not other people, and not his circumstances; it is over the unruly world within, alone, that will is called to be vicegerent; though, to be sure, in proportion as a man governs himself, he has the world at his feet. We should keep well in view that the functions of will are exercised within the bosom and not without."

"I am still at sea: you are going on a tack that I was not prepared for. Do you mean that 'will is another name for the power of self-control'?"

"Not exactly; you feel the risings of anger, resentment, greed. But you show no sign; you act and speak and look as if you were not boiling over with ugly feelings. That is self-control—good, so far as it goes; but *will* can do more for you. Will is able to avert the rise of the forbidden feeling or desire; then there is no need for self-control; you do not give way to it because it is not there."

"What a mighty potentate! But, indeed, you are reckoning without your host, as I know full well. I (that is, my will) say to myself, 'You are not to be cross, or worried, or whatever the wrong thing may be.' Myself takes no more notice than a wilful child, and I am just as cross or worried as if *will* had not put in his oar at all! Your theory will not hold water. My will has no power at all to *make* me do things."

"That is precisely the power that will should have, and if yours fails, why, it's because you don't set to work in the right way."

"What is the right way? I give my will a fair chance to *make* me behave myself, and it fails me utterly. 'T is a rotten staff and a broken reed!"

"No wonder, if you will exalt the poor thing to a high estate it was never meant to fill! Will is no mighty lord of the bosom; 't is no more than a wheedling, clever old nurse. You know how a nurse will pick up a screaming child, and carry it to the window to 'see the gee-gees.' There you have exactly the sort of help will can give. You can, by an effort of will, turn your thoughts from the thing you shouldn't think of to some other thing lawful and pleasant to think of: behold, the victory is gained — the forbidden thing no longer solicits, and you are able to go on steadily in the path you had marked out!"

"I am beginning to see! Suppose I am converting my blue cashmere into a new frock for Effie: it is a tiresome task because there are so many faded bits, and I bethink me that it is Mrs. Ellray's afternoon, and of her hot scones and good tea (don't be scandalised—am I *very* greedy?). Well, I get restless, and am on the point of going up to dress, when *will* comes to my aid! I turn away from Mrs. Ellray and her tea, and think of our coming holiday in Wales. Effie will want the blue frock (just the colour of her eyes). I see the children scrambling about in flowery nooks, my needle flies quick as the pleasant thoughts come; the frock begins to look pretty, I work away at it for its own sake; and, by-and-bye, I have done a good afternoon's work, the restless, dissatisfied feelings have gone, and I am able to appear with a cheerful countenance when his serene highness, my lawful lord, comes in to his tea. Now, have I got it? Is that the sort of thing you mean?"

"You have hit my meaning to a T! (Not a pun: don't protest!) That is exactly the function of the will. It will be a help to us, both in training the children and in what Sir John Lubbock calls 'taking pains with ourselves,' if we remember that the function of will is probably no more than that of turning our thoughts in the direction we mean them to take. That, and no more, can Will do for us, but *that* is enough to make us."

"I don't get much help about Harry. Poor little fellow! he does not *mean* his thoughts to take any direction; and I doubt if he have any power of turning them. And then, you see, you might not even mean good things, and what help would your will be in that case?"

"That 's just what I want to bring you to; we are no doubt born with the power of willing, as we are with that of swimming; but to be able to

will, as to be able to swim, you must have training and practice. Away for ever with the notion that our poor little uncurbed Harry has 'a strong will,' forsooth! Don't let the danger of 'breaking his will' keep you awake for an hour, my dear! You can't break what is not there!"

"Don't be hard on the poor child! Well, what is this wilfulness of his if it is not will? 'I mu't hab it!' he would say before he could speak plainly, and to this day he 'mu't hab it!' Happy for us that his desires are not generally very unreasonable."

"Why, don't you see, he has no power of turning away his thoughts from the thing he desires, and the desire becomes uncontrollable, masterful. You don't want me to go over the whole ground again? It is desires, passions, that are strong in him, not will; the strength he shows is the strength of a madman, not of a reasonable, self-possessed soul. Verily, we are guilty concerning our child. But, please God, there is place yet for repentance. We must set ourselves to bring him through this moral disease just as earnestly and promptly as if he were down in a fever. I mean, we must cure him at once and have it over. To send the finest of our children into the world in a state of moral insanity is not to be thought of. I am only sorry, poor wifie, that the strain will fall most heavily on you."

"That is only fair, for the neglect has been mine. But really you must make very plain what is to be done. At present I am in a fog. One thing more: don't think me fanciful, but does it not seem to you that we are taking too much upon ourselves? Do you think anything but God's converting grace can deal with moral disease?"

"Indeed I do not; but I believe converting grace is as open to those who use the means of moral, as is God's life-giving energy to those who use the means of physical, health. We must not forget that asking and seeking are two things, not one. We shall not fail to ask that our little boy may be restored, and because we ask we must be the more diligent in seeking and using the means for his restoration."

"I see. Prescribe, please."

"Well, let us assume that the contrary of wilfulness is the power of willing. We want to give our child the power of willing, and of willing rightly. Men have been able to subdue all other passions and desires to the accomplishment of an object not necessarily good. A man will keep himself in order to make a fortune—even to avenge himself of his enemy. But we need not go back quite to the beginning; you have taken care that the child knows the happiness of duty as his service to God. Give him the power of willing, and he will *will* what is right. Also, the habit of attention, which we have taken pains to form in all the children, will come to our aid. Harry can keep his wits together and think of the thing in hand as well as most children of his age. What is more, he is of an age to help himself. Show him the way, and he will turn his thoughts from the forbidden thing. The sense of victory will delight him, and he will try again and again. At first we must be on the watch to give him the new thought; but, by-and-bye, as his will gains strength, he will help himself—will be on the watch to divert his thoughts into the appointed channels—will, day by day, be building a manful and Christian character, wise to form the purposes of a godly life, and blessed with strength of will to accomplish them. There, my dear, is the general outlook; but as for all the details of how and when, it is you who must teach me. Think it out; make all this talk practical; and then tell me what to do and what not to do. Only there is no time to be lost. This very day we must begin upon Harry."

"It's very awkward just now: we were going to begin house-cleaning next week: the house is like a pig-sty! But I suppose it must be put off for a month or two. I must have nothing else on my mind if I'm to do any good with Harry."

"Put it off, by all means!"

"No doubt you would like it put off for good! You men never know when a house is fit to be seen!"

I suppose we are growing lazy in our old age. In earlier days we should have thought nothing of putting off *dinners* for a week, if necessary, while we were bringing either of the children through what John used to call "moral measles!" But I was more put out than I like to own at the thought of having the house in a mess. However, what must be, must be, so I let the house go, and turned all my thoughts upon Harry, endeavouring to reduce my husband's suggestions to some practical outcome.

"Harry, I must speak to you about yesterday, because that sort of thing must never happen again! You understand me? Never again!"

A shamefaced, "I will be good, mother!"

"Of course you will try, and I will help you; so first we must find out what made you so naughty. You told me you did not want to be cross—why not?"

"Because it is naughty!"

"And why is it naughty?"

"Because it vexes mother, and—and—it vexes God." (This last in a whisper.)

"Quite right, dear; it is wicked in a child to displease his parents, and so to displease God. But we must find out how you came to behave so shamefully."

A hot flush warned me that the word cut.

"Poor Harry! 'Shamefully' is an ugly word, and mother wishes she could use another; but it is true. You behaved shamefully; tell me why."

"I wanted to skate, mother"—in a manner shamed, but not quite convinced.

"And you do not think it was wrong to want to skate?"

"Was it, mother?"

"Not until I said, 'You must not go.' To think about skating another minute after that, was wrong."

"But, mother, how could I help? I thought of all the boys and the ice, and the man putting on the skates, and—and—oh——"

Another outburst was imminent. I made hot haste, and broke in with—"How would you like to have a little garden of your very own this year?" An eager talk followed, which lasted fully a quarter of an hour.



"I see the children scrambling about in flowery nooks."—*p.* 902.

"But the skating?"

"Oh, I forgot all about it! I was thinking of the snowdrops and crocuses I should have; and, mother, don't you think I might have a button-hole of snowdrops ready for father's birthday if we set about it at once?"

"I daresay, dear; but I want to talk about the skating. You told me you couldn't help thinking about it all, and you were just going to begin another terrible hullaballoo. What hindered you?"

"I don't know. Oh, you put it all out of my head, mother, by talking about my garden. Can we go this afternoon for some seeds?"

"All in good time, Harry; but, first, I must have the skating settled. Attend to me, boy. The wrong thing was to go on thinking about it when I said 'No.' You say I put it all out of your head. Now, if you mean to be a man, and to please father and mother and our Father in heaven, *you* must learn to put things out of your head when you are not to have them or to do them. You must not go on *wanting*."

"But how can I help wanting things?"

"Think of something else, to be sure! You can't skate? Well, never mind. Out with your paint-box in a minute, before you have time to be naughty!"

"What good fun! I wish that I wanted something now, just to make myself think of something else!"

Thus we have made a beginning.

"Begin it, and the thing will be completed,"

says somebody; anyhow, we'll go on trying, though it may take weeks of watchful effort on our part; and I have much hope that Harry sees what we are at, and will be our best ally.

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

THE MERITED PALM.

BY THE REV. J. HILES HITCHENS, D.D., AUTHOR OF "ECCE VERITAS," "THE YOUNG MEN OF SCRIPTURE," ETC. ETC.

MORE than eighty years ago, the Nelson family adopted as their motto the words, "Palmam qui meruit ferat"—"Let him who hath earned it bear the palm." Then the illustrious Horatio Nelson, the greatest of British admirals, was at the zenith of earthly fame, and Lord Grenville, quoting from Dr. Jortin's "Ode to the Winds," said of Nelson, "Let him who hath earned it bear the palm." The suitability of the words was at once recognised, and they became henceforth the family motto. The passage by the author of the "Life of Erasmus" from which the words are selected, runs thus:—

> "O winds! breathe calmly o'er us and our foes!
> Let ship with ship alone contending close,
> And while the sea-gods watch above the fray,
> Let him who merits bear the palm away."

Certainly, if ever an admiral merited the palm of honour, Horatio Nelson did. Having been in action about a hundred and thirty times—having lost an eye and an arm in his country's service—having effectually silenced his nation's foes, and procured peace for his cherished friends—he justly earned his title, his pension, and his renown. It is a matter for regret that he was not spared to wear his well-deserved honours and wave his nobly won palm. But Southey's words rise to our minds: "The death of Nelson was felt in England as a public calamity; yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented who died so full of honours, and at the height of human fame."

It is not always that the bearer of the palm has earned it. There have been scions of noble houses who have stepped up to greatness in their teens because they could not help it. They were born amid splendour, influence, and wealth, and the law of primogeniture has invested them with immense possessions and widespread power. Some such, alas! have proved themselves wholly unworthy to bear the

palm. They have dragged their robes of dignity through the mire of the world, and handed down to posterity a tarnished name. Others have carried the palm with so steady a hand and so beautiful a life, that men have grown to admire and esteem them as much as if the palm had been at first acquired by merit.

There have been others who have procured the palm by trickery, deceit, lying, and cruelty. They have risen to fame on the ruins of a brother's reputation, by the confiscation of a neighbour's property, and by the lamentable destruction of human life. "What millions died that Cæsar might be great!"

There have been others, again, who have obtained the palm by favouritism. Being known intimately by or related to some person in a position of authority, influence has been brought to bear on their behalf, and thus honour and wealth have been secured.

On the other hand, there have been scores of instances in which the man who has earned the palm has never obtained it. Ignorance, bigotry, selfishness, and fear have retarded the deserving man's progress, and the palm he should have received has fallen to the lot of another, or he himself has been neglected and ill-used. When Italy was disturbed by political factions, Dante toiled with unwearying zeal to unite the conflicting parties, but was doomed to the sorrows of an exile for many years as his reward. Columbus, the discoverer of America, was sent back to his native land in chains, which he preserved and ordered to be buried with him. He was neglected by the people whom he had so nobly served, died in poverty, and the honour of giving his name to the world he had discovered was denied him. Balboa was one of the first to open up the West Indies. He sent an account of his discovery to Spain. A governor was thereupon appointed, who, being jealous of Balboa, caused him to be beheaded. Bruno advocated the Copernican system, but was burned alive in Rome. Tycho Brahe, becoming the first astronomer of his age, "the first priest of the stars," shed a glory over his country, but men ignorant of all true science opposed him, and he was stripped of his honours and pension. Galileo, notwithstanding his advances in science, was compelled to yield to the all-crushing influence of ecclesiastical despotism. Sir Walter Raleigh, the celebrated English navigator and author, was, without evidence, condemned to thirteen years in the Tower of London, and subsequently beheaded. James Hargreaves discovered a method by which he could spin *eight* threads whilst one was being spun by the then prevalent system. To the instrument he gave the name "Jenny," and the "Spinning Jenny" is still known. An ignorant mob arose in opposition to him and his invention, broke up his machine, and drove Hargreaves from his native town to die in a workhouse. The man through whom England has amassed immense wealth passed away unrecompensed. Matthew Flinders, the discoverer of Australia, returning to England to make known the results of his investigations, was shipwrecked, taken prisoner by the French for six years, and his plans, charts, and log-books were taken from him. At the end of six years he regained his liberty, only to find that his discoveries had been appropriated by a Frenchman. Another bore the palm. Flinders was unrewarded whilst he lived, and his widow died in abject want. In 1861 Charles Pearson wrote to a friend saying that he had twenty years before introduced the plan to raise the Holborn valley, and centralise the railways by a grand trunk railway running through the valley of the Fleet. To make his scheme known, he plentifully scattered pamphlets, had plans and models constructed, but all in vain. He was opposed and scandalised. Now the plan has been adopted and executed by others, and all London applauds. He who earned the palm never received it.

Thus is it that hundreds of brave spirits have worked and waited, but have been so opposed or neglected, that they have felt a burden on their hearts as "heavy as the mass of Ætna on the breast of Enceladus." Their hopes have been dashed to the ground, their ambition has been disappointed, their hands have been weakened, and their hearts well-nigh broken. We understand how William Caldwell Roscoe could write that the—

> "Low rustling of the loved Apollian leaves
> With which my youthful hair was to be crowned
> Grows dimmer in my ears!"

and how Christina Rossetti could sing pathetically of—

> "The dark hair changing to grey
> That had won neither laurel nor bay."

There is, alas! an unhappy tendency in humanity to be lethargic in recognising true worth. Many a real genius, many a true-hearted benefactor of his race, is left to face the difficulties and fight the foes of this cold world, without a smile of approval or a word of encouragement. There is an apparent indisposition to bestow the palm, however justly merited. Not until the man dies is his usefulness acknowledged. It is absolutely astounding to see what a difference death makes in the estimate society forms and expresses of men. There is no limit to the eulogistic language concerning a man of whom men were jealously silent whilst he lived. Why is not the palm accorded whilst he is struggling with care and disappointment? He would thereby be encouraged to further advances; and the Church and the world would be more fully served. Bulwer Lytton truly and beautifully writes: "I know not why we should delay our tokens of respect to those who deserve them until the heart that our sympathy could have gladdened has ceased to beat. As men cannot read the epitaphs inscribed upon the marble that covers them, so the tombs that we erect to virtue often only prove our repentance that we neglected it when with us." It is true there is joy in service, and strength derived from work, to the sincere worker. He finds reward in the task itself. Still, who shall say how much longer he might serve his generation if men ministered a little frank and friendly encouragement? We say—

> "If you have a friend worth loving,
> Love him. Yes; and let him know
> That you love him, ere life's evening
> Tinge his brow with sunset glow;
> Why should good words ne'er be said
> Of a friend till he is dead?

"If you hear a song that thrills you
Sung by any child of song,
Praise it. Do not let the singer
Wait deserved praises long:
Why should one who thrills your heart
Lack the joy you may impart?"

Notwithstanding that many bear a palm who have never earned it, and that many who have deserved the palm have never received it, yet do not forget, reader, that it is our duty to strive to merit a palm. That is the great business and blessedness of life—so to prosecute the duties before us, and so to reach forward toward perfection in all we do, that the cause of failure to win the palm may not be found in us. For this a well-formed resolution is needed. In the year 1814 a little company of German students in the University of Göttingen vowed to each other that they would effect something great in their lives. More or less they all kept their vow. One of the circle was Bunsen, and in his biography the incident is recorded. It is well to set our target in the skies, and with caution, blended with concentration, aim at it. It is well to determine, God helping us, to rise above our own low level into a rarer atmosphere. It is well to brace the loins of our mind for a steady and steadfast step in the great race of life.

But let us guard against the error of supposing that we can ever do anything to *merit* the palm of glory in the beatific world. When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants in God's sight. The future reward will be a gift. In Cork there is the following epitaph: "Edward Molloy, the friend of humanity, the father of the poor. He employed the wealth of this world only to procure the riches of the next; and leaving a balance of credit on the book of life, he made Heaven debtor to mercy." Nothing can be more unscriptural. There are no works of supererogation. Our good works certainly ought to prove the existence of a Divine life within our hearts, but they will not purchase or procure an eternal recompense. The multitude whom John, in his vision, saw clad in white robes, with palms in their hands, were indebted for both robe and palm to the finished work of Christ. Whilst we do our uttermost faithfully to serve God and man, let us at the same time base our hope of everlasting reward upon the fidelity, affection, and unchangeableness of the Infinite Saviour.

A little before he died, the great Church historian Neander said: "The Christian should ever remember that here all is fragmentary—nothing reaches completion; that even service in the cause of Christ on earth is but the beginning of an activity destined for eternity; that we must not, therefore, be so absorbed even in labours consecrated to God as to be unprepared to obey at any moment the summons to the higher life and service of Heaven." His own life and death are illustrative of his words. He was toiling at his Church History when seized with his fatal illness. Still he kept at his work by the aid of an amanuensis, who took down his words as he dictated them. As though a double meaning were in the query, he would frequently say to the writer—"Are you ready?" Having dictated long, he inquired the time. Being informed that it was "half-past nine," he remarked, "I am weary; I will go to sleep." Having been made comfortable on his bed by kind attendants, he said, "Good night!" and slept the sleep of the just, to awake at the call of the archangel's trump; but his happy spirit went upward to receive the palm. His preparation for "the higher life and service of Heaven" was derived from saving dependence upon the Lord Jesus. So let it be with us. Let us toil honestly and honourably to merit earthly palms, but let us trust implicitly to Christ for eternal glory.

"A MERRY HEART GOES ALL THE DAY."

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.

"AND I had pictured life in the country as something quite idyllic, Clare! Away from all the fret and worry of London: sunshine, and flowers, and nightingales, with just enough society to keep off dulness; county families—not very intellectual, of course, but sufficiently so to appreciate your father's undoubted genius, and the people looking up to him with a sort of affectionate idolatry! And the reality: grey skies or incessant rain, a smoky drawing-room chimney, not a single person of any consequence to welcome us; and, from all I can hear of the poor people, they are so frightfully independent that one might just lie down and be trampled on, and pretend to enjoy it! I won't speak of *my* privations. It has always been my lot to suffer; and when I married your father I renounced then and there all the gaiety and enjoyment that a girl in my position might have expected. But it is such a frightful prospect: all your social and artistic talent, Clare, and his eloquence *wasted*—thrown away—on a handful of labourers and farmers! And then that Mr. Owen, his successor, whom people make such a fuss about, should come down and see all our miseries! It is *too* provoking! But you and your father are so sanguine, no doubt you will say you prefer rain, and smoky chimneys, and universal stupidity!" And Mrs. Seymour threw herself back on her cushions with a sigh of utter weariness and impatience.

If that sigh found an echo in her daughter's heart,

no trace of it could be discovered on her bright face. "I'm afraid it *is* dull for you, mother dear," she said; "and Mr. Owen will bring you all the news from town, and cheer you up. Don't worry about entertaining him; we will borrow Henry Bruton's macintosh and gaiters, and send him off with father to poke about the remains of that wonderful old British camp. Besides, it can't rain for ever. We shall have sunshine to-morrow; and I've heard of the most charming old pony, warranted not to go more than three miles an hour, and we'll drive all over the country—you and I—and hunt up those too-retiring nightingales. The pure country air will make you better in no time."

"Really, Clare," said her mother, "you are most terribly unsympathetic! Well in no time! After years of weakness and suffering, that is what one receives for constant patience and stoical endurance! You might have known what mistakes physicians make, even the most eminent; and yet no sooner does that ridiculous Dr. Steel say that I should be stronger and better for a country life than, hardly consulting *me*, your father throws away all his prospects, resigns his charge, and dooms me to this miserable banishment! Meanwhile he is pottering about 'early British camps,' which, most likely, are nothing more nor less than the remains of some forgotten sheepfold, as he will be obliged to confess before long; and you are more anxious to finish that wrap for a stupid, ungrateful old woman, than to unpick this piece of cross-stitch for your own mother. It has all come wrong!"

"Oh, I am so sorry!" exclaimed Clare penitently, throwing down her wool, and puckering her forehead as she took up that most aggravating form of needlework. "This wrap is for an old woman of exactly *my* age, with bronchitis and four children."

"Foolish creature to marry so early!" put in Mrs. Seymour. "One can't pity afflictions which people bring on themselves."

"Such a nice young thing!" continued Clare. "I had the greatest trouble to get her to admit she wanted any help, and had to explain what an immense advantage it would be to that overgrown girl of Mrs. Higgins's to learn a little housework; so at last I have arranged that she is to go for a week. Positively, the poor woman was at the wash-tub, coughing frightfully all the time. I should have been tucked up in bed, with jellies and beef-tea, if I had been half as ill. The ex-baby is a picture—I must borrow him next week: such curls and dimpled little arms!"

"I do hope you will keep all those dirty children strictly in your studio, then, Clare. If only you could copy in the National Gallery again!" A pause. "Your father has not the least compunction in leaving me alone the entire afternoon, though he knows I have been shut up in this prison nearly four days!"

"But the poor man was dying, they sent word, mother."

"Well, then, it was natural for his family to wish to have the last few hours with him; at any rate, he needn't have stayed so long," returned Mrs. Seymour peevishly.

"There he is at the garden gate!" cried Clare, running to open the door.

In another minute her father entered—a tall, white-haired man, with clear brown eyes and a smile of wonderful sweetness; the patient lines round the mouth could have told the tale of a life-sorrow.

He went straight to his wife's couch. "How are you now, my love?" he asked, tenderly stroking her thin hand.

"Oh, perfectly numb, after yesterday's neuralgia! *Could* I be better in such an atmosphere?"

"Is poor Williams still living, father?" said Clare.

"Yes, dear, and wonderfully revived."

"There! of course!" exclaimed Mrs. Seymour, in a tone of annoyance; "and you had your walk for nothing!"

"No, no, my dear," remonstrated her husband mildly. "Mrs. Williams thought it was not necessary for me to see him, though I should have liked to say a few words. I must call again in a day or two. They do not know me yet, and cannot feel quite at ease with a stranger. But I went on to the town, Amabel, and have brought the book you wanted so badly." Mr. Seymour smiled back an answer to the loving thanks in his daughter's eyes as the new volume was eagerly seized.

"Just give me the paper-knife, Clare," said Mrs. Seymour, "and then you can go with your father and meet Mr. Owen, for I believe you do really find some enjoyment in tramping about those miry lanes."

"Isn't the air washed and delicious, father!" said Clare, gaily slipping one hand in his arm as they walked briskly down the hill. "Look, there's blue sky! no waterproof or umbrella for me! Mr. Owen will have fine weather for his visit, after all: and I had been longing to see him in a deer-stalker hat and gaiters! I wonder why he has come down here—to ask your advice about Church matters, I suppose? Will it be painful, dear, to hear about the schools, and the crowded galleries, and flourishing mothers' meetings that he mentioned in his letter?" she asked, with momentary gravity.

"No, no, I think not, Clare," replied Mr. Seymour. "In fact, it will be refreshing to learn how the work is prospering; not," he added hastily, "that I regret for a moment the step I have taken."

"Why, of course you don't, father. When everybody is mourning over the enormously increasing population of London, we are public benefactors to go away and make room for other people."

"And then there seems to be a fascination in city life that one ought to be able to resist," he continued thoughtfully. "I have often wished to enter with fuller sympathy into the trials of my ministerial brethren in the rural districts."

"And I am sure we shall soon understand the people; there is something very taking in their hearty, outspoken ways; I love the north countree," said Clare, with a pretty blush. "Just look at those magnificent masses of cloud rolling away in the west; what a flood of sunshine! It makes me feel amiably disposed even to John Owen!"

"My dear, you hardly do the young man justice—he has talent, is a thoroughly good man,"

"Has an excellent opinion of himself, and thinks he knows more of life and human nature at eight-and-twenty than you do at eight-and-fifty! I have no patience with him!"

"I am sadly behind the times, Clare," said her father, smiling, "and my daughter does not look through impartial spectacles. Why, there is the fly from the station, and Mr. Owen, surely; I did not think we were so late," he said, signing to the driver to stop, and warmly shaking the hand of a sallow, dark young man, whose short-sighted eyes had already complacently taken in the fact of Clare's appearance with her father. "Let your portmanteau be taken on, and walk home with us!"

"With pleasure, my dear sir," said Mr. Owen. "Miss Seymour, I need not ask if you are well."

"Thank you; much as usual," replied Clare. "But I'm shocked that you should find the two and a half miles from the station too long a walk for you—a close carriage in May!"

"You are very kind," replied Mr. Owen. "With this delicacy of throat, I feel obliged to take every precaution. The air is so keen here: very bracing, no doubt, as you say—it certainly agrees with you, Miss Seymour!"

"*Almost* everything does," she replied, with a slight emphasis.

"This seems to be a charming retreat, Mr. Seymour, far removed from bustle and toil, where one can peacefully dream the days away, perhaps hardly missing, at last, the intellectual friction of town."

"I have to visit a young woman here, so must say good-bye; you have so much to ask my father's advice upon, Mr. Owen. How we have pitied you, coming from your former small charge to such heavy responsibilities."

"You are *very* good and thoughtful, Miss Seymour," said the infatuated young man, pleasure gleaming through his eyeglasses. Mr. Seymour could not keep back a smile as he met his daughter's alarmed glance.

"Miss Seymour is indefatigable as ever in district work," she heard him remark, as she stood at the cottage door, and would willingly have lingered to discuss Mrs. Jones' "brown kitus" and Martha Higgins' breakages, but for the warning remembrance of the awful consequences that would ensue if Mary Ann were trusted with the sole management of preparations for high tea. So she hurried home, finding time, woman-like, to put on her new spring dress, and to fasten some cowslips carefully in the waistband, while she murmured, "John Owen is more insufferable than ever."

She went down to the pretty drawing-room, where the fire was now behaving admirably. Mrs. Seymour was looking almost animated as she listened to talk of people and things which two months ago she would have branded as gossip; Mr. Owen's softly modulated tones were really soothing and pleasant.

"My love," said Mr. Seymour, "I met Henry Bruton this afternoon, and asked him to join us; Mr. Owen must not suppose we have *no* society."

"How very tiresome!" interrupted his wife. "He is the personification of rude health and animal spirits, Mr. Owen, with a loud voice and north-country accent that jar one's nerves frightfully. So unsympathetic, too! You would hardly believe that he actually recommended me to walk a mile or two before breakfast! He tramps about with Mr. Seymour, hunting for British camps——"

"My dear," said her husband, slightly nettled for once, "you did not let me finish my sentence. Henry is not able to come this evening. You must admit that he has been most kind and attentive, and I could not bear that we should seem to slight the son of the dearest friend of my college days."

"Tea is ready now, father darling," said Clare, giving his arm an affectionate hug as they passed through the little hall.

"I must have seen Mr. Bruton at the station, I think," remarked Mr. Owen, as he placed a footstool for Mrs. Seymour and arranged the fire-screen at its proper angle—"a florid north-country giant, with a fist like a sledge-hammer—good-natured enough, I daresay; he offered me a drive in his dog-cart when he heard me inquiring the way to your house."

"You may be thankful you did not accept his offer, then," said Mrs. Seymour. "He is breaking in a young horse, and it is positively dangerous: I have forbidden Clare to drive with him."

"You are *quite* right," said Mr. Owen, with such an air of sincere conviction that Clare broke into a merry laugh.

Next morning, the weather being delightfully fine, Mr. Seymour proposed showing his guest the beauties of the neighbourhood, but Mr. Owen declined, on the plea that he had several letters to write for the morning post. Clare was in and out of the house, bringing a breath of the spring with her as she arranged velvet auriculas, great bunches of polyanthus blossoms, and wild hyacinths, humming snatches of "Barbara Allen."

The young minister evidently found such interruptions very distracting, and it was wonderful that those important letters were ever finished, but I suppose they must have been, for when all the china pots and jars were filled, Clare placed some lovely cowslips by his elbow, saying, "Here is a subject for next Sunday's sermon, Mr. Owen;" adding, "I am off to the farm for new-laid eggs, so good-morning." John Owen, starting up, said he would walk with her, and post them in the village.

Mrs. Seymour seconded the suggestion so cordially that there was no escape, and naughty Clare inwardly determined to make their route lead them over some specially slippery stepping-stones and up a very breathless hillside.

So Mr. Owen had to carry on his share of the conversation in a very panting and staccato style. "Isn't the country glorious!" exclaimed Clare, as they at last found themselves on the crest of the hill, looking down on the wooded slope, with its delicate tints of brown and faintest green, the silver river shining beyond, and a thrush in the copse filling the air with a perfect ecstasy of song.

"Most charming indeed," was the reply, with just that touch of conventionality in the tone which brought Clare back to commonplace life in a moment.

"Shall we sit down on this timber—I don't think

it is damp—and enjoy it thoroughly? You must be aware, Miss Seymour," he went on, with the slightest air of embarrassment, "why I have undertaken this journey to the north at a time when it is really seriously inconvenient to me to be absent from town,

"But, indeed, you must not exaggerate the cares of a minister's life; on the contrary, I have found my career thus far singularly free from perplexity——"

"Did you ever hear of my father's magnificent sermon on spiritual lethargy?" asked Clare, with



"'No waterproof or umbrella for me!'"—*p.* 907.

with pressing engagements, meetings to arrange—but I need not tell *you* what a London minister's life in May is!"

"No, indeed," said Clare demurely; "and I am sure we thoroughly understand and appreciate your motive, and if it had not been for those tiresome letters, you could at this identical moment have been talking over all your worries and anxieties with my dear father, who always sees a clear way out of difficulties when no one else can find even a knot-hole."

heightened colour. But Mr. Owen apparently did not notice this remark.

"The difficulties I experience, Miss Seymour, rise out of the fact that without the help of a cultivated and really intellectual woman a minister's work must be terribly maimed and one-sided. I am, perhaps constitutionally, too much given to analysis and introspection, and constant intercourse with a cheerful, sympathising spirit like yours would be life and energy to me, whilst my work would be infinitely

benefited, I know. It has pained me inexpressibly to think how starved and arid your intellectual life must be here, and the constant fret and worry of your home must, in time, deaden all your natural brightness. Clare, will you be my wife and share my joys and sorrows—my triumphs too? for, without vulgar boasting, I feel that I *have* some talent, and a latent power which only your influence could fully develop."

Clare had taken off her hat, and the west wind was blowing the soft curls from her forehead. She turned to him now, a fine scorn looking out from her clear brown eyes.

"I suppose I should feel greatly honoured by your proposal," she said quietly. "But surely, with all your abstruse studies and knowledge of the world, you must occasionally have come across the fact that when a woman is asked to entrust her heart and life to his keeping, she expects—very absurdly, of course—to hear something, from the man who asks that very small sacrifice, of what is, after all, the great motive power of life. You have left *love* entirely out of the question, Mr. Owen; and already having *that*, I find, instead of being starved and arid, as you fancy, my life is brimming over with happiness and hope! I must decline, with thanks, your very kind offer;" and she was rising, with a haughty bow.

But Mr. Owen caught her hand with a sudden earnestness which almost frightened her.

"And why did I not speak of love, Clare?" he whispered, with suppressed passion. "Because I *dared* not! You think I do not love you, when I hunger to touch your hand, to breathe the very air that has kissed your cheeks!—when you have filled my heart and life until I can think and dream of nothing else, and the work to which I have vowed that life and energy seems futile without you! I have fought and struggled—how fiercely no earthly being will ever know!—and now, Clare, you tell me that I have left love out of the question! It is cruel—unutterably cruel!" and he put his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

There was a long silence. At last Clare said quietly, "Forgive me—I did not know."

"And you *will* give me some hope?" he exclaimed, looking up at her with a desperate eagerness.

"I promised, two months ago, to be Henry Bruton's wife," she answered simply. "But if it had not been so, I could never have made you happy—could never have shared your social ambitions. I hope, dear Mr. Owen," she faltered, using the cruel form of parting words which a kind-hearted woman so often makes use of, "I hope you may soon meet one who is worthy of you, and can return your affection."

He laughed bitterly.

"Don't—please don't! what have I said? Oh, how *could* I tell you ever cared for me?" she cried piteously, the hot tears on her cheek. "I cannot bear to think I have made anyone so unhappy."

But Mr. Owen had regained his self-control.

"Forgive me, dear, and forget it all! I see it is impossible; it would have been too great a happiness for me; and my love might easily have become idolatry. You have nothing to blame yourself for—but your name," with a sad smile. "'Is not *Clare* for love excuse enough'?"

* * * * * *

Three years have passed away; Clare is a happy wife and mother, sunshine in her heart and home. John Owen still has the charge of a large and increasing church, and has thrown himself with such energy into the work that many a fair member of his congregation has feared that dear Mr. Owen was wearing himself out, and would gladly have cheered his solitary hearth. But, with a little secret pride in his own constancy, he had set Cupid's best-aimed shafts at defiance, his heart being securely guarded, as he thought, by certain faded cowslip blossoms.

But who can withstand his destiny? and John Owen's has come to him in the form of a sweet, attractive girl, who believes him to be perfect—I mean, has that full appreciation of his talent and power in which Clare Seymour had been so sadly wanting. She is not intellectual, does "not understand, but loves," and will make him a most tender and devoted wife.

The "decayed vegetables," in fact, with other rubbish, were emptied from his desk by Isabel Owen the other evening, she having a sudden attack of tidiness, *not* curiosity. "Botanical specimens, I suppose, John dear?" was her remark, as the withered things fluttered down into the grate. "You don't want to save them, do you?"

Mr. Seymour, like the rest of us, has had his trials. His wife's malign prophecy has been fulfilled, and the beloved early British camp has been proved to be a delusion and a mockery. But kind nature's compensation is curly-haired little Seymour Bruton, in whose extraordinary intellectual promise his grandfather finds an ever-increasing source of interest and astonishment. Mrs. Seymour has developed an entirely new malady, which has received an unpronounceable name of several syllables from a celebrated leading physician, and in discussing and noting down its varying and minute symptoms her time is fully and most pleasantly occupied.



"TAKE HOLD OF MY STRENGTH."

A CHAPTER FOR THE SICK AND INFIRM.



HICH of you, clasping the hand of the child that you love, leading it home in the eventide darkness, or across some stony way, would let go that feeble hand, so that the little thing came to harm in unaided loneliness? Not one of us would forsake the little life that trusted to our guidance; our utmost power would be at the child's disposal, to bear it safely home.

It may be that to you life's path is rough and hard just now; the skies may be darkened, the track perplexing. Yet never dream the hand of your God and Father has ceased to guide you. He holds you all the more closely because the road is dark. There is no shadow, no stone of difficulty in the way, that is not known and understood by your Lord, and His gentle bidding comes to you in your helplessness and bewilderment: "*Take hold of My strength.*"

"I felt a different creature when I had talked it over with my friend," said one whose circumstances seemed all in a tangle, but who suddenly remembered one living near her who was willing and able to unravel the tangle. Lying awake in the silence of the night, she made the decision, "I will go to that friend," and she came away cheered and hopeful. But what is the cheer that earthly sympathy can give compared to the sense of support and aid and comfort imparted by Him Who bids us take hold of His strength by *prayer?* Lying before His mercy-seat in humble faith, spread the tangle out before the Strong One, the Counsellor, to Whom belong the cattle upon a thousand hills, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. You know not how to act, how to decide, amid your perplexity. Lay hold of His strength as you pour out your heart before Him; He will give you the power you need for the wise and right decision.

Do you need strength for endurance, for patience, to repress the sense of murmuring, and keep the light of trust in triumphant glow? Lay hold of His strength Who, in supreme love, wore the thorn-regalia, Who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet He opened not His mouth; Who knelt in Gethsemane's olive-shade and prayed, "Thy will be done." Whether you need power to *do* or to *bear*, take hold of the strength of Christ, the Rock of His people's hearts, the Strong Tower whereto we may continually resort, the Deliverer, the Captain of salvation, the Friend that loveth at all times.

The strength available for you this day, and in every moment of your need, is changeless, eternal, gentle, inexhaustible. Your life has been a record of change, and the strength of past days has waned to infirmity; but the Master is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—just as strong as when He stilled the tempest, just as mighty as when He overcame the darkness of death and led captivity captive. Many an Ebenezer of help arises in your life-history; think not you have reached a crisis too hard, too crooked, for Divine strength to avail. Is *anything* too hard for the Lord?

"He lives! He lives!" were the words Luther's fingers traced on the table at a time of perplexity and fear. *He lives!* and to Him even now you may commit your cause, and, in your weakness, take hold of His unchanging strength.

Power without tenderness is the power of a *tyrant;* the strength you may clasp, however ignorant, poor, friendless, or infirm, is the strength of the *Father*—yea, of the *mother*—for in the Lord your God meet mercies and compassions beyond those of earth's gentlest parent. The arms that pillow your weakness are the arms that rule the earthquake, the ocean, and the storm; yet they are the arms that blessed little children, and were stretched out in blessing to His flock as He passed to His sovereign throne. Even should your infirmity prove a weariness to your nearest and dearest (though, could you read their hearts, you would understand it is far otherwise), the strength of the Master's loving-kindness remaineth, and His ear is never deaf, His power is never limited, like the power of human pity. The strength of God flows out towards you through the channels of His *love.* Nothing can separate you from this love, stronger than death, triumphant, unspeakable, invincible. Remember this day "the great love wherewith He hath loved us," and thus take hold of strength sufficient for your need, strength whereby you can do all things, bear all things, endure to the end, through Christ which strengtheneth you.

All earthly supplies fail sooner or later; the strength you have in the Lord is *inexhaustible,* and you will prove more of its fulness, even as you learn more and more your own frailty and helplessness.

"God is an unchanging Rock," said John Brown of Haddington when laid low upon a bed of weakness. Suffering and exhausted, he could yet say, with a smile, "The Lord is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation." May *we* take hold likewise of that strength which is changeless, faithful, divine, eternal; then our last thought, like John Brown's, will be one of tender and availing comfort even through the valley of the shadow—"*My Christ!*"

M. S. H.

"THE LUXURY OF WOE" IN CHINA.



A CHINESE BUDDHIST PRIEST.

THE deceased lady was the wife of an official, and in her lifetime had often visited a Christian lady residing near her, but while admiring the pretty European house and furniture, the lady's conversation about her God and Saviour seemed to have no influence on the T'ai-t'ai. Early one cold morning her foreign friend heard the sad wailing and sobbing which always accompanies Chinese mourning. On calling, she found the two young daughters and a daughter-in-law of the family sitting on the ground and wailing most piteously. Their embroidered silk robes were replaced by the coarsest white cotton garments, the borders of which were not even hemmed, and the usually elaborately dressed black hair was streaming in wild confusion over their shoulders. The wailing was continued early in the morning for some forty days, with an occasional few days' intermission. During this time the coffin, which in China is of very heavy wood and hermetically sealed, was kept in the house, and at vast expense constant relays of Buddhist and Taoist priests held various services for the dead. A few of these services Mrs. Grey was invited to see; and hoping to drop some words of truth and comfort, she accepted the invitations. On the first occasion she found a life-size sketch of the dead lady in coloured chalks on the floor. Round this a priest was pouring a little stream of rice, which a second priest following him deftly worked out with his fingers into a framework of vine-leaves and grapes. This completed, the priests formed in procession, and with monotonous chants and sounding of cymbals and gongs, moved in a kind of slow dance round and round the figure, crossing and re-crossing the rice pattern with their long flowing robes, and yet in some mysterious fashion never disarranging it. Between the times of wailing and the priests' services, the three young girls were busy embroidering silk and satin shoes in their mother's favourite patterns, and having them made up according to the size she used to wear. The second time Mrs. Grey was summoned this was explained to her. She was conducted to a large, handsome-looking house, made of bamboo and paper, but painted and coloured to look exactly like a real dwelling, standing in an open space some distance from the home of the family. The coffin, after a long processional journey, was also there. The sedan-chairs of the lady mourners halted as Mrs. Grey arrived, and on being opened discovered the three girls, pale and worn with long wailing, clad in coarse white cotton garments and shoes, and with sackcloth veils covering their heads. According to Chinese custom, they did not move themselves, but were roughly dragged by servants from their chairs and along the stony ground to the coffin, before which they prostrated themselves. Mrs. Grey was now invited to enter the house, as the relatives would be the last to inspect it, and no one else would then be allowed to enter. To her surprise, she found the structure consisted of nine rooms, each large enough to contain six persons comfortably. Loving thought had evidently been bestowed upon it, for in the guest-hall was a capital imitation of Mrs. Grey's own drawing-room grate, which had been a special object of admiration to the T'ai-t'ai. Chinese chairs and tables and excellent effigies of men and women servants were also there; then came the



CHINESE WOMAN IN MOURNING.



PAPER MONEY FOR SENDING TO THE DECEASED IN THE NEXT WORLD.

bedroom, with wardrobe and appropriate furnishings, the former containing numbers of costly silk and satin dresses and *the embroidered shoes*. In ordinary cases the clothes and shoes are also made of paper, but it is understood that the better the materials used on earth in these ceremonies the better will be the spiritual counterparts in the other world. Next came the box-room, containing piles of imitation Chinese trunks full of paper money, clothes, pu-kais (a kind of wadded quilt, often covered with silk), and many other



SENDING A HOUSE TO THE DECEASED.

necessary articles; outside this was the kitchen, with a Chinese cooking range and all its accompanying pots and pans, among which was a foreign lamp and bottle of kerosene, all most ingenious imitations of the real things. After all the invited guests had left the house, the mourners entered, carefully inspected and rearranged everything in the different rooms, and then closed the doors and withdrew to a short distance. The priests now formed in procession, and having, amid the firing of crackers, set fire to the house, marched round and round it as the flames burnt it up, chanting and beating their gongs. One of them sprinkled something on the fire from a bowl held in his hand, and Mrs. Grey asked one of the gentlemen of the family to tell her what it was and explain the meaning. He replied briefly, "Fairy water," and turned away. Not satisfied, she appealed to a younger member of the family who had already manifested interest in the foreigner's religion; he explained at once, as fully as he knew himself, that it was the blood of a cock, and that its being sprinkled on the burning house in some way helped to transform it into a spirit-land habitation for the departed one! So fully is it believed that the wants of the dead are thus supplied, that relatives will take advantage of an occasion such as the one just described to send boxes to their own friends. The one for whose special benefit the burning is taking place is supposed to pass on these boxes to their owners. In the sprinkling of the blood, can there be some vague notion of the need of a sacrifice? After the house and its contents had been consumed, the coffin was deposited in a temple near by. Not yet would the rapacious priests allow "the hope of their gains" to go, and so the coffin must remain unburied for another year, or even years, with periodical expensive ceremonies performed, before a lucky site could be fixed upon for burial.

Truly in this present life "Godliness would be profitable" to these poor people, to say nothing of the comfort and joy of a "sure and certain hope" for the future. Let us think for a moment of our own "walking in the light" compared with their stumbling in darkness, and surely the contrast will lead us to pray earnestly that on them, too, the Sun of Righteousness may rise with healing in His wings.

H. E. L.

THE ANGEL IN MID-HEAVEN.

(PREACHED IN BEHALF OF A UNIVERSITY MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.)

BY THE REV. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."—Rev. xiv. 6.

NO one will question the assertion that of all books of Sacred Scripture, on that of the Revelation of St. John, the book of sealed but magnificent mysteries, it is the height of presumption to dogmatise. Yet we only follow the footsteps of many cautious and reliable expositors when we identify the beautiful description and vision we have now read with the era of the Reformation and its momentous results. Even if we were less satisfied with the grounds of such a reference than we are, the suggestive passage might readily be accommodated to the theme and the object of our present meeting.

In a previous chapter we have a vivid picture of a mighty angel, typifying the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Angel of the Covenant, coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud and a rainbow. He has in his hand an open book. It is an unclosed Bible, Heaven's best boon to apostate Christendom. In the verses immediately preceding our text there is a striking delineation of a different kind. A lamb is seen on Mount Sion, surrounded with 144,000 with harps in their hands and a new song on their lips. It is the Church of the living God, with their living Head in the midst of them—no longer witnessing in darkness and sackcloth, but openly, in the face of the world, exulting in the glorious liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. But what then? Are these handful of representatives, these 144,000—a number we may take to be indicative of the smallness of the true Church at that particular age—to appropriate to themselves all the sweets of that freedom and the preciousness of that new anthem? No. Other harps are to be awoke; other voices in far-distant climes are invited to swell the chorus. That "new song," the first note of which, if our suggested interpretation be allowed, was chanted by a poor monk, is to awake the echoes of the world. For John's attention is immediately arrested by a new and more startling figuration. Another divine messenger is seen, with the same opened book in his hand, high in mid-heaven (as if he had been delegated by the Covenant Angel), speeding onwards with this charter of freedom to distant nations. Brethren, let us seek, in preaching for a Missionary Association and a missionary object, to track his stupendous flight, viewed in connection with the great ecclesiastical movements and impulses of this busy century, now fast waning.

I would desire, then, with the blessing of God, to direct your attention to these three particulars brought before us in this verse:—

I. *The revival of a missionary spirit in the Church of Christ.*—"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven."

II. *The instrumentality employed.*—"Having the everlasting Gospel."

III. *The object and extent of His commission.*—"To preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

I. We have described *the revival of a missionary spirit in the Church of Christ.* We say a *revival*, for that spirit not only formed a necessary element all throughout the New Dispensation, but it had its recognised place and potency in the Old. How many of the prophets of Judah and Israel, in varied words and imagery, exulted in the prospect of times when the exclusive privileges of the covenant-land would cease; when nations sitting in darkness would see the great Light! How often in the Psalms do we find the same aspirations! The sweetest strains of the minstrel monarch of Israel are missionary odes. What was his very last, when his head was whitened with years, and the corruptible crown was fading from his brow? What the last cadence, ere the golden harp often attuned on earth is to be exchanged for the nobler harp of the skies? It was a missionary note. The farewell vision which awoke that melody was the very vision of the text. The undimmed eye of faith saw far down the vista of ages the Angel flying through the midst of heaven with the tidings of salvation to perishing nations. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust." It is enough; His task is done! "Blessed be His glorious Name for ever and ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory." And then, and not till then, he adds, "Amen and Amen; the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."

It was the apostolic age, however, which was the era for the grand development of missionary zeal. Scarce had the gates of glory closed on their ascended Lord when the disciples set out on the task which had been confided to them, and manfully did they fulfil their great commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

But was missionary ardour to expire with the primitive era in the Church of Christ? a solitary and transient outburst of enthusiasm, when Peter and John crossed the borders of Palestine for the regions of Asia Minor and the distant lands of the dispersion;

or when Paul braved the surges of the Adriatic and confronted the merchant princes of Corinth, the philosophers of Athens, and the captains of Imperial Rome? True, for the space of 1,400 years, with some memorable exceptions, specially in the sixth and again in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,* the missionary harp was muffled; while, in other cases, efforts made by the purer representatives of Gospel times and Gospel truth, Bigotry frowned on and Tyranny suppressed. The Reformation dawned, but did there come along with it, as we might have expected, all at once the resuscitation of this missionary spirit? No, alas! Even then, in that first hour of her emancipation, the Church seems to have been forgetful of her responsibilities. Supine after the first flush of victory, she laid aside her weapons for fresh conquests, and rather sought to repose on the laurels she had won.

The set time, however, duly came for God fulfilling His own irrevocable decree—"Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The occasion had arrived, as marked in the roll of prophecy, when Zion was to awake, like a giant refreshed, to a sense of obligation to those beyond her pale. And what *is* the time her great Head selects for the fresh outburst of this expansive force? The Church's walls have always been built, and now her outposts are again to be reared, in portentous and troublous times. Europe was heaving to its core. The shock of the first French Revolution had just been felt; thrones were tottering; empires were dismembered; old dynasties crumbled; and withal, in that tremendous crash, there was the threatened disownment and dethronement of the God of nations. "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" He did now as oftentimes before; He made the season of darkness and peril the season of awakening. The enemy was coming in like a flood, but the Spirit of Grace put it into the hearts of not a few to lift up a standard to resist him. Christians in our own favoured land were the first to unfurl the banner, naturally beginning with the outcast and benighted—"the heathen at home"—but ready, too, to carry that standard far and wide, and to inscribe on it, "The field is the world." While Europe, like a midnight ocean, was rocking itself asleep in the gloom of spiritual death, all at once this rising sun of missionary enterprise shoots above the murky horizon, bursting on the crests of a thousand waves and illuminating them with living gold! Beautiful figure surely to depict all this, is that employed in the words of the text.

In the following chapter we have what we may assume to be a contemporary vision. A number of harpers (symbolic of the true Church of Christ in these lands) are represented as standing by a sea of glass mingled with fire, making the shores re-echo their pæans of victory. And what is it that forms the new note in their exultation as they sing in sweet symphony, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ"? Lo! above their heads, as described in the text, there is seen, speeding through the vault of heaven, the great Mission Angel, an ambassador charged with treaties of peace to every nation under heaven.

Shall we attempt to track him in his majestic flight?

Far away in the distant East there lay a mighty empire. Poetry had sung of it as "The climes of the sun," and British arms and enterprise had claimed it as their proudest trophy. But the darkness of spiritual death is brooding over it, and polluted fires are rising from unnumbered altars. Thither the Angel of the vision wings his way. Altar-fire after altar-fire is quenched. The chime of the Sabbath bell and the hum of the Christian school break the stillness of moral solitude, and he comes back to tell, "In the region and shadow of death light has sprung forth."

He only pauses there to renew his errand. Again, in the expanse of a wide wilderness of waters on the bosom of the Pacific, there slept in quiet loveliness what seemed as if the fabled islets of the blest. Sad contrast, however, between the azure canopy above, or the fragrant beauty around, and those who proclaimed amid the paradise they tenanted that it was too sadly, too truly, "Paradise lost." Thither the Mission Angel speeds. Nothing meets his eye but licentiousness, cruelty, revenge—the blood of brothers, parents, children, crimsoning the guilty soil. He drops his mighty antidote. Lo! in a few brief years the vulture is changed into the dove, the lion into the lamb, and the cannibal is seen at the feet of Jesus sitting clothed and in his right mind.

Yet again, there is a far-off land in the same teeming East. It has for ages, with vain conceit, mimicked in name the glories of the true Celestial—China, in extent and numbers itself a world. Thither, too, the delegated messenger directs his way. For long he hovers, like the dove of old, over the proscribed and forbidden territory, and can find no resting-place! Babel walls and portals of adamant seem to debar all access. But, lo! the ponderous gates seem at last to move. The ambassador of the Cross, slowly, but surely, has achieved an entrance among these 300 millions. The expiring shout of one devoted missionary, who died nobly at his post, seemed prophetic—"China for Christ!" And ever and anon there are voices heard in trembling accents to exclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Yet again, the earth is one mighty valley, like that of Ezekiel, strewn with the skeletons of once breathing men and animated frames. "Son of man, can these bones live?" It is the scattered Jewish race, for ages under the curse of abandonment, a

* One of these centuries must be remembered with thankfulness for the ecclesiastical revival in England, especially under Lanfranc and Anselm. Also, that through missionaries sent from Great Britain and Ireland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were brought to embrace Christianity.

hissing and a byword and a proverb among the nations. Thither, on an errand of mercy to fallen Israel, the Mission Angel is sent. Who can follow him in his devious flight? for there is not a spot, from the chill regions of Siberia to the burning sands of Libya, where the outcast children of Abraham are not found. The Gospel messenger begins, like their own prophet, to prophesy to these bones. But what has he to tell, save the same mournful tidings, "Behold, they are very many and very dry"? And yet as he passes by, the mouldering wrecks in that Valley of Vision seem to move—the skeletons are clothed; the dead live! The summons is heard, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh. Thou shalt no longer be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be any more termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee!" The response comes, it may yet be only in trembling whispers, but soon will it proceed from ten thousand voices, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth glad tidings of good; that publisheth salvation. . . . Break forth into joy; sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem."

We need not dwell on the picture. The Evangelist beheld the Angel of the vision "flying." It denoted at once suddenness and rapidity. And in this respect the emblem beautifully accorded with the reality. The outburst of missionary zeal at the period we have alluded to was as instantaneous as it was comprehensive and remarkable. All at once, without any note of preparation, the Churches awoke from their slumber, and, with a lofty moral chivalry, united in a missionary crusade against the world. Denominational differences were forgotten; the electric spark of Christian zeal ran along the varied links of the chain which begirt the globe. Bible Societies, and Tract Societies, and Home and Foreign Missionary Societies, followed in rapid succession. It seemed as if the earth were on the eve of the time in which "nations were to be born in a day." Oh! when Christians, with astonished transport, beheld this unprecedented rise of a dormant missionary spirit, proselytism in its noblest form, that glorious flight to earth's kindreds, commenced, which is only to terminate with the hour of Advent: what could an exulting Church testify but this?—giving glory to Whom glory alone was due—"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!"

II. We have *the instrumentality employed:* "The Everlasting Gospel." This was the book the Mission Angel held in his hand. In the former chapter, to which we have already referred, where is described the descent of the Covenant Angel, and, if we are correct in our interpretation, the dawn of the Reformation, it was this same volume, called there "the little book," no longer sealed, but open, and made patent to the gaze of all, which formed not the least prominent part of the vision. Nay, more; you will observe, by referring to the close of the same chapter, that the Angel of the Reformation, if we may so designate him, in delivering it over to the Apostle, accompanied the act with a special charge. John, as personating the Church of Christ, is told that that precious boon is not for behoof of it alone (to be muffled and secreted like the law in the ark of old)—"Thou must *prophesy*," was the solemn commission (or preach) "before many peoples, and *nations*, and *tongues*, and *kings*."

Thus was a grand missionary design unfolded in connection with that Resurrection-era in the Church's spiritual liberties. Her living Head enacted it as a special article in her reformed creed, and by this preliminary vision prepared His servant for the scene depicted in the text, when that "little book" was to reach kindreds and tongues; or, changing the figure, to be the winged messenger of mercy carrying the olive-branch of peace around the globe.

"*The little Book.*"

It may seem to proud reason a poor weapon with which to effect the moral conquest of the world. And more especially when that Gospel is proclaimed, not by angels, but by feeble men. "But the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

It seems to be a law or distinguishing feature in His government of the world, that the mightiest ends are effected by the simplest and often unlikeliest means; that results are brought about by agencies and instrumentalities in themselves apparently inadequate to produce them. Look at His providential dealings as these are recorded in the page of Scripture. It was the sling of a shepherd-boy and a few pebbles from the brook which brought to the dust the giant of Philistia. It was a simple rod in the hand of the meekest of men which made a passage through the waves of the Red Sea or summoned water from the flinty rock. It was the blowing of trumpets of rams horns which levelled the proud bulwarks of Jericho, and effected an entrance for the hosts of Israel. And all these are only types of the like feeble instrumentality God uses in the achievements of grace. The sterner walls of the world's unbelief are to be razed to the ground; He employs the blast of this Gospel trumpet in the hands of human agents. Twelve humble fishermen from Tiberias' shores, with no weapon but the sling of faith and the Gospel stone, showed, ere half a century was past, how He could choose "The foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29). And, powerful in the past, the same moral and spiritual forces are still to be mighty for the pulling

down of heathen strongholds. It is with this "little book" the Mission Angel is still to fly through mid-heaven. Countless Dagons are to fall before this Ark of God.

And who can fail to admire the wondrous adaptation of that everlasting Gospel to all characters, and ages, and times! The same truths which gave light to the mind of the child Timothy, and peace to the Ethiopian in the desert, and wisdom to the sages of Athens, and an ideal of true imperial life to Nero's household which rank and splendour never could have unfolded, that same Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, still effects its conquests alike over barbarous races and polished Europeans. The vision of the text, moreover, tells us it is destined, yet on a vaster scale, to vindicate its title to be "The power of God unto salvation" unto the very ends of the earth—the grand fulcrum and lever in one which is to elevate degraded humanity. Governments and rulers may seek still, as in ages past, to invent other panaceas for national wrongs. The wisdom of statesmanship, and the refinements of philosophy, and the theories of economists, may affect to discover other means for the amelioration of man; but too many of these are like the flaming meteor, bred from its own atmospheric corruptions, which illumines for a moment with its glare, and then leaves behind it a darkness more felt. The other is like the sun, its eternal type, in the firmament. It shines with increasing brightness as it climbs the meridian in its onward path to perfect day.

And then, and more than all, it is God's own appointed means. That Angel sets forth on his flight at the bidding of the Almighty Himself; and though the weapon were feebler and the foolishness of preaching greater than it is, "it hath pleased God," it is His own devising, and that is enough. What an encouragement is here to the humble, devoted missionary who, looking to his own unworthiness on the one hand, and the magnitude of his work on the other, is tempted at times to exclaim, "Who shall believe my report?" to know that he goes not a warfare on his own charges; that He who took Peter from his nets and Matthew from his toll-bar, and, in later times, Carey from his cobbler's stall, and Livingstone from his factory, and made them the triumphant messengers of mercy to thousands, can bless the weakest instrumentality in the execution of His own great purposes. He committeth the treasure to earthen vessels, that the excellency and the power may be altogether of Him. He would demonstrate this to be the secret and history of the efficacy of all means, and ordinances, and ministrations: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

III. Let us now turn to *the extent of the commission:* "To preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." We believe, as already stated, that this vision has been fulfilling for the last eighty years. Alas! however, before the glowing picture we have given, are we not compelled to shade our eyes and to ask, "What is it, after all?" The mind sinks at the thought of the little done, the much undone. What way have we got among these perishing millions? How few olive-branches, in comparison, has that winged messenger brought back to the Ark of God! If we can sketch a bright foreground, what of the looming distance? What a petty instalment of the world's great debt! What a few paltry sheaves of the world's great harvest! Christianity can only number her units, Paganism her thousands. There seems but like a single sheaf gathered from each land, while the reaping-time still remains. And what? Does this reverse side of the picture indicate the failure of the Mission Angel? and are we left to mourn how far off still is creation's jubilee-day, when it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and be translated into the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God? Not so. That day approaches. Its approach is certified, even though the Angel of our text is touching only the borders of these lands, and gathering little more than a handful from each. That everlasting Gospel is not to be preached to "*convert* all nations;" but we are expressly told it is to be preached for a "*witness* to all," and "then" (after that *witness* is accomplished)—"THEN shall the end be."

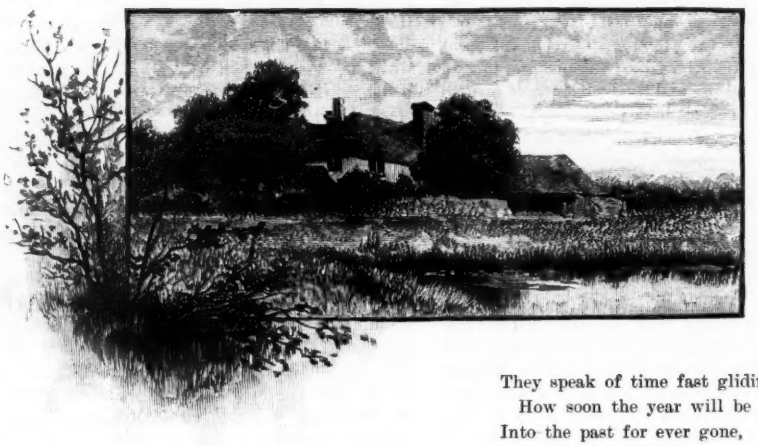
May we not farther venture, without presumption, to say that that witnessing is rapidly completing?—as if the great voice in the contemporary seventh vial were about to emanate from the Temple of Heaven—from the Throne—saying, "It is done." Blessed be God, those nations are now the exceptions where this symbolic messenger has not given forth his witness. Traverse what climes we may, to earth's remotest shores, "there is no speech nor language where His voice is not heard. His line is gone to all the earth, and His words unto the end of the world." We behold the Esquimaux and the Laplander, in their frigid zone, gazing on the better Sun of Righteousness; we behold the Gospel beacon-light studding Greenland's inhospitable shores, and shining amid the fogs of her dreary winter. We behold the degraded African, the type of mental imbecility, exulting in the wisdom that cometh from above; mission stations studding the banks of the Niger and Zambesi, and the shores of the Lakes Nyassa and Nyanza. We behold British evangelists making a peaceful conquest of the Island of Madagascar in one hemisphere, and the Moravians planting their settlements amid the rushing streams of Alaska in the other. We behold the cannibal shedding tears over the victims of former cruelty and lust, and triumphing only in the blood which cleanseth from all sin. We behold the pagodas of India tottering to their base, and the subtleties of the Hindoo merging in the sublime simplicities of the faith of Jesus. We behold the Chinese—tardily, it may be—renouncing hereditary superstitions, and glorying in those walls which are salvation, and those gates which are praise. We behold the Jew traversing as a Christian the slopes and rocky pathways of his own Jehoshaphat; Christian churches crowning

the steeps of the holy mountain; and that Mission Angel standing amid the wreck of Jerusalem's former magnificence, exclaiming, "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King!"

But we shall not enlarge. With the prospect of that end (come when it may, sooner or later), let us all be up and doing God's work while it is yet day—while the dimming shadows still fall on time's dial. There are voices from all sides exclaiming, "He cometh, He cometh to judge the earth!" Blessed, thrice blessed, are those servants who, when their Lord cometh, shall be found watching.

God's work *must* be accomplished, and *will* be accomplished, independent of us. And the question is, not who will make the sacrifice, but who will feel honoured in sharing the instrumentality? Nor let us excuse ourselves, or venture to plead that our missionary objects are unnecessarily multiplied and extended. Shall we plead exemption from fresh claims by pointing to what we have already done? *Done!* What have we done? *Nothing;* absolutely nothing in comparison with what we have still to do. One is almost ashamed to think of the petty mite thrown into the Church's missionary treasury, compared with the squanderings of lavish profusion, the waste of guilty extravagance. And if from all we have now said, the Lord has done so much and we have done so little; and if there be a fresh opportunity now afforded us of aiding the Mission Angel in his flight, of helping to add a fresh stone to the fast-completing Temple, let us hail the opportunity rather than grudge the claim. It may not be our privilege long. The coping-stone of that Temple may soon be brought forth, and the angelic choir sound the prophetic note over the consummated structure. Let us turn the simple but beautiful Hebrew chant with reference to that Temple into a prayer:—"*The mighty God shall build His Temple speedily; in haste, in haste, in our days, speedily. Lord, build! Lord, build! build Thy Temple speedily! The blessed Lord, the glorious God, the holy God, the gracious God shall build His Temple speedily. In haste, in haste! in our days, speedily, speedily. Lord, build! Lord, build! build Thy Temple speedily!*"

THE CHILDREN'S HYMN.



WHERE golden sunshine lights the air
In pleasant woodland ways,
How bright, how peaceful, and how fair
Are these sweet autumn days!

They speak of time fast gliding on!
How soon the year will be
Into the past for ever gone,
Lost in eternity!

Lord, in our youth may we obey
The voice of Love Divine,
And seek Thy guidance day by day,
And in Thy likeness shine!

Keep us, dear Saviour, by Thy grace,
Who art the children's Friend,
Until in heaven we see Thy Face
Through years that have no end!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

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INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

OCTOBER 19TH. THE SPIRIT OF TRUE SERVICE.

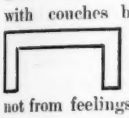
To read—St. Luke xxii. 24—38. *Golden Text—Phil. ii.* 5.

I. HUMILITY (24—38). Notice the occasion.

The time. The night before our Lord's Crucifixion.

The place. The upper room at Jerusalem.

The occasion. Taking seats at the Last Passover. Teacher must draw or describe a plan of the three tables with couches behind, forming three sides, thus:



The centre table the post of honour. A strife as to who should have the place nearest the Master, not from feelings of love, but ambition—who should have the seat of honour. What does Christ say?

In the world greatness constitutes honour, *e.g.*—

Greatness of *birth* and position—as kings.

Greatness of *influence*—as wealthy men.

But in Christ's Kingdom it is the reverse.

They are great, not who demand, but who *give* most service.

He Himself is the best example of all, for He came not to be ministered unto but to minister.

His disciples shall have the same reward as Himself, viz., present service—future kingdom.

How is this humility to be shown?

1. Each esteem other better than himself (Phil. ii. 5).

2. Minister to others—as Dorcas (Acts ix. 39).

II. TRIALS (31—34). The disciples had been with Christ in some of His earthly trials. Had seen Him—

Weep at the grave of Lazarus (St. John xi. 35).

Grieved at the hard hearts of the Pharisees (St. Mark iii. 5).

Displeased at disciples rebuking the mothers (St. Mark x. 14).

Now their time of trial is coming. What was St. Peter's to be?

Trial of faith—would he confess or deny Christ?

Trial of courage—would he stand by his Master?

Christ foresaw his fall and recovery—bids him afterwards, from his experience, strengthen his brethren.

Notice how St. Peter answers.

With *proud confidence* in himself—"I am ready!"

With *foolish boasting*—"even to prison and death."

Not yet had he learned the folly of trusting to his own heart (Prov. xxviii. 26).

Forewarned with him was *not* to be forearmed.

LESSONS. Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.

III. DANGERS (35—37). Christ's cause before had been popular.

Disciples been gladly welcomed, treated with hospitality, received as messengers of peace.

Now all is changed. Must provide for their own wants—may even have to use sword in defence (not for attack), for Christ is now rejected of men—treated as a malefactor. Disciples must expect the same.

LESSON—

> "Christ leads us through no darker rooms
> Than He went through before;
> He that into God's Kingdom comes
> Must enter by the Door."

OCTOBER 26TH. JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.

To read—St. Luke xxii. 39—53. *Golden Text—Is. liii.* 3.

I. THE AGONY (39—46). Must picture Christ and disciples leaving the "upper room" at Jerusalem and going to the Mount of Olives.

The walk—down the valley, over the brook Kedron, up the green slope to the Garden of Gethsemane—a retired but familiar spot (St. John xviii. 2).

The talk. Passed vineyards on the way. Christ spoke the parable of the Vine (see St. John xiv. 31; xv. 1). Probably paused in the full Paschal moonlight with the disciples grouped around Him.

The garden. A last charge to disciples to pray.

Christ leaves eight disciples under the trees—withdraws with three best loved, Peter, James, and John, deeper into the shade (St. Matt. xxvi. 37).

He kneels down to pray. What is His prayer?

Removal, if possible, of the cup of agony.

Yet in this, as in all, God's will to be done.

An angel, as after the temptation, sent to strengthen.

Christ undergoes great *mental agony.* Why?

Because of man's great sin—the pain and punishment of which He is enduring.

Also great *bodily exhaustion*—His sweat like drops of blood.

Three times makes the same prayer—three times finds disciples asleep, worn out with sorrow and excitement (St. Matt. xxvi. 44).

They did not watch with Him. Soon all forsook Him, and one denied Him.

LESSONS. 1. The awfulness of sin—causing such agony to the holy Jesus.

2. The need for watching and prayer.

3. Prayer always to be according to God's will.

II. THE BETRAYAL (47—53). *The multitude.* Officers from the chief priests, and a mixed rabble.

Judas had left the supper-table some hours before, and been getting together his party.

The kiss. Pre-arranged signal to point out Christ.

The sword. Disciples could not understand that Christ's weapons were not carnal. So Christ with a touch of pity and love healed His captor's ear.

The address. He rebukes the leaders. Why take Him as a dangerous malefactor? They had many opportunities of taking Him. He will make no defence.

LESSONS. What does the betrayal of Christ teach?

1. Beware of *covetousness*. Judas did it simply to get money.

2. Beware of *hypocrisy*. The seeming kiss of friendship covered deadly enmity.

3. Beware of *violence*. Christ's followers may defend themselves, but not attack enemies.

4. Beware of *cowardice*. Have we never deserted Christ's cause when His enemies attacked Him?

NOVEMBER 2ND. JESUS ACCUSED.

To read—St. Luke xxii. 54—71. *Golden Text—Is. liii.* 5.

I. THE DENIAL (54—62). Christ led away as prisoner to palace of High Priest—first to Annas (St. John xviii. 12), then to his son-in-law Caiaphas the actual high priest—for preliminary inquiry.

Where were the disciples? Nine had fled right away when Christ was taken prisoner. St. Peter and St. John followed afar off—covered by the darkness.

St. John knew the portress and got admission (St. John xviii. 16). Through his influence St. Peter was let in. Was he not exposing himself to temptation?

Now his trial comes. Picture the group—

The servants crowding together round the fire—the very men who made Christ prisoner.

The busy talk about the events of the night.

Suddenly the portress recognises St. Peter and challenges him. Taken off his guard—he denies.

Presently another says the same—he denies again.

An hour passes—what a terrible hour for him!

His love to Christ makes him stay—he fondly hopes the danger is over. But he is again recognised—this time by his speech. Why could not he keep silent? And now with oaths he denies again.

The cock crows, as Christ had foretold.

Christ hears it—turns His head—looks through the open door at Peter outside. Peter sees, recognises, remembers the warning—rushes out and weeps bitterly. What sort of a look was Christ's?

Of remembrance—recalling St. Peter's boast.

Of sadness for His disciple's fall.

Of yearning that he should repent.

What sort of tears were those of St. Peter?

Of sorrow for his grievous sin.

Of repentance—turning to Christ for forgiveness.

Such tears never in vain.

II. THE ACCUSATION (63—71). Christ's sufferings from men had begun.

He is mocked—as appearing under false pretences.

He is struck—after being blindfolded, and challenged to name the striker.

He is reviled and insulted, but answers not.

Truly He was a Man of Sorrows (Golden Text).

Now at break of day the Sanhedrin—the great Council of seventy Jewish elders—is assembled. What do they ask?

Does He claim to be the Christ—the expected Messiah? Does He claim to be the Son of God?

Christ after silence answers at last.

He *is* the Son of God. They see Him now a prisoner—they shall see Him hereafter in glory.

So they condemn Him out of His own mouth.

LESSONS. 1. Christ's dignity. He suffered manfully.

2. Christ's patience. He suffered uncomplainingly.

3. Christ's sympathy. He can feel for us.

NOVEMBER 9TH. JESUS BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD.

To read—St. Luke xxiii. 1—12. *Golden Text—verse* 4.

I. BEFORE PILATE (1—4). So far Christ had been tried by His countrymen.

Been arraigned before Sanhedrin on charge of blasphemy. But that was not an offence for which Romans could put to death. So they needed a charge of treason. Sanhedrin take Him to Pilate.

They begin at once to accuse Him of three things.

(*a*) *Perverting the nation*—vague and indefinite.

(*b*) *Forbidding to pay tribute*—perfectly false.

(*c*) *Making Himself King*—false in spirit.

See how Christ's life was answer to these charges.

(*a*) He blessed the people by word and deed.

(*b*) He told them distinctly to pay tribute.

(*c*) He always refused to be made King (St. John vi. 15).

Pilate only listens to the third charge. He questions Christ—is satisfied with His explanation that His Kingdom is not of this world (St. John xviii. 33—38)—and pronounces sentence: "Not guilty."

So far Pilate acted fairly and rightly.

He *heard* the charge at once—as a judge should.

He *tried* the case on its merits—according to law.

He *listened* patiently to the prisoner's defence.

He *judged* according to righteous judgment.

II. BEFORE HEROD (5—12). The Jews angry with the verdict—heap fresh charges against Christ. "He stirreth up the people." Was this true?

Yes. Christ did stir up the people. For example—

At Nazareth—preached deliverance to the captives.

In Levi's house told of His mission to sinners.

On the mountain proclaimed the law of love.

Warned the multitude against hypocrisy, covetousness, etc. (iv. 18; v. 31; xii. 1, 15).

And the common people heard Him gladly.

Now Pilate sends Him to Herod. Why? Perhaps to get rid of Christ without offending the Jews.

Who was Herod Antipas?

The murderer of John the Baptist, who reproved him of his sin. Was still living in open sin.

This man expected Jesus to show off a miracle!

No wonder Christ kept dignified silence.

Herod in anger mocked Him with His soldiers—insulted Him, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Thus a second time Christ was acquitted.

Herod the Jew and Pilate the heathen became friends over the trial of Christ.

LESSONS. 1. Keep innocency, for that brings peace.

2. A time to speak and a time to be silent.

3. To do well and suffer patiently is acceptable with God.

XUM



(*Drawn by* MARY L. GOW, R.I.)

"Art one with all her darlings dead,
Refusing to be comforted?"

(*See p.* 022.)

SORROW.

WHAT is thy pain?
Art one with all her darlings dead,
Refusing to be comforted?
Or Jephthah's daughter for one rash word slain?

Or Magdalene,
Hurt with the fiery sword which drinks
The spirit, till it fainting shrinks,
And whispers, "O that I had never been"?

O mourning one!
Whate'er thy root of bitterness,
Wait, and thou yet mayst surely bless
The cloudy day, when glory was begun!

He chooseth thee,
Not where thou wouldst, had choice been given;
Earth may not dictate so to Heaven;
In the deeps only must thy calling be!

When all is bare
Of mirth and pleasure—when the tomb
Has swallowed love, and life is gloom,
'T is then He seals thee His, and makes thee fair.

Behold the Man
In His abysm; His pale face wet
With agony and bloody sweat,
The sorest heart on earth since time began:—

The cup He drains,
Then, lifting up His glorious head,
His manhood wholly perfected,
On high ascends, and there triumphant reigns.

And His great Name,
The angels and archangels vie
With ransomed saints to magnify,
For which He bore the cross, despised the shame.

Oh, if, as He,
Thou bearest what thy God ordains,
Thou too, from thine allotted pains,
Shalt rise, the pure in heart, His face to see.

GEORGE S. OUTRAM.

IN THE SECOND PLACE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I," "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," "ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

HE was not gone three minutes; in less than that time he and Markham returned together. Hope saw at a glance that the latter had never been in bed. He, too, looked dishevelled; his face was pale, and its expression considerably disturbed. His eyes rather avoided Hope's; she came up at once and took his hand.

"I'll leave you," said Grey; "only I told you, Hope—I told you that it was wrong to disturb a man who is ill. If Markham gets worse, the sin will be on your head."

"Don't be bitter," said Hope. Her voice was almost bright. She herself opened the door for Cecil, and saw him out. Then she again returned to Markham, took one of his big hands in both her own, and looked full up into his face. She was a tall girl, but he towered above her. His face, massive and rather heavy in outline, made no response to the quick, sweet glance, and the hand she clasped lay passive between hers.

"Dick, are you really ill?" she said tenderly, but with some of the alarm, which his presence had for a moment dispersed, coming back into her voice.

"In mind, Hope; I have had a blow, and am ill in mind."

"But Cecil said you sent for the doctor."

"*He* did—he is a good fellow, and he and the doctor between them made up a sort of story about me."

"Then it wasn't true?"

"No, it wasn't true. Physically, I am in health—that is, I move, I breathe, I see and hear without pain."

"Yes—come and sit on the sofa, Dick. Here, close to me. Dick, you have had a blow?"

"God knows, child—yes."

Hope felt the cold round her heart getting greater. All the momentary reaction of pleasure had left her. Even her hands felt chilly; she would have trembled but for the violent restraint she put upon herself. Markham sat by her side as she bade him, and when she nestled close, his big frame bent forward a little; still he avoided her eyes.

"Look at me," said Hope suddenly. "Dick, look at me - you must, you shall! I know what has happened. You have seen the other girl; the shadow has come to life."

"Yes, it has come to life with a vengeance."

"You saw the other girl to-day, Dick?"

"I saw her to-day."

"You will marry her, I suppose?"

"Marry her! No, that I shall never do. She is not for me."

Hope sat absolutely silent. She did not move even an inch away from Markham's side; the only difference in her attitude was that now her cold hands lay perfectly still on her dress.

Markham still kept his face averted. His expression was dogged, changed, almost cowed. There was no tenderness in his manner, no compunction. His mouth was set hard, and its expression was cruel. The fact is he was absolutely taken up with himself. He was an unselfish man, as a rule. Now all his thoughts were self-centred; at this moment the slim girl by his side was absolutely nothing to him. It seemed as if hours had passed away, although in reality not many minutes had gone by, before Hope raised her voice and spoke quietly.

"You were quite honest with me, Dick; you told me about the other girl before we were engaged. You did not think you would meet her again, but you admitted the possibility. You never for a moment gave me to understand that you loved me, or could love me, better than her."

"It would have been a lie if I had said it," answered Markham, suddenly rising, and beginning to pace the floor. "I am not myself when I think of her. That I should have seen her to-day, of all days! —I am not myself; I have had an awful blow. You had better leave me, Hope. I cannot talk to you now."

"You were quite fair about it," continued Hope; "you told me at the time. It is an awful thing for me all the same. You gave me so little, and I gave you so much—all. I have nothing left, Dick; I am going away empty. Good-bye, Dick! You are not sorry for me now, but you will be presently. Good-bye, Dick!"

She went up to him, took his hand, raised it to her lips, and kissed it, then went out of the room. He scarcely saw her go, and scarcely felt her kiss; but when she was gone, really gone away; when he heard the house door being shut quietly, he staggered up and leant against the mantel-piece, and, burying his head in his hands, gave one or two great tearless sobs.

"Does she know?" said Cecil, who came into the room. "Did you tell her? Did you really break her heart?"

"Yes, old man," replied Markham, "she knows. She spoke of it herself—she guessed. Yes, she knows.,'

"Then you have broken her heart. Hope's heart broken!—think of it—the brightest, the bravest heart any girl ever possessed! But, Dick, one question more. Does she know who has robbed her?"

"I did not tell her," replied Markham, rubbing his hand wearily across his forehead. "She may guess, of course, but I don't see why she should; I did not tell her. I am going up-stairs, Grey. I feel dazed and queer; I ought to be in an awful state, but I 'm not. Don't worry me any more to-night, like a good fellow. The best news I can now hear is that you are engaged and married. Do it quickly, and tell me nothing until you send me a paper announcing the fact."

"About Hope—what about Hope, Dick?"

"I don't know. I can't think of her, somehow."

CHAPTER XXII.

A FORTNIGHT after the events mentioned in the last chapter, a girl might have been seen standing in an expectant attitude on the steps of Mrs. Douglas's small but daintily kept house. It was a very bright day, and the girl, who was exquisitely dressed, had a face so radiant that in itself it seemed part of the May sunshine. She stood on the steps, drawing on her gloves, and looking half-expectantly, half-absently, up and down the street.

At that moment a hansom cab was seen to dash round the corner, a rather restive horse was pulled up short, and Cecil Grey, springing out, ran up the steps.

"Have I kept you, Jocelyn? I didn't mean to. What a day it is! Will you come now? My mother came to town last night. We shall meet them in the Park; I told them you would be there."

"You were imprudent, Cecil, and I never gave you leave to be that. If your mother sees us together, she will think—oh, you know naturally what she will think."

"But it is true, dearest. We are engaged."

"Yes, yes. Did I deny it? I will drive with you, Cecil, not to the Park, but to Regent Street. I want to make a change in a rather important order. Now let us be off; all the housemaids in the street will soon have their heads out of the windows, wondering what we are talking about. Yes," continued Jocelyn, as the hansom whirled the pair away, "I admit that I am engaged to you, but I also admit, and you must admit, that all this is under the seal of secrecy—secrecy inviolate."

"You said so, Jocelyn; not that I could see the smallest necessity for it. My mother is most anxious that we should both be happy: my father has withdrawn any opposition he ever felt, and—and—but don't let us talk of it. Your wishes are mine, darling. I am the happiest fellow in the world—too happy, under the circumstances."

"Yes, the circumstances are grave," responded Jocelyn. "What an eccentric person—to use the mildest term—your friend Dick must be! I should like to see him, really, out of curiosity."

"The powers forbid!" ejaculated Grey.

Then he forced a laugh, looked into the radiant face of his betrothed, and said again, almost apologetically—

"I 'm the happiest fellow, and I 'm ashamed of myself when Hope is so ill."

"I cannot understand Hope," answered Jocelyn. "She certainly is very ill; the doctors say it is a sort of low fever. Oh, I don't think they are really

alarmed, Cecil. They say she has had a shock of some sort, and will come round if she gets time and isn't worried. What puzzles me about her is her fretting at all for a man who would behave so abominably. Fancy his breaking off the engagement at the eleventh hour! Hope will never give any reason for it, and she won't blame the wretched fellow. Shouldn't I blame him, though, if it were I!"

"No, you wouldn't, Jocelyn—you least of all."

"Why should I blame him least of all? Oh, how mysterious you all are! and I hate mysteries!"

"Forget what I said, Jocelyn. Don't think of it again. Dick has gone out of our lives. Poor Dick! Hope is right not to blame him. Hope was always right, and some day he'll remember it to her. Some day her face will come back to him as the sweetest memory."

"It 's all most melancholy," said Jocelyn—"melancholy and mysterious; I came back, as I thought, to a wedding, but it 's much more like a funeral."

"You came back to me, darling," said Cecil. His face glowed, and he tried to take her hand.

"Don't, Cecil. I hate demonstrations, particularly in hansom cabs. Here we are. Will you come in? You 'll find it awfully slow."

"Yes, I will. No, I won't, if you 'd rather not. I'll walk up and down outside until you come out."

"Much the best plan," laughed Jocelyn.

She went into the shop; it was nearly an hour before she reappeared. When she did, she was accompanied by a slight, plain, eager-looking girl.

"I must have an answer for him, Jocelyn," the girl was saying. "Are you coming back to-night, or are you not? I can't have him coming to the house as if he wanted to see me. Mother would be so wild."

"Hush! I 'll come if I can; how can I make promises when Hope is so ill? You are unreasonable, Lottie."

"Well, shall I give him Mrs. Douglas's address? It really is hard on me. He is certain to come again to-night."

"I 'll come over. I 'll promise. If you give my address, I 'll never speak to you again. Now, no more, I entreat. This is Mr. Grey coming up the street; you have heard me speak of him—Cecil Grey, an old Downton friend.—Cecil, let me introduce my cousin, Miss Seaton."

"I have often heard of you," said Lottie.

The three walked away together. Presently Jocelyn made an excuse.

"I must go into this shop with Lottie," she said. "Yes, I am going to sleep at the Douglases' to-night, but I shall go home to lunch with Aunt Margaret and Lottie, and it is very probable I shall spend the evening with them. I can see you to-morrow with the Douglases, Cecil; you might come about eleven if you liked."

Cecil's face fell.

"And my mother!" he began. "You know she expected to meet you in the Park."

"Please give her the prettiest message you can invent, from me. Tell her I was unexpectedly detained. I trust you will say something nice, dear old man."

The last words were almost whispered; the lovely eyes grew soft and tender. Cecil felt a glow round his heart.

"I 'll manage it, my dear," he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion.

Jocelyn nodded again lightly to him, and went into the shop with Lottie.

"No wonder poor Dick is as bad as he is," thought the young fellow, as he walked down Regent Street. "I loved her before—I loved her always, since the first day I saw her, when she was a little imperious child, and made me do what she wanted; but oh, how deeply I care for her now! She bewilders me, she teases me, she 'll always do just whatever she fancies with me—she knows that; but how lucky I am! I can't believe in my own good fortune. Well, poor Dick! Yes, of course I 'm sorry for Dick; he must go to Australia, or Ceylon, or somewhere; he 'll have to give up Oxford. Oh, of course, that goes without saying. I don't suppose he 'll be selfish about it, for *I* couldn't take Jocelyn into exile; she wouldn't go. I shouldn't like to test her love too much. Oh, of course it 's there, but she mustn't be ruffled. The first thing I ask her shall not be a sacrifice. No, Dick must go away. Poor Hope! I hate to think about Hope. Well, it is all really settled. I am absolutely engaged to Jocelyn Karron. Now I shall write to Dick and tell him."

Grey turned into his club, and soon dashed off a hasty line. He was happy, but he felt very restless and disturbed. Jocelyn was his, but he certainly could not mention any possible wedding-day.

"Dick said, not to let him know until we were absolutely married," he murmured to himself. "I may have to wait awhile for that, but this will put him out of his pain. Poor Dick! poor old fellow!"

Then Grey wrote his letter, glanced over its contents, put it into its envelope, and with his own hands dropped it into the nearest pillar-box.

The next morning Markham, who had returned to Oxford, received it. He had taken a house there—a house where he and Hope were to have lived happily together. He had not gone near the house, but had returned to his old lodgings. There he silenced his astonished landlady by telling her that he had no news whatever to give her—that he was not married nor likely to be—and by a request, made with most unusual sternness, that she would cease to question him on the subject.

Then he took up his usual avocations, lecturing better than ever, but shunning his fellow-men. It was quite true that he was not the least ill in body; he ate, and when he went to bed he slept. His brain felt more acute than ever; his reasoning powers were excellent; but the kindly light had quite gone out of his face—the light which used to make Dick Markham's plain, rough, rugged features almost beautiful when he looked at suffering, or spoke to a child, was gone. He often said to himself, "I don't suffer at all, but really I have not a scrap of heart. It is as if it had been killed with a blow. If this state of things goes on, I may turn into a very cruel man. I am a hard man now—hard as iron. I must be on my guard against myself."

On the morning Markham received Grey's letter, he



"'My unknown friend!'"—*p.* 926.

ascertained with almost a sense of satisfaction that the heart he thought dead was only frozen or stunned. It awoke with a great throb to fresh life. A wretched sense of bitterness came over him.

"The worst of it is, I know I am an utter fool," he said to himself. "What man who was not an idiot would throw away all that makes life worth living for the sake of a face and a voice that can never be his? Never, now, absolutely, for at this very moment she belongs to another."

For the first time that day Markham's thoughts turned to Hope. Not that he was even yet sorry for her. It seemed impossible to him at that moment that any girl was to be pitied who was well rid of a fellow like himself. For perhaps the most acute part of the suffering which fell to his share during the few weeks that followed was his sense of self-abasement. He hated himself even more thoroughly than he still loved and clung to the voice and the shadow which darkened his life.

His heart was no longer paralysed, however; which, although he could scarcely be got to consider it a special blessing, was at least a move in the right direction.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was rather a merciful thing for Hope that the dreadful and mysterious calamity which fell upon her was immediately followed by illness of an acute form. She was not absolutely in danger, but she suffered from a recurrent sort of low fever, which, when at last it left her, took away a good deal with it.

For instance, the great charm which there had always been about Hope had been the singular likeness which her face bore to her name. It was an expectant face, with a glad outlook about it, an anticipation of something brighter and better than the present could give, always filling the eyes and sparkling on the lips.

Now this look had gone. The face which rose from that sick-bed was sweet, but the thing that had given it its beauty had left it. It was a still face, rather

wanting in animation, quite unexpectant, with no forward inquiring glance. No one could now speak of Hope Karron as beautiful, although the trouble that had come to her had in no sense embittered her.

There are girls and girls. There are many who under a blow like this would become shattered, poor, and useless; not a great many really die of broken hearts, but most would be embittered.

Hope was not embittered. A great deal had been taken away, but she was not going to lead a useless life.

After three weeks of illness, she went one day to Mrs. Douglas, and had a long talk with her.

"I am not cured," she said. "Something has been taken away from me which can never be replaced. Dick was not to blame; he told me that a possible contingency might occur when first he asked me to be his wife. I became engaged to him, knowing all about this. Dick was not to blame, although it is very sad for me. Yes, it is very sad and hard, but I am not going to be crushed. To-morrow, Mrs. Douglas, I want to go away. I have fixed on the place I am going to, but I don't want anyone to know my secret but you. Neither Katie nor Jocelyn is to know. I will give *you* the address. See, it is here, in this closed envelope. Open it if you really want me, and in any case open it at the end of six months, if you don't hear from me before. I am going away to get cured, or at any rate so far cured that I can be a useful sort of girl again."

"But what about money, dear?" said Mrs. Douglas, who was a soft-hearted woman, and could not help crying while the young girl sat by her side so quiet and still and patient. "You can't go on with your profession while you are away, Hope. You must have money to carry out your scheme."

"So I have," answered Hope. "I have a little money saved, and Mr. Frost has just sent me my half-yearly income. Now, you will keep my secret, won't you? I am not going to tell anyone I am going. I am not going to say good-bye to anyone."

"Not even to Jocelyn?"

"No, not even to Jocelyn. Jocelyn seems very far from me now. Oh, yes, I am glad she is engaged to Cecil; but she is changed. I think she is more Aunt Margaret's child now, than my sister."

The next morning, early, Hope carried out her plan. She vanished from the Douglases' quiet little dwelling leaving no apparent trace behind her, for Mrs. Douglas faithfully kept her secret. There was a small excitement at her departure. The little circle of her acquaintance were interested for a day or two; but time goes fast in the busy London season, and in a day or two Hope Karron and her sad little story were forgotten.

It was the end of June, and a very sultry evening, when Markham once again, owing to some circumstances connected with his profession, found himself travelling to London. Once again he was in the bustle of arrival at Paddington. After his late experience, he cordially hated railway stations, and now pushed his way rapidly through the crowd. All his necessary luggage had been shoved into one small handbag. This he carried himself, and was about to hail a hansom to convey him to his destination when once again he was pulled up short, and once again his heart beat heavily and strangely.

As he stood on the pavement waiting to summon his hansom, a neat brougham drawn by a pair of bays came rapidly up, occupied the space just before which he was standing, interrupted his view of the line of hansoms, and forced him for the moment, chafing with impatience as he was, to turn his attention to the occupants of the brougham.

They got out—a girl and a man. The girl looked full into Markham's face; he staggered back and turned white. His change of colour and evident confusion perhaps helped her to recognise him. She stepped forward with a radiant smile.

"My unknown friend of other years at Rome—is it not so?" she said. And she held out her little hand.

Markham did not take it. He stammered something unintelligible; a crimson wave of deep colour had rushed all over his face.

"I think myself lucky to have met you," continued the girl. "I don't know your name, but I have always somehow associated you with luck. I will tell you my name now—that is, my new name—the Contessa di Longobardi. Yes, I am a bride—this is my wedding-day."

"Let me congratulate you," began Markham. "My name is—is—" But before he could utter a word the Count, a fussy little dark-eyed Italian, hurried up.

"Not a moment to lose—we shall miss our train, carissima," he said, and he darted a fiery glance at Markham. Some people rushed up in a hurry, the bustle increased, and in a moment Markham found himself whirling away in a hansom through the sultry evening air. There was a cold dew on his forehead; he had a queer sensation as if he had suddenly passed through death. "Anywhere—drive anywhere," he said to the cabman.

The evening was very still; not a breath of air seemed to move. Markham took his hat off and began mechanically to wipe the drops of dew from his cold forehead. The driver of the hansom, not knowing where else to go, took him into Hyde Park. He drove through from one gate to another, not too fast, for surely there was no use in wearing his horse out over a person who did not know his own mind. Markham, with his hat still off, leant forward in his seat. The balmy warm air was reviving to him, and something in his present situation recalled dimly at first, then vividly, an old memory. About two months ago he had left Paddington and driven, a gay and light-hearted man, to Victoria. He was going to meet a girl who on the next day was to take his hand in hers and promise to be his true, loving, and faithful wife. All through the years that followed this girl and he were to walk in loving fellowship—they were to be so united that no man could sever them. The picture of the home which he and Hope were to have together once more rose up before his mental vision. He saw Hope's face, tender, strong, very faithful, very bright and steadfast. The whole picture came vividly before him, and he there and then discovered that for

the last two months his whole moral nature, all that made him manly, worthy, honourable, had been under an eclipse. Something had come between him and the sun. A dark cloud, from which he never thought to escape, had enveloped him. But this evening at Paddington he had looked once into a beautiful but shallow face, the voice that had haunted him sounded once more in his ears—it was insincere, it was untrue.

"Thank God, I'm cured!" suddenly shouted Markham. He said it aloud, and the cabman, who heard him, thought his eccentric fare had gone quite off his head.

"Look here," said Markham, putting on his hat, springing to his feet, and addressing the cabby, "drive to —— in Pall Mall." He gave the address of Cecil's club. In ten minutes he found himself there. He inquired of the hall-porter if Grey were in.

"No," said the man; "Mr. Grey has been in the country for the last day or two."

"I will write to him," said Markham; and he was about to proceed to the reading-room when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and the very man he sought stood by his side.

"Good gracious, Markham! what has brought you to town? And you look—you look quite well!"

"So I am," said Markham, "quite—that is, *I* am well," he continued, with a sudden pause of shocked recollection. Until this moment he had absolutely forgotten that what had worked his own recovery might wreck the life of the bright young fellow who stood by his side.

"Come into the coffee-room," said Grey, his face glowing. "Your presence puzzles, astonishes, but it also delights me. *You* here, the old Dick—I know by your face that you are the old Dick."

"A sadder and a wiser man," said Markham, with a grim smile. "Still, absolutely cured—yes, absolutely; but at a cost, Grey. Grey, old fellow, must each man have his turn? I am cured, at a cost."

"Come into the coffee-room," said Cecil. "Let us have some dinner together. Afterwards I am going to the Seatons. They are having their last reception for the season. You—you couldn't come? I don't suppose you are cured enough for that?"

"I am absolutely cured, Cecil. No, I won't go into the coffee-room. If you are hungry, go and eat. Afterwards, shall we take a stroll together? The evening is lovely."

"As you please. I don't believe you are cured, Markham; you look queer. I'll just go and have something, for I'm starving. Then I'll join you."

Markham went into the reading-room. He took up an evening paper, held it so that no one should see his face, and fell instantly into a dream. Once again he saw the home and the girl who presided there. He was cured; he had been delivered from a delusion; but perhaps even yet his mind had not recovered its normal balance. He was a just man, unselfish, a man with generous instincts—such was the normal Markham. He was about to inflict a terrible blow on his best friend, and yet the moment that friend left him he forgot him.

He sat on in a snug chair, enjoying his dream. The room was full of men when he entered. After a time he noticed that he was almost alone. Then it occurred to him to speculate on the length of time Cecil took to dine. Then he looked at his watch and started—he had been in the reading-room for over an hour; it was now nine o'clock.

He rose with an effort; his pain had been so acute, and his absolute deliverance so sudden, that he felt a certain sense of pleasant inertia. All was right where all had been wrong—the love, the home, were before him. He was not troubled as yet with even the faintest shadow of a doubt with regard to the reception Hope would give him.

Still, Cecil was a long time away. He went out of the reading-room, and found himself again in the entrance-hall. Seeing that he was looking about in an inquiring manner, a page came up to him.

"Are you Mr. Markham, sir? Are you looking for Mr. Grey?"

"Yes. Mr. Grey was dining here. Will you ascertain if he has finished?"

"He went out a long time ago, sir. He said when you asked for him I was to give you this."

A rather bulky envelope was put into Markham's hand. He thrust it into his pocket, put on his hat, and went out. He felt no curiosity to read what Grey had said.

"He knows, poor fellow!" he murmured. "Probably she wrote to him at his club. She was all froth and vapour. He will be as glad as I am to have been saved from her, one day."

Then Markham turned his attention once again with a certain selfish recklessness to his own affairs.

There was a quiet little hotel in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly where he was in the habit of going when he spent a few days in town. Should he drive there now, order some dinner, read poor Cecil's letter, and ponder over what he could do for him? No, he could do nothing for Cecil; he could not even comfort him. His own affairs were paramount. Something was drawing him, a longing which was almost pain was impelling him in a certain direction. He yielded to the impulse, jumped into the cab, gave Mrs. Douglas's address, and soon reached the house. It was now half-past nine—rather a late hour for an ordinary caller; but he could not possibly class himself under such a head. A neatly dressed servant—not Jane—answered his ring.

"Is Miss Karron at home?"

"Miss Karron? No, sir. Miss Karron doesn't live here, sir."

This answer made Markham stagger back a trifle. He gazed at the servant with a perturbed expression coming over his face.

"Can I see Mrs. Douglas?" he asked, then.

"Mrs. Douglas is away until to-morrow, sir."

"Oh, is anyone at home?"

"There 's Miss Katie, but——"

"That 'll do," said Markham, in a tone of relief. "I 'll see Miss Katie Douglas. Take her this; ask her if I can see her on important business at once."

He gave his card to the maid, who presently returned with a grave face, and conducted him to the drawing-room. The gas was lit; the little room which

Markham had always associated with Hope, for they had often spent hours alone there, looked dreary, and not too tidy. The windows were open, and Katie, as usual surrounded by trophies of needlework, rose with a startled, nervous glance from the recesses of one, and came to meet him. Her manner was as cold and stiff as such a very *empressée*, undignified person could make it. She did not offer her hand, but looked at Markham in no friendly spirit. He afterwards said that the look on Katie's face showed him more of what he himself had done than any reproach he had ever received. The words he had meant to utter so easily were arrested half-way. When he did speak, it was with an effort.

"I am told by the servant that Hope is not with you; can you give me her address?"

"No, I cannot. I don't know it."

Katie stood about six feet away from Markham. He did not advance any nearer. Again his words came with an effort.

"You must be able to tell me something about Hope," he said presently. "When last I saw her, she lived with you. It is most important I should find her at once."

"It is not at all important to us that you should find her; I don't know where she is—I cannot help you in the matter."

Katie sat down once more in her window. She was altering an elegant dress, and she took the flimsy material now between little fingers that trembled.

"You are rather cruel to me, Miss Douglas," said Markham. "You can at least tell me something—something about Miss Karron."

"Yes, it is much more suitable for you to call her Miss Karron. She is nothing whatever to you."

"That 's as she and I will, in future. Miss Douglas, I know my conduct must appear black to you. I begin to see something of its true colours myself, now. My excuse is that I was insane. Now I am sane—my right mind has returned to me."

"What a blessing that you didn't make Hope your wife—how awful if she had married a lunatic! No, I don't know anything about her, and if I did I shouldn't tell you."

"But I wasn't insane in that sense! Good gracious, I can't explain it to you. Miss Douglas, you don't know what awful mischief you may be doing by keeping back what little information you can give me. Now, look here, I desire you to tell me what you know about Hope."

"'You desire,' said Katie, flinging down her work, and confronting him with flashing eyes. "Do you know that you nearly killed Hope? Do you know that she went away because you broke her heart? *You!* I love Hope, and I hate you. Do you think I would do anything to help you?"

"I bitterly repent," began Markham, whose face had grown white.

"Yes, and what good does your repentance do anyone? You did not take Hope's life, but you took away that which made her a delight to all who knew her. You took the sun from her, and the joy from her; you made her name, her dear name, a lie every time she is called it. Oh, how miserable the world is when men like you can be so cruel!"

Here Katie's fortitude forsook her. She laid her head on her hands and sobbed bitterly.

It is impossible for a girl to keep up her anger long when she gives way to violent weeping. Presently her voice became softer and more heartbroken.

"This has been such an awful, wretched day," she began. "You must forgive me if I say bitter things. You know—or do you not know?—that Jocelyn was privately married this afternoon to Count di Longobardi; that wretched, mean-spirited little Lottie Seaton helped her, and poor Cecil knew nothing about it till an hour ago. Cecil came here for a minute this evening. He was almost wild. Jocelyn wrote him a letter which he got at his club. I could tell him nothing, and he went straight away to the Seatons. Oh, no wonder I am miserable and perturbed. Fond as I am of Hope, I almost wish I had never known the Karrons. Now what is the matter, Mr. Markham?"

"Nothing. I am going to the Seatons to try and find Grey—good-night. I may call to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXIV.

UNTIL Markham got to the Seatons' house he quite forgot what Cecil had told him; they were having a reception, a gay reception, the farewell to their many friends of the season. In his present attire Markham could scarcely enter. Besides, he did not know the Seatons. He inquired of more than one liveried footman standing about if he could tell him anything of Grey. Was Grey up-stairs? Had he left? No one seemed able to give accurate information. One said one thing, one another. Markham resolved to see the reception out on the steps. He was slightly in the shadow himself, but he could see the face of each man and woman as they came out to go away. An attendant looked askance at him. He slipped a sovereign into the man's hand and held on to his position. By-and-bye the very last guest departed. No, Grey was not present. Markham hailed a hansom and drove back to Grey's club. The hall-porter assured him that Mr. Grey had never come in. Then he drove to the young man's private address in Curzon Street; the house was shut up—no light anywhere; finally, Markham went to his own hotel. He was spent, weary, almost faint now; it was hours since he had eaten. He ordered some supper, quickly despatched it, and going up to his room at last took out Cecil's letter. All this time remorse like a vulture was tearing him. How could he in the moment of his own deliverance have so forgotten his friend as to let him receive this blow unsupported? The sense of Jocelyn's unworthiness had been a relief to him. Why did he forget that what was his release might be another man's death?

He opened Cecil's letter. Some straggly lines were written across a thick page of the club note-paper.

"Each man must have his turn; enclosed will explain."

There was no signature. Markham saw then that Grey had absolutely sent him Jocelyn's own letter. He took it in his hand for a moment, tried to open it

carelessly, then flung it from him on the floor as if it were a living thing and could sting him. Presently he buried his head in his hands, and strong man, in many respects iron man, that he was, he began to weep. A man's tears are terrible things. Markham was weeping for the sorry part he had played, for the desolation which he had caused, and also because a new dull fear had taken possession of him. Was it at all likely that Hope would look at him or think of him again? Between fear about Hope, and remorse at having let Cecil meet his trouble unaided, Markham had a bad night of it. It was not until morning had long broken that he took courage to read Jocelyn's letter. This was what she said—

"Dear Cecil,—When you hold this in your hands I shall be another man's wife. I know how angry you will be. I know that I shall have hurt you awfully. I am very sorry. I would not, if I could help it, Cecil, give you a moment's pain. I'll tell you how it is, and how I can't help myself. I am marrying the Count di Longobardi because I am a coward. I am afraid of him—you don't know how fierce he can look. He is an Italian, and has an awful, passionate nature. He does not know anything about my ever being engaged to you. He must never know—it would be too dreadful. I'll tell you the story about him, Cecil.

"Last winter, at Algiers, Aunt Margaret used to have receptions, and he always came to them. He is enormously rich, and Aunt Margaret thought for a time he was coming after Lottie. She did not want Lottie to marry a foreigner, and she often said she would only give her to an Englishman. But the Count did not want Lottie—it was me. He said that he worshipped me, and I think he did and does. He asked me to marry him, and I was frightened, and I said I would. I was sorry the moment I said it. I didn't a bit want to marry him. I begged of him to keep our engagement secret, and I always hoped and hoped that I might get out of it. Then *you* wrote, asking me to marry you, again, and I thought how much nicer you were than the Count, and I felt



"His voice was gruff, and not very steady."—*p.* 931.

more sorry than ever that I had promised to be his. He was very fierce just then, and he was always threatening to tell Aunt Margaret, but I used all my powers to get him to keep it a secret. I tried to make him think that Aunt Margaret wouldn't let me have him, that she meant me for some grand titled man in England. That frightened him, and he gave in. I told him I would marry him privately whenever he wished, but that we must not tell Aunt Margaret until after we were man and wife. Just then he had to go to Italy; I think his father died or something—anyhow, he had to go away in a hurry. It was then I was coming to England for Hope's wedding, and I managed to get away without his knowing, and I hoped, oh, so earnestly, that I had escaped the Count. Then *you* proposed to me, Cecil, once again—the third time, dear Cecil. I thought perhaps that the Count could never find me in England. No such luck. He discovered me all too soon. I have gone through six weeks of misery, trying to keep you two apart. I don't think he knows of your existence—he must never know. Lottie helped me, and I married him this morning. I am writing this now while he thinks I am changing my dress. Oh, how my hands shake! Good-bye, Cecil. I don't suppose I'd have been a good wife for you. What a pity it wasn't Hope you fell in love with! Forget the worthless, the unhappy

"JOCELYN DI LONGOBARDI."

Markham read every word of this letter.

"Poor girl!" he said softly. "Yes, it was somebody quite different who filled my heart. I am bitterly sorry for her and for Cecil."

Then he saw some pencilled lines faintly scratched at the end of the letter. They were in Cecil's handwriting.

"Burn this, Markham, when you have read it."

So Markham tore up the letter, and committed it to the flames. The Contessa's miserable story was safe as far as he and Grey were concerned.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOPE settled herself comfortably in a tiny village on the Devonshire coast. She had gone there once many years ago with her mother. She sought out the same landlady, who kept just the same neat little whitewashed, spotlessly clean dwelling. She took in Hope with acclamations of delight; told her she had grown into a most beautiful young lady, fed her up and petted her.

Hope now set herself seriously to the task of getting well; quite well, not only in body, but in mind, she intended to become; but even Hope did not realise how sore and deep her pain was. She determined to lead a busy life in the little village. She made friends with the fisher people, and often went out in their boats. She hired a rough pony, and took long rides by herself. She studied French and German diligently, made a collection of sea-anemones and seaweeds. She even sketched a little; and during every moment of spare time, she read.

No one could have led a busier or more healthful life. The colour bloomed once more in her cheeks, and the light of health came back to her eyes. Still, the dull ache in her heart did not go away. It lay down with her at night, and pursued her through the long and busy day. She knew its name—it was a starved pain—starved because Dick had turned away from her, and she might never see his face again.

She had been about a month at Highbeach, and all that time had congratulated herself at not having met a single human being of her own world, when one day, returning from a longer ride than usual, she was startled by hearing a clear voice call out her name.

She turned round, and saw, rather to her dismay, Roley Douglas, accompanied by two other boys, coming tumbling and leaping over the short rough grass to meet her.

"Hullo! I knew it was you, Hope—Miss Karron, I suppose I ought to say—I always do call you Hope behind your back. We have come down to lodge next door to you—Jones and Spicer and I."

Here he waved his hand in a patronising style to the other boys, who were nearly double his size, and looked red and awkward.

Hope nodded to them, took Roley's hand in hers, but could not help a shade of disappointment coming into her voice.

"How did you find me out, Roley? I did not think anyone—anyone knew where I was."

"I like that! What a muff you must take me for! Wasn't your easel outside the door, and a bit of blotting-paper of yours floating out of the open window with great D's scribbled all over it? D stands for—D stands for—— I say, Hope, you need not go off in a rage like that. I'm not going to split. The fact is, we all had whooping-cough at school, and Jones and Spicer and I were the worst. And my mother wrote to our master, and told him what a nice place Highbeach was. She didn't say anything about your being here. We found that out for ourselves; didn't we, Spicer?"

"I say, you might let Miss Karron go on—go on with her ride," drawled Spicer.

"Oh, I 'm very glad to see you, boys," said Hope, after a moment. "I 've had my ride, and am coming home now. And will you—will you all," she added, "come and have tea with me to-night? If you say Yes, we may as well go round by the shrimp-man's—I know Roley of old was devoted to shrimps."

Roley uttered a loud hurrah of joy; Spicer might have been observed to pronounce distinctly the one word "Galopshious!" while Jones, who had not hitherto articulated, said solemnly, "It 's scrumptious!"

During the days that followed, the boys and Hope spent most of their time together. After the first little pang of dismay, she had to own that she was glad of their society. She was just the sort of girl herself to delight boys, and they took long expeditions together, had a few almost perilous adventures, not a few long, delightful days, and were in every respect the best of friends.

"I think you might," said Roley one day to her.

"Might what, Roley?"

"Might let me call you Hope now, to your face, as well as behind your back."

"Well," said Hope, after a pause, "it doesn't sound very respectful, does it? I used to be your teacher, you know."

"Yes, the only jolly one I ever had."

"But I'm not your teacher now. Yes, I think, on the whole, you may call me Hope."

"Thanks, very much. And I suppose Spicer and Jones may too? They don't like Miss Karron; they think it so stiff."

"No, Roley; I really must draw the line there."

"Must you? I think it's rather hard of you. Spicer and Jones like you tremendously. Spicer said the other night that he'd almost as soon have a walk with you as eat shrimps. He did, really; and Jones nodded. Jones always nods to everything Spicer says."

"I'm greatly obliged," said Hope, "and—flattered. Are they coming now? It's time we were off."

It was on the evening of that same day that Roley edged up close to Hope, looked into her face, and said—

"I've a bit of news for you. You won't guess what my eyes rested on to-day."

"No; what is it? I wish you wouldn't be mysterious, Roley."

"I mysterious? That's not my way. Why, you have all coloured up! Well, I'll tell you—I expect you'll be surprised. Rossiter's here."

"Nonsense, Roley! I don't believe it."

"It isn't nonsense. I saw him—a groom had him—he's in the stable at the White Hart—I saw him going in. He looked very wicked, and the groom seemed afraid of him. As if *I* wouldn't know Rossiter! He *is* here—he's in the stable of the White Hart this minute. I'll go and ask, if you won't believe me."

"No, Roley, you'll do nothing of the kind. You have mistaken the horse, that's all. Little boys are always making mistakes of the kind."

"Thank you—'little boys,' indeed! 'Little boys' are sometimes right. How obstinate you are, Hope; and your face is as white as it was rosy a minute ago. Are you tired, Hope?"

"I believe I am; I'll go indoors," said Hope.

All the freshness had left her voice. She went in, feeling flat and quiet. After all, life with the flavour out of it must at the best be a tasteless thing.

Presently she went to bed, but a headache kept her awake. Roley was probably quite wrong; but if Rossiter were there, it was only because he was sold to a new master.

Towards morning she fell into a troubled sleep. She had a dream in her sleep; she was still Dick Markham's betrothed wife. She was standing close to him, and he was singing to her—

> "Sae fair art thou, my bonny lass,
> Sae deep in love am I;
> And I will love thee still, my dear,
> Till all the streams run dry."

"But he was never deep in love with me," said poor Hope to herself, as she dressed languidly, pressing her hand now and then to her hot forehead. "I gave him all—he knew that. Yes, it has been hard on me."

She went down-stairs; the words of the old song kept ringing in her ears:—

> "Sae fair art thou, my bonny lass,
> Sae deep in love am I."

She hated herself for humming them—she almost hated the words. In the middle of breakfast Roley rushed in.

"It's a lovely morning, Hope," he said. "Are you going for a ride?"

"I think I will," said Hope. "I have a headache, and the exercise will drive it away. You might ask them to bring Robin round in half an hour, like a dear boy, Roley."

Roley nodded and vanished, and Hope, having finished her breakfast, went leisurely up-stairs to put on her rough grey habit.

The half-hour passed; no Roley appeared, but she heard horses' footsteps, and running down opened the cottage door.

"I'm ready, Jim," she said, addressing the man who generally helped her to mount. "I hope Robin is nice and fresh this morning. I mean to take it well out of him, I can tell you."

Nobody answered; she had been drawing on her gloves, and had not for the moment raised her head. The colour was fresh in her cheeks; she never looked more animated nor sweeter. Now, startled at the silence, she raised her eyes fully.

"Jim——" she began. Then she turned very white, stepped back a pace or two, and leant against the cottage porch.

Neither Jim nor the rough pony was waiting for her, but Rossiter, pawing the ground and arching his neck, stood close to the cottage step; he had on a lady's saddle. By his side was a powerful black horse, and holding the bridles of both stood Dick Markham.

"Will you come for a ride?" he said.

His voice was gruff, and not very steady.

"You need not be afraid of Rossiter. He conquered you once. Having done that, he'll forgive you all the rest of his days. You need not fear Rossiter, nor—nor me—Hope."

"I never feared either man or horse," said Hope, when she could find her voice. "But—I don't understand."

"No, you don't. Something marvellous has happened—marvellous, miraculous! Take one ride on Rossiter by my side, and let me tell you. Hope, *let* me tell you; I shall be a broken-hearted man all my days if you say No."

Perhaps Hope Karron had no spirit, after all. No one can quite count beforehand on how a girl will act under given circumstances. This girl stood quite still for another full minute, then she held out her hand to Markham, and lightly sprang on Rossiter's back.

They took a long ride away, away through the lovely country. For hours they were absent, and when at last they returned, no one who had known Hope of old could now miss anything out of her face.

"There is one thing," said Markham, as they rode quietly up to the cottage door: "that I never even knew the meaning of being properly in love before."

"And you are certain, Dick—certain," said Hope, in a shy, tremulous voice, "that the shadow won't come back again?"

"It cannot, Hope; it has melted into air. You fill my heart. When all is said and done, I cannot give you more than all."

But Hope never knew—never during the whole of her happy married life—whose face and voice Markham had once passionately worshipped. She never knew this, for neither Markham nor Grey would tell her. Jocelyn did not return to England, and from one cause or another the sisters are scarcely likely to meet.

By-and-bye Grey recovered from the blow which had nearly shattered him. He married Bee Chaverton, and makes her an excellent husband.

Markham says no man is as happy as he is, and he also adds, what perhaps in some ways is true, that he doesn't deserve it.

"But then there was never anyone quite like Hope," he adds; "which just accounts for my being absolutely forgiven and loved beyond my deserts."

THE END

A TALE OF A DUTCH HERO.

BY PEVERIL, AUTHOR OF "IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS," ETC.



IN the days when Charles IX. was King of France, when Philip II. reigned over Spain, and our own land was governed by Good Queen Bess, the people of Holland and the Netherlands were called upon to endure the most fiery persecution the world ever witnessed.

For many generations the Dutch had enjoyed more liberty than was usual at that stage of the world's history. Their cities possessed charters and privileges of which they were justly proud, and to which they owed their prosperity. As a natural consequence, education advanced, and the people were accustomed to freedom of thought and argument.

In this good soil the seed of the Reformation took deep root. Nowhere did the doctrines of Luther spread so rapidly, nor bring forth so rich a harvest.

Then came persecution.

The cruel and bigoted King of Spain, believing himself ordained of God to sweep heresy from the face of the earth, let loose upon these smiling provinces all the terrors of the Spanish Inquisition.

Already they had suffered much for the cause of religion. During the reign of Charles V., many thousands laid down their lives for the truth; but Philip II. exceeded his father both in cruelty and tenacity of purpose. Henceforth no man's life was safe. Liberty was crushed, and a dark cloud of oppression settled over the land. Men and women were tortured, drowned, strangled, burnt alive or buried alive, for no other crime than reading the Bible, praying with their children, and teaching them to look to Jesus as their only Saviour.

It would shock you too much were I to tell you a tithe of what these poor Christians endured at the hands of their fellow-Christians. Saddest of all human delusions, when religion is used as a mask for tyranny! Happy are we who have the privilege of serving God according to the dictates of reason and conscience!

In Holland, cruelty and injustice produced their natural result; the people rose up against their oppressors, and an army was sent by Philip to reduce them to obedience. Thus the misery of war was added to the terrors of the Inquisition.

The Dutch were a commercial rather than a warlike people. Stern necessity obliged them to fight for their homes, and for their wives and little ones; but at first the well-disciplined Spanish troops had them at a terrible disadvantage.

In one way, however, they were superior to their foes. They were as much at home on water as on land; and in winter they could skim about upon the frozen seas and lakes, to the great confusion of their enemies. When the battle was fought upon water or upon ice, it was the Dutchman's turn to win.

But the Spaniards were persevering as well as brave. They soon bought skates and learnt to use them, though not so skilfully as those who had been accustomed to them from childhood.

Dirk Willemzoon was one of those who suffered for conscience' sake. Although he was innocent of any offence beyond the reading of his Bible and attending religious meetings, he was taken prisoner, tried, and condemned to death.

Dirk felt it hard to submit to this cruel injustice. He was young, and life was sweet—even life such as it then was in Holland. He set his wits to work out a plan of escape.

His plan succeeded. Once more he was free. Free, but not safe. He must still hide from his enemies. In this, alas! he was not so fortunate; his retreat was discovered by a Spanish soldier, and he was pursued across the open country. At no great distance was a lake, now a broad sheet of frozen water.

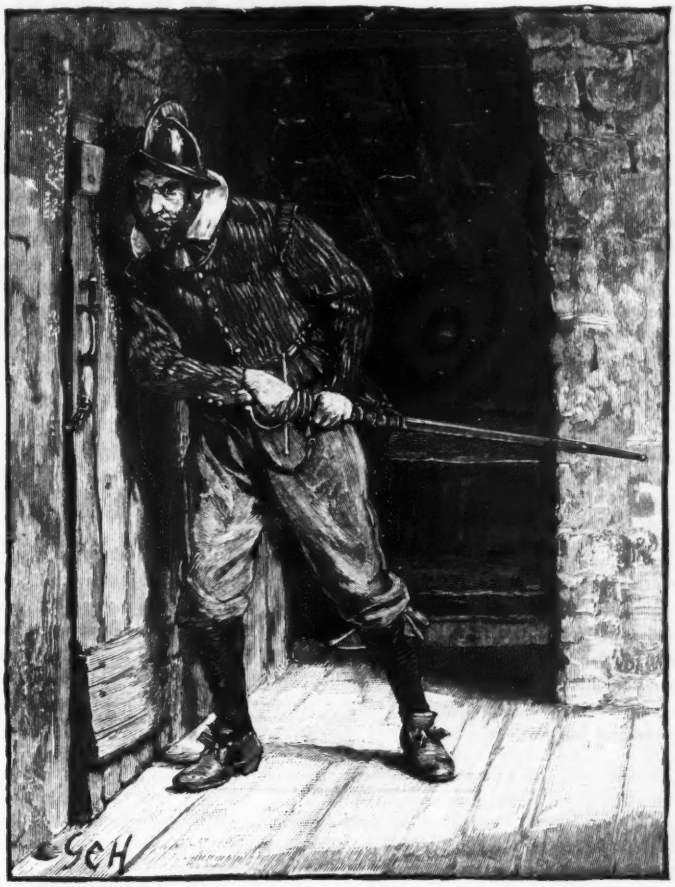
Here was a chance for Dirk. He knew that upon ice he could soon outstrip his pursuer.

He was right. The Spaniard was a bold runner, but upon that slippery surface he was no match for the young Dutchman. Moreover, at this season, the lake was not to be traversed without danger. Winter was nearly over; already there had been mild spring days, and the ice was unsafe. It trembled and shook beneath the flying footsteps of the hunter and his prey.

Dirk was no stranger to the lake. He knew well what parts to avoid. The soldier lacked this useful bit of knowledge. Suddenly there was a loud crack—a cry—a splash! The fugitive turned to look, and behold! his enemy was gone. A large hole in the ice, surrounded by many a deep crack—that was all now visible.

But as he looked, the head of the drowning man reappeared above the water. He stretched out his hands and grasped the edge of the ice, which bent beneath his weight. Dirk saw that he could not get out unaided. He was caught as securely as any rat in a trap. In a few minutes he must sink.

Dirk was safe now. Intense gratitude for his escape filled his heart to overflowing. "The Lord hath delivered me!" he cried. "It is not my work. Truly God hath fought for me; He hath overthrown my enemy like the Egyptians in the Red Sea."



"His retreat was discovered by a Spanish soldier."—*p.* 932.

But this thought was rapidly succeeded by another. "I say unto you, love your enemies; do good to them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Would he not be disobeying his Saviour's command if he left this man to perish? It was a terrible moment for poor Dirk. He covered his face, and fell upon his knees. A fierce battle raged within his soul, the powers of good and evil striving for mastery.

God give us all grace to fight such battles on our knees!

It was soon over.

The Spaniard was presently amazed to see the young Dutchman returning across the ice; but the sight brought him no comfort.

"He comes to slay me with his dagger," thought he. "Well, 't is more a soldier's death than drowning like a kitten in a tub."

So he resigned himself to his fate, with the stoicism of one who has faced death too often to fear it.

To his astonishment, however, the young man showed no desire to kill, but seemed, on the contrary, anxious to save him. He advanced cautiously along the quivering ice, then lay down, and creeping towards the hole, stretched forth his hands and drew the soldier out of the water.

There is but one way in which such a story should end. If the Spaniard had no reward to offer, he must at least grant freedom to the man who had risked his life to save him. But, alas! the tale has a far darker sequel.

Whatever his feelings may have been while in the ice-hole, the soldier was no sooner safe on dry land than the instinct of the bird of prey revived. The man was in his power yet—the man he had followed through so many dangers; should he let him go, and so lose the reward of his valour? No! The young Dutchman was his lawful captive, and back to prison he must go.

Motley, from whose pages we have drawn this sketch, tells us that the Spaniard was subsequently stricken by remorse, and would have released his prisoner, but was prevented by the burgomaster of Aspern, who bade him remember first his duty to his king.

We are not disposed to give the soldier much credit for this tardy repentance. It was never strong enough to induce him to open the door to his captive.

Dirk's noble action met with no reward in this world. After languishing in prison for some weeks, he was led out into the market-place, tied to a stake, and burnt to death.

Even then we may be sure that brave Dirk Willemzoon never for a moment regretted his generous self-sacrifice.

He had followed his Master; for, like Him, he had laid down his life for his enemy; and perchance to him also was granted grace to say with that dying Master, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

EARLY LESSONS.

'T WILL not be always May, dear,
Nor always mirth and song;
For cares will cross your way, dear,
And dangers round you throng.
Yet there's a land of perfect spring
Beyond the shining river,
Where happy little children sing
For ever and for ever.

'T will not be always day, dear,
Nor always bright and clear;
For even while you play, dear,
The night is drawing near.
Yet there's a land of endless light
Beyond the shining river,
Where children walk in robes of white
For ever and for ever.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

MANY MEMBERS, ONE BODY.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE 'I WILLS' OF THE PSALMS," ETC.

SAINT PAUL was a great logician. He did not confine himself to statements of Christian truth; where need was, he argued about it too. And this he does here. He had to combat human pride, selfishness, discontent, misconception; he had to deal with all these even in the matter of spiritual gifts, where one might have supposed that there would have been no room for them at all; and he deals with the matter by an analogical, and then by a logical process—he shows that the Church is a whole made up of many members, just as the human body is, and then he makes use of the analogy in what is called an *argumentum ad absurdum*; that is, an argument which says "because such a thing is absurd, it cannot be."

And a very good kind of argument this is too, in its place; for, when men have a thing put before them in a ridiculous light, they will often see its folly, when otherwise nothing could have persuaded them of it.

There is a great deal of useful, practical information and instruction in this chapter,* some of which I would briefly gather up here; for I am persuaded that it can teach us now, just as it did the Corinthians long ago.

* 1 Corinthians xii.

One lesson that we are taught here is, that there is actual even though it be unconscious connection. What we are not thinking of yet is, and not only is, but cannot be otherwise. Our not knowing this, or not thinking about it, does not alter the matter in the least. The eye, if it had powers of independent thought, might be absorbed with itself, and the ear, and the hand, and the foot, with themselves; but they are all indissolubly bound together, for all that.

This, good reader, may awaken a new thought in you. You have perhaps looked upon yourself as a unit—as alone—as self-contained; and all the while you were in a position of which you had no conception—but you were in it, for all that. You have been, you are, in intimate relationship with others; and out of that relationship your responsibilities none the less flow because you have never thought about them, and so do not know them.

Another lesson is that solidarity is the true law of God. "Solidarity" is a new word in our language—it means a great whole, a whole with many parts, and these parts mutually related. This word has come into being even as other new words have, in order to express new ideas, new discoveries, new revelations of truth. It does not express the creation of anything new, only the existence of what always has been, but with an existence unrecognised—at any rate, in its power.

God never planned a series of isolations either in nature or in grace—I doubt if He ever planned even one single isolation. Christ Himself was not an isolation. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part in the same" (Heb. ii. 14). By Mary His mother, He became one of the human race; and He fulfilled the law of solidarity—for, being made in all things like unto His brethren, He suffered in all points as they suffered, and "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." When we feel that we are weak and miserable, it is because we are realising isolation, and not solidarity—realising ourselves, and not ourselves in Christ.

Another thing that we learn is that God's ordering cannot be interfered with, without confusion and absurdity. The merging of the eye in the ear, or the ear in the eye, involving the loss of one organ: or the abnormal and exaggerated swelling of arm or leg, drawing off to itself more than its share of the vital juices of the body, would end in confusion—perhaps in destruction.

Imagine the eye gone, and according to its wish become an ear—thinking that to listen to soft Æolian tones is better than to look at softly harmonising shades—and see the body which it ought to direct, no longer bounding forward with a fearless step, but slowly and painfully creeping by the wall. And imagine the ear, according to its wish, become an eye, so that the man sees now twice as far and twice as much; but ah! where now is the thrill of the organ's swell, where now the spirit's hush of the summer's breeze? where now the rustle of the leaf and the song of the bird, and the murmur of the stream, and the chime of the distant bells, and the soft whisperings of human love, and the soothing plash of the falling tide, and the ripple of the rising wave, waking wondering thought as to whither we are going, and whence, indeed, we came.

Now that the hand has become a foot, where is the delicate tracery of the cathedral window, where the fluted column and its sculptured boss? what is there to raise the stalwart tower and tapering spire? where now is the soft ministry of touch with which to bind the wound, and where, it may be, the softer pressure, which, with an eloquence its own, tells without words its unspoken tale of love? The order of God has been violated, to the loss, as it ever must be, of him by whom it has been broken; and the body which He made perfect is distorted, crippled, and incomplete. The violation of the ordered harmony of God can issue in nothing but loss and misery for man.

Here, too, we are taught that reciprocity is the law of the natural body, and of spiritual life. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;" if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Each of them lives for itself, but each of them lives for others too—each, not for one other alone, but for the others, each and all. Our common saying, "Give and take," is the very law and life of the perfection of the world, of the Church, of the man.

Here in this chapter we see also the danger and the loss of isolation. Isolation is a breach of law, and in common with all breaches of law brings trouble in its train. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth unto himself. The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. The eye is a perceptive power, the hand is its executive; it is little use to be able to know, without being able to reduce that knowledge to practice, and to do. And the matter is put more strongly when the case comes to be as between the head and the foot; the head contains the eye and the ear, the mouth and brain. But with all its great supremacy, it is not independent of the humble foot. Let the feet refuse it their help, and the eye cannot go where it will see, nor the ear where it will hear; and for want of exercise, the brain, ever thinking, will leave the nervous system unbalanced by the muscular, when it will become unnaturally excited, and induce all manner of disease. The idea of eye and ear, of hand and foot, of eye and hand, and then even of head and foot, all being dependent the one upon the other, is as much as to say, "No persons similarly circumstanced are independent of each other, nor are people dissimilarly circumstanced, nor is the very highest independent even of the very lowest. The outward connection may not be seen; who sees the muscles and nerves between the head and the foot? but there they are; and so the body, with its many parts, is one.

Ignorance of this truth touches deleteriously the opposite poles of society; it lies at the root of the communism of the lowest classes, and the selfishness of the higher. The hands and feet seem to think that they have nothing to do with the head except to be used, and they are indignant that they have to work while, as they think, the ear and the eye are taking it easily; and the whole head has a fine time of it, while they have to work for it and carry it about. They forget that it is the brain that gives them the means of living, and they often little know the anxieties of that brain which they envy so much. The great houses which are built, and which they would pull down and wreck if they could, could never have given bread to those who built them unless there were people to live in them; and there could be no people to live in them unless they had incomes to support them, and the spending of those very incomes is the bread of thousands of artisans and servants who would have no employment if those incomes were not there.

The rich, whether they like it or not, are compelled to live for the poor; there is scarce a single way in which they can spend their money but that it comes down to them at last—but often there is no thanks to them for this. God, indeed, overrules their selfishness; they are unconsciously what they ought to be consciously; and theirs, if only they knew it, is the bitter loss.

And now let us turn for a moment to the instruction to be derived from this. We may learn much, and that practically, in the way of feeling and action.

In the matter of feeling, there is great encouragement to those who occupy low positions, whatever they may be. We are apt to be depressed when we think how lowly our place is; but we are necessary. We have an importance; we may be only what the foot is to the brain, but we have our place, and an importance in it. The earth-worm is a very humble creature. What relation has it to the blushing rose, or the spreading palm, or the fruitful vine, to the great fields white with harvest, to the sustenance of the race of man? and yet I have read that unless the functions of the earth-worm were fulfilled the world would be uninhabitable for man. The housefly is one of the humblest creatures about our homes. What has it to do with the bounding steps and the rosy cheeks of those within its walls; and yet if there were no housefly to consume the deadly particles which are often floating in the dust we breathe, our lives would be in much greater danger than they are.

Don't envy other people's positions and gifts. You may be sure they have their troubles as well as you have yours—they have their own peculiar responsibilities too. You might be as happy in your sphere without having what others have, as they are in theirs with all they possess. A certain sultan, who found all the remedies of his physicians fail, was at last recommended to wear the shirt of the merriest man in his dominions—that would cure his melancholy. Well, at last the merriest man who could be found was caught and stripped, and lo! he had not a shirt at all—he was too poor to afford one.

Be content. Remember that your part, whatever it may be, is an assigned and ordered one—you have not been thought of no consequence, and not worth anything, because you are a foot and not a head. You have the qualifications necessary for a foot, you have not those necessary for a brain. There's many a one now an admirable foot, who if he were turned into a head would soon get giddy, and end by going out of his mind. Depression—the depression of isolation—is met, by remembering that in God's eye you are part of a great whole—and the fittest part for you.

And, if you want a consciousness of full dignity, look for it not in yourself alone, but in yourself as in connection with a great body—serving others, and served by others too. The clothes you wear involve the service of others to you, and the food you eat, and everything in life. God has ordained that you shall not only serve, but be served.

Your sphere may be very limited, but let there be contentment and conscious dignity in it. Remember you are part of a great body.

And as to action—don't allow yourself to be extinguished by extinguishing yourself. While wishing to be another, you may cease to be yourself.

Assert your place in the body by action. The foot! let itself be known as valuable by walking; the hand! by working. Show, by doing something, that you are worth something. And do it, if need be, in a limited sphere. The range of the hand's action is small compared with the range of the eye's vision, and the range of the foot's motion compared with the ear's ingathering of far distant sound; but the hand can polish a diamond and set it in a crown, and the foot can bear the eye to the vantage ground whence it can map out the stars which are in the sky.
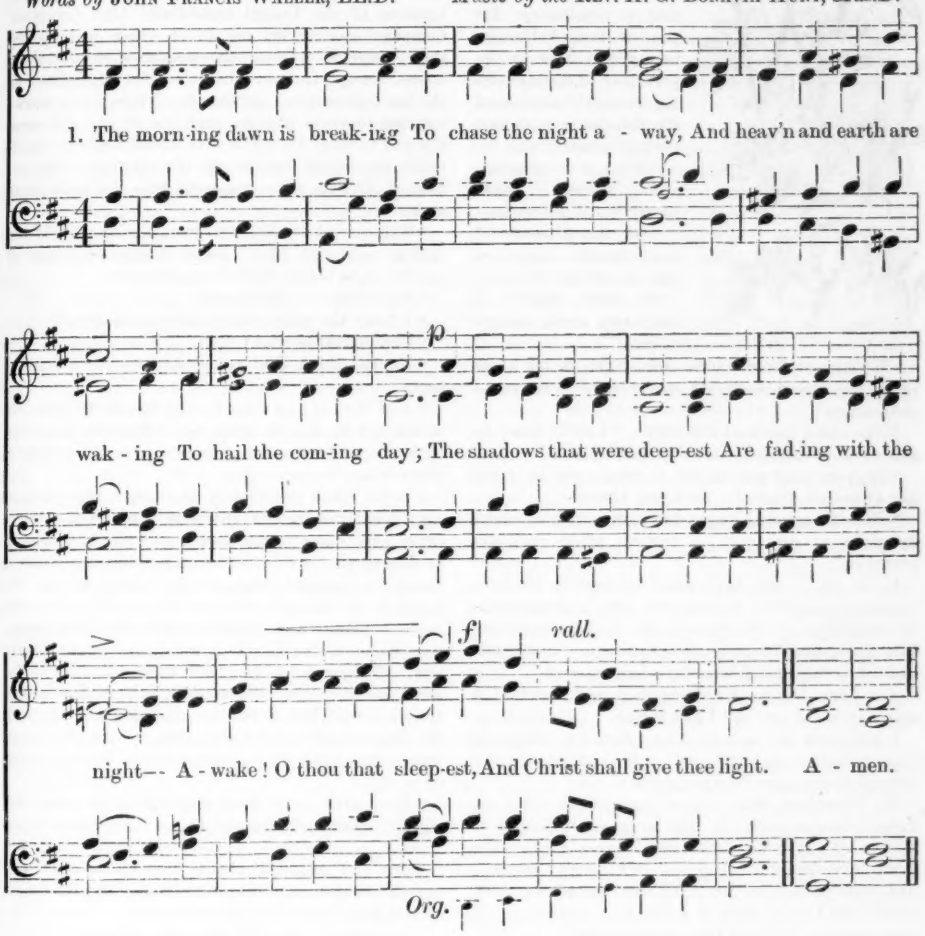
You are best serving the whole—you are most carrying out the full and harmonious mind of God, you are most honouring yourselves, when you are fulfilling your own part, and doing what you were taught as a child to do—"your duty in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call you."

Be content in your own particular sphere—believe that you have a sphere—and that what is God-appointed is always best.

Awake, thou that Sleepest.*

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—EPHESIANS v. 4.

Words by JOHN FRANCIS WALLER, LL.D. *Music by the* REV. H. G. BONAVIA HUNT, MUS.D.



2. From Death's dark slumber wake thee;
Behold, the "Day-star" bright
Shines on thy heart to make thee
Alive in Christ, thy Light.
O Light, Thy light that givest
To all that look to Thee,
Thou art the Life that livest
Through all eternity.

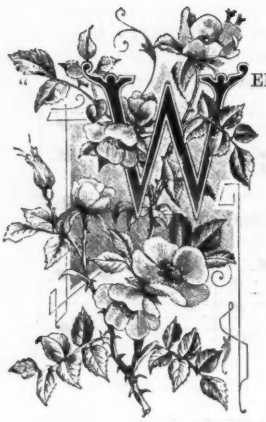
3. Oh! let Thy light enlighten
Our darkness, Christ, we pray;
Wake us from sleep, and brighten
Our night, and make it day.
Thou Life, in Thee still living
O Christ, in mercy save
All those, in Thee believing,
From death beyond the grave.

* The Greek from which the words of this hymn are a translation, seems to be rhythmical, and was probably taken from some Christian hymn well known at the time.

'TWIXT LOVE AND HONOUR.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—HONOUR.



"WELL, I 've succeeded in getting a nomination for you at last, Nellie; so now you 'll have an opportunity of distinguishing yourself," exclaimed Mr. Grantham, with very evident satisfaction.

"When is the examination, father?" asked pretty Nellie, in dismay.

"On the fifteenth of next month, lassie; so you 've no time to lose."

"I don't believe I shall ever know enough to pass."

"What! not after I have been down on my knees to all the big-wigs who sit at the board to get you a nomination?"

Nellie shook her head dolefully. "I shall never be able to do twenty-four 'tots' in half an hour."

"Oh, you must get Hester to coach you up a bit. She knows all about it; don't you, Hester?"

"Well, I suppose I ought to know something about it, uncle, at any rate," I replied, when thus appealed to.

It was in the old days, when one had to obtain a nomination in order to enter the lists of competitors for clerkships in the offices of the United Operatives' Life Insurance Company, the competition being then limited to three candidates for every vacancy.

Six years before, Mr. Grantham had obtained a nomination for me, and I had become a lady clerk.

I still held my appointment when the foregoing conversation took place, and valued it highly, for clerical duties were very congenial to me.

Mr. Grantham was not my uncle, although I addressed him as such; in fact, he was not related to me in any way. He had, however, taken me in when I was homeless and penniless, and he and his wife had been parents to me in all but name ever since. Need I say I loved them as a daughter, and that their joys were my joys, and their sorrows mine?

Nellie worked hard as soon as she got her nomination; and although, as she had said, she was not particularly quick at casting up columns of figures—or very brilliant at any branch of arithmetic, for that matter—still, she had sufficient knowledge of the other subjects in which she was to be examined for me to feel that she did at least stand a fair chance of acquitting herself creditably.

Of course I did the very best I could to prepare her for the coming ordeal, getting up early in the morning to set her tasks, and hurrying home of an evening to examine her day's work. What would I not have done to show my gratitude to the Granthams for their loving-kindness to me?

There were at that time three branch offices, situated in different manufacturing centres, where the business of the United Operatives' Life Insurance Company was carried on, all of which had opened their doors to women, the vacancies in the three offices being filled by the successful candidates at the one competitive examination. Those whose marks entitled them to a place high up on the list were allowed to select the office they would prefer to enter, while the others had to fill the vacancies that remained after the more successful ones had made their choice.

"Will you advise Nellie to go into your office if the option rests with her?" asked George Grantham of me the night before Nellie's examination.

"No, George; I think not."

"I fancy the pater will expect you to do so."

"I am afraid he will."

"He will think that you could give her a helping hand."

"And that is just what I could not do, George. It would not be fair to treat her differently from the other clerks because she happens to be as dear as a sister to me."

I could speak out plainly to George, for we were very dear friends, and thoroughly understood each other. He was a young doctor, and was then acting as assistant to his father's brother, Dr. Grantham, a successful medical practitioner. After a time he hoped to be allowed a share in the profits sufficiently large to enable him to marry, and when that happy day should arrive, he was to claim me as his future wife. Not much had been said about this conditional engagement in the family circle, as both George and I were rather shy of talking about it; still, I think the others knew of our attachment. At all events, there was no intentional deception on George's part, or on mine.

"Poor little soul! I do hope she will get on all right," murmured George, more to himself than to me.

Then, as I looked anxiously into his face, I could see that he shared my dread lest Nellie should not be able to adapt herself to official routine.

"Oh, George! what if she came into my office and didn't get on?"

"It 's no use meeting troubles half-way, dear," replied George, putting his hand kindly on my shoulder. "We can but do what we think right, and then leave the rest."

I felt that George's advice was sound. I would wait until the result of the examination was known, and then, if the option rested with Nellie, I would advise her to elect to go into one of the other two offices, and say out boldly my reason for doing so.

But when the list came out, Nellie's name was too near the bottom for there to be any choice in the matter.

However, there were great rejoicings at home when

it was known she had been so far successful as to obtain an appointment at all.

"I told you little Nellie would do us all credit," exclaimed Mr. Grantham, with paternal pride. "It doesn't follow that a girl lacks brains because she isn't a dowdy;" and the proud father's eyes rested lovingly on his youngest daughter's winsome face.

"Do be quiet, John! you 'll make the child as vain as a peacock," said aunt. But she, too, gave a swift, admiring glance at dear Nellie, who was blushing very prettily.

It was such an indescribable relief to me not to have to damp their joy by the offer of unpalatable advice.

Very impatiently we all waited until Nellie was informed as to which office she was appointed.

"Oh, father, I shall be with Hester after all!" and tears of happiness shone in Nellie's eyes as she handed the paper containing this joyful intelligence to her father.

"Well, now, I do call that a stroke of luck. Here 's Nellie just as well off as if she hadn't had to put up with Hobson's choice. What do you think of that, George?—Hester will be able to give you a helping hand now, lassie, and no mistake!" exclaimed Mr. Grantham delightedly.

George gave one glance at me, a glance of sympathy and encouragement, and then evaded making a direct reply to his father's remark by asking Nellie when she was to attend for the first time.

"This day week," replied Nellie, again referring to her paper. "Oh, father, I do hope I shall be able to do the work! See—it says I am to be put on probation for three months," she added, calming down a little.

"Not much fear of that, lassie, with Hester at hand to put you in the right way."

Dear uncle! he was himself so ready to extend a helping hand to a friend in need, I felt at once how almost impossible it would be for him to realise that there may be occasions when, in fairness to others who are not friends, the helping hand should be withheld.

In those days, when the offices of the United Operatives' Life Insurance Company had not long thrown open their doors to women, promotion amongst the lady clerks was rapid; so that, although I had commenced my official career only six years before, I was already the head of a large section. It is different now, so I am told; and a girl may be a good worker, and yet not get even her first step up for several years. On the whole, I think it is better that it should be so. Looking back on my past experience, I cannot but feel that too much responsibility is not good for very young women.

Now, it was in the section of which I had charge that the probationers were tried. It would, therefore, be my duty, at the expiration of Nellie's three months' trial, to report on her work; and whether she were called upon to resign or offered a permanent appointment in the company's employ would, in a great measure, depend on the character of this report. Of course the report would be handed to the head of the branch, who would represent the case to the Board; but as I enjoyed the confidence of my chief, and the Board was guided entirely by her opinion, the decision *practically* rested with me. This was why I would so much rather Nellie had entered one of the other two offices.

We had several vacancies when Nellie got her appointment, so that five other probationers entered with her. Unfortunately for Nellie, these five showed great aptitude for the work.

I think it was rather a disappointment to Nellie when she discovered how very little I, as head of the section, came into touch with her. A duly qualified clerk was told off to teach her her new duties, and I had only the uncongenial task of cautioning her when she made errors. During the first day or two she called me Hester, as she had been accustomed to do nearly all her life; but as I always made a point of addressing her as Miss Grantham, she soon discontinued the use of my Christian name during office hours. It was the practice to observe the punctiliousness of official etiquette strictly. This was all very well as long as those in authority were not personally acquainted with the clerks under them; but I certainly felt it to be a little awkward to be obliged to treat Nellie, who was so very dear to me, just like any other junior clerk. And yet I knew that I ought to do so.

"You should rise, Miss Grantham, when Miss Langley addresses you," I overheard Nellie's instructress whisper to her after I had paused, when passing Nellie's desk, to speak to her about some official matter.

Poor Nellie got furiously red. But the next time I spoke to her she rose before replying, and, in her confusion, nearly upset her chair. I wonder which of us felt the more uncomfortable at that moment!

As I had feared before she entered, Nellie had but little natural aptitude for clerical work. She was painstaking and conscientious to a degree, but she appeared to experience great difficulty in mastering the details of her official duties, and was distressingly slow over all she did. It was no good for me to shut my eyes to facts: Nellie's work compared very unfavourably with the other five probationers'.

"Dear me! how dull Miss Grantham is!" I overheard my assistant, Miss Moore (who had a table next to mine), murmur to herself as she was ticking off some returns. This occurred when Nellie had been in the office about two months.

Then Miss Moore called Nellie up, and explained to her at great length how the return ought to have been made out. Miss Moore was very patient, and her explanation seemed to me to be particularly lucid; but I could see, by the one glance I ventured to cast at poor Nellie, how hopelessly puzzled she was.

Nellie returned to her seat, and at the expiration of a quarter of an hour brought the return up again.

Still the numbers were wrong. This time Miss Moore called up Miss Burton, Nellie's instructress.

"I wish you would get this return right for me, Miss Burton, and try to make Miss Grantham understand how it ought to be made out. I have already seen her about it."



"I did the very best I could."—*p.* 938.

"How do you think, Miss Grantham is getting on?" I asked Miss Moore, as soon as Miss Burton had retired.

Miss Moore looked grave. "Not very well, I am afraid, Miss Langley."

Now, Miss Moore was a very experienced clerk, and I had great confidence in her judgment. She was, moreover, thoroughly kind-hearted, and always said the best she could for a struggling junior.

"Is there anything we could do to help her, do you think? I should be grieved to be obliged to report unfavourably of her work."

"Yes; I should be very sorry for you to have to do that, Miss Langley: she is such a nice girl," murmured Miss Moore compassionately. "But it seems to me she has had many advantages already. She was taught by Miss Burton, if you remember, whose pupils have hitherto always turned out well; and the duty she is now on is a very light one."

I felt the force of all this. I had done the best I could for Nellie. I had given her an experienced instructress, and as soon as she was ready to go alone, I had put her on a light duty. Greater indulgence than this I could not have shown her without being unfair to those who, although they were not personally dear to me, had an equal claim on my consideration.

"There are not many errors recorded against her, Miss Moore," I observed, as I referred to the list.

"No, she is careful, but she is very slow. In times of pressure she gets so flustered that I always have to arrange for someone to help her, and the helper invariably does nearly all the work."

"Don't you think she may improve?"

"I hope so, I am sure, Miss Langley; but I am very much afraid it isn't in her."

Miss Moore's remarks merely confirmed the unfavourable opinion I had already formed of poor Nellie's official character. Had she been quick and careless, I should have been more hopeful of her; but painstaking, slow, nervous, and dull: these I knew were not the attributes that go to make a valuable clerk, however much time may be allowed for the process. And yet she tried so hard!

Of course, Nellie talked a good deal about matters official at home, and the Granthams soon learned to how great an extent her future career depended on the report I might give of her. But what they did not fully understand was that the character of this report must, in justice to others, be governed entirely by the quality and quantity of Nellie's work, and that I should be merely an instrument used in its preparation.

So when Nellie bewailed her manifold shortcomings, the slips she made, and her inability to get her work done to time, Mrs. Grantham would say—

"You must ask Hester to help you, dear. I am sure she would show you how to do it all properly if you went to her."

While Mr. Grantham would put it even more plainly—

"Don't you worry yourself, little lassie. Hester 'll pull you through right enough, never fear."

Mr. Grantham had done so much for me that, now I had an opportunity of making some little return, it was not in the nature of things that I should be so ungrateful as not to embrace it. Thus he reasoned, although he was almost unconscious of doing so. Had it been put plainly to him, would he wish me to deceive one who trusted me? He would have repudiated such a suggestion, while he would probably have been equally indignant had anyone explained to him that to advise the appointment of an inefficient clerk at a salary which would command the services of an efficient one would be tantamount to being generous with the shareholders' money. Nevertheless, I felt that nothing *I* could say would ever make this plain to Mr. Grantham. He had but a poor opinion of women's business capabilities. When the supply exceeded the demand, it was of course necessary to institute some such method of selection as a competitive examination; but when a clerk was once admitted into one of the three offices, the work required from her must be so simple that to fail in performing it would be an impossibility. Those in authority over her might raise an objection or two; but all such objections would arise from a desire to magnify the imaginary difficulties of that which they did well themselves, rather than from any inherent defects in the work submitted.

What, therefore, would he think if honour compelled me to report unfavourably of Nellie's work, and she were, in consequence, called upon to resign her appointment?

I asked myself this question repeatedly, and I could find but one answer. George would understand me, and Nellie would know I had only performed a most painful duty; but Mr. Grantham and the other members of the family would always believe I had refused to make the only return in my power for all their goodness to me.

But there was another month yet, and Nellie's work might improve. As George said before she passed the examination, it was no good meeting troubles half-way.

And it did improve, but the improvement was so slight that I would almost rather it had retrograded. Poor Nellie was still so careful, slow, nervous, and dull, that I could not fail to see the makings of a really good clerk were not in her.

Then came the agony of trying to decide what I ought to do. Hour after hour I would lie awake at night, endeavouring to make up my mind one way or the other.

I think Nellie must have known how sorely distressed I was. We used to have long talks together about the work, and I would make any suggestions I could think of likely to help her. But when she bewailed her own inability to carry out these suggestions, I did not dare to say a word of encouragement to her, lest I should be buoying her up with false hope.

"I shall be glad when it is all settled, both for your sake and Nellie's. I shall have to prescribe for the pair of you soon, if you worry yourselves much more," George remarked to me, a few days before Nellie's probation report was due.

"Oh, George, George! what shall I do? I was never so perplexed and unhappy before."

"Do what you feel to be right, dearest."

I never knew anyone so brave as George. One look into his steadfast eyes always gave me courage. And then I had such perfect confidence in his judgment: he seemed so to have accustomed himself to look all difficulties straight in the face and go boldly forward.

"But, George, I cannot make up my mind what I ought to do. It would have been so much easier if she had failed utterly. Of course, I should have been bitterly grieved to have been obliged to report against her; still I should have had no choice in the matter. As it is, however, she is not a downright bad worker; she is only an indifferent one."

"What would you do if you were not personally interested in her, dear?"

"George, I don't know—I really don't know. I have thought and worried over it so much until my head seems in a whirl."



"I tried to write out the rough draft."—*p.* 942

"It seems to me that what you have to try to do is to put all personal feeling aside, and treat Nellie exactly as you would were she one of the others now on probation."

"If she is called upon to resign, it will be a dreadful blow to uncle."

George could only look grave. "I know it is difficult for you, Hester, my darling," he said, very tenderly.

"He will think me so terribly ungrateful."

"Better that than that you should know yourself to have acted dishonourably."

"Oh, George, if I could only wake up and find it all a bad dream!"

But no such escape as that was possible. As George said, what I had to do was to put all personal feeling aside. I ought not to lean towards Nellie because I was so interested in her welfare; while, on the other hand, I ought not to decide against her from sheer dread of being unduly influenced by my love for her. If only the quality of her work had been a few degrees either better or worse!

And if I *could* pass her without being disloyal to my employers, surely it was my duty to do so?

Then, in the sanctity of my own room, I took up pen and paper, and tried to write out the rough draft of a favourable report.

But as I wrote on I seemed to see the reproachful eyes of my chief fixed on me; she had always treated me with such implicit confidence. Throughout my official career, I had never intentionally deceived her by word or look. I respected her so thoroughly, I loved her so loyally, I——

Thinking thus, I tore up the report I was writing into fragments, and burned them one by one in the candle, while the tears rolled down my cheeks.

The next day I wrote another report, in which appeared the fatal words: "I should not wish to have Miss Grantham working permanently in my section."

Poor Nellie! If that report went forward, her doom was sealed. Nevertheless, I felt that as the words were true, they ought to stand. If all the clerks under me had been no better able to perform their duties than was Nellie Grantham, I could not possibly have got the work of the section done to the satisfaction of my chief.

Then I locked up the report in my desk. It wanted two days to the date on which it should be handed to the head of the branch.

Twenty times I was tempted to tone it down, as I looked at Nellie's pale, anxious face, and thought of all that would be said when she should carry home the sad news of her failure. But loyalty to my chief triumphed, and early on the morning of the appointed day I sent the report to her just as it stood. Since attempting to write that other favourable report I had never doubted in which direction duty pointed.

I thought that perhaps my chief would send for me as soon as she read the report, but the day wore on, and she did not do so.

That evening, while Nellie and I were sitting together at work, she began talking about the office.

"I seem to have got on a little better to-day, Hester. I really begin to think that if I keep on trying very hard, I shall get on right in course of time."

I murmured some inarticulate reply, and made an excuse to hurry out of the room. Official etiquette would not permit me to prepare Nellie for the bitter disappointment in store for her, and I could not bear to hear her talking in so hopeful a tone.

In the hall I met George, who had just let himself in with a latch-key.

"Oh Hester! Hester, my darling! it has come at last!" he exclaimed, when he caught sight of me; and in another moment he had folded me in his arms.

"What is it, George?" I asked in much astonishment; for George was not generally a demonstrative lover.

"Uncle Benjamin has taken me into partnership, and we can be married just as soon as ever we like."

"Taken you into partnership, George! Why, you didn't even hope for that, did you?"

"Well, dear, between you and me, I have thought just lately that that might be what he meant to do; but I didn't like to say anything about it, even to you, in case I was mistaken."

Then George carried his good news to the other members of the family, and we all talked, laughed, and asked questions at the same time without waiting for the answers.

And in the midst of the excitement George led me forward, and formally introduced me as his future wife.

No one was in the least surprised; but they all clustered round me and kissed me, as they offered their congratulations.

"'Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,'" quoted uncle; "and I am well pleased you did not go far afield to seek one, George, for Hester has been as a dear daughter to me these many years."

But when we had all calmed down a little, and were arranging to have a family dinner the following evening in honour of George's partnership with his uncle and his engagement to me, my thoughts wandered back to poor Nellie, and my face grew grave.

"Why, Hester, you are saying hardly a word," observed George, when I had sat by his side in silence for some time.

"Marriage is a solemn business," remarked uncle. "And Hester won't make a worse wife because she looks a bit grave over it. Take my word for that, George."

But George was not altogether satisfied.

"What is troubling you, dear?" he asked, as I was wishing him good night. "I don't want to hurry you if it really is inconvenient; but considering we have already waited——"

"George, it isn't that at all. I will come to you gladly directly you really need me, dear," I replied eagerly. I was far too upset to consider whether I ought to make quite so free a gift of myself.

Of course George expressed his gratitude for this noble offer in becoming terms.

"But what is it, then, dearest?" he asked, a few minutes later on.

"Oh, George, it's poor dear Nellie!" Then I laid

my head on George's shoulder, and a big sob escaped me.

"Hester, Hester, don't, my own darling!" exclaimed George, with all a man's natural aversion to tears.

George said all he could to comfort me, commending me for what he termed my courage in doing that which I felt to be right. But I could see that he, too, was bitterly grieved on poor Nellie's account, and I was very, very miserable.

The next morning I had occasion to see my chief about some work that had to be done in my section.

Just as I was about to retire, she called me back.

"The probationers in your section seem to have got on very well, with the exception of Miss Grantham." And as she spoke, Miss Semple unfolded Nellie's report.

"Yes, Miss Semple," I answered.

"And you say you would rather not keep Miss Grantham."

"I am afraid she would never make an efficient clerk."

"What would you say to extending her probation for another six weeks, Miss Langley?"

I was prepared for this question, and yet I hardly knew how to reply to it.

"Perhaps you think it would be of no use," said Miss Semple, seeing that I hesitated.

"I should not be very hopeful about the result, Miss Semple," I replied at length.

"Let me see, Miss Langley: you say she is careful, but very slow and rather dull. Can she do a full day's work?"

"No, Miss Semple."

"On no occasion has she done so?"

"I think not; in fact, I am sure she has not."

"And she does stupid things, I suppose?"

I admitted that she did.

"Oh, well, Miss Langley, I will represent the case to the Board, and let you know its decision later on."

In the afternoon Miss Semple sent for me.

"You will be interested to hear, Miss Langley, that the Board has instructed me to offer permanent appointments to five of the probationers and to call upon Miss Grantham to resign."

It was just what I had expected. Yet, now that it had come, I felt it to be a shock.

"Will you see them all this afternoon, Miss Semple?" and as I put the question I felt that my voice quavered.

"I am going to send for them at once."

The five successful probationers went into the chief's room first, one by one, and each came out with a smiling face to announce her success to her fellow-clerks.

Then came poor Nellie's turn. I turned quite faint as I watched her walk across the office. Even her lips were colourless, I observed.

She returned at the expiration of ten minutes, and came straight up to my table.

"Will you give me some foolscap, please, Miss Langley? I am to write my resignation at once."

It didn't sound like Nellie's voice at all. I handed her the paper, without daring to look at her. I was afraid that she would break down every moment, and had she done so, I felt that I must have thrown my arms round her, and wept too.

"I am not to go to the office any more," announced Nellie, in a choking voice, when she got home that evening.

"Not going to the office any more! How's that?" asked her father sharply.

"I can't do the work;" and poor Nellie's long pent-up tears began to flow.

"Who says you can't do the work?"

There was no answer for a few seconds, and then the word "Hester" was heard between her sobs.

"Speak up, lass; I doubt if I understand you."

But Nellie sobbed on.

"And how about the other five you've talked so much about?"

"They've—all passed—their—probation."

"And who said they could do the work?"

"H-H-Hester."

"Do you mean to tell me that Hester had the face to say all those five could do the work, and you were the only one who couldn't?"

"But, father, it wasn't Hester's fault—it wasn't, indeed," explained Nellie, getting more coherent as she began to realise that her father was about to put the blame on me.

"I wouldn't have believed it of her. No, I wouldn't have believed she'd have done such a thing if my own brother had told me so. And I thought she was so fond of us all."

"Father, father, you mustn't say that; you mustn't, indeed. I couldn't do the work. It wasn't Hester's fault."

And then she broke down again, and sobbed more bitterly than ever.

"Nellie dear, you know how grieved I am about it, don't you?" And as I spoke I put my arms about her and drew her to me.

"Stand aside, Hester," said Mr. Grantham sternly. "A little doing is worth a great deal of talking."

Then Mrs. Grantham came into the room, followed by some other members of the family, and there was more weeping and wailing.

Preparations had been made for a family dinner that evening, at which Dr. and Mrs. Grantham, and a few other relatives and intimate friends, were to be present to congratulate George and me.

With a heavy heart I dressed for the occasion.

As for Nellie, her eyes were so red that she went straight up to bed.

"Where is Nellie?" whispered George to me, as we took our seats at the table.

"She has a headache and has gone to bed. She was called upon to resign to-day. Uncle is so angry and aunt so grieved about it," I whispered back.

"Poor Nellie! To-night of all nights, too! It was the greatest mistake in the world for her ever to have gone up for the examination. Poor little soul!" and George looked about as miserable as I felt.

It was a wretched affair, that dinner. And it might have been so different! There were no end of speeches, in which my name was coupled with George's, and people said kind things about me, thinking that by so doing they were pleasing their host and hostess. But

Mr. Grantham did not glance at me once during those two long weary hours; while Mrs. Grantham's manner, whenever she addressed me, was painfully constrained.

CHAPTER II.—LOVE.

My life at home after Nellie's failure became known was very depressing. Mr. Grantham seldom spoke to me; and although I was convinced Mrs. Grantham endeavoured not to be unduly influenced by what had occurred, I missed that touch of motherly sympathy in her manner to which she had so long accustomed me. It was the same with the others, always excepting George and Nellie. No word of reproach was addressed to me; nevertheless, I was made to feel how grievously I had offended.

Every morning I left Nellie studying the advertisements in the daily papers, and every evening I returned to find her worn out after a fruitless search for employment; for the Granthams were not sufficiently well off to keep her at home.

In private, Nellie would tell me of her many disappointments, and we would grieve over them together; but in the family circle my advent was always a signal for the subject to be dropped. Mr. Grantham evidently felt that had I been only commonly grateful for all his goodness to me, this trouble would not have come to poor Nellie; therefore he would not allow it to be discussed in my presence.

No active opposition was offered to my marriage; and as George was anxious that it should not be unnecessarily delayed, I began to prepare for it. Still, I was made to feel that Mr. Grantham no longer cared to welcome me as a daughter-in-law, and I was, in consequence, very, very unhappy.

What with the worry of getting my new home together, the sorrow of feeling myself so grievously misunderstood, and the misery of seeing poor Nellie grow thinner and paler as she met with fresh disappointments day after day, I at length began to feel quite ill. So I resigned my clerkship in the employ of the United Operatives' Insurance Company a month before the date fixed for my wedding, with the intention of going into the country for change of air. To leave all those with whom I had worked happily for so long was in itself a wrench, and that I was debarred from speaking of it at home did not make it easier.

Of course I did not care to go away alone; so I asked Marian, Mr. Grantham's eldest daughter, if she would accompany me. Marian was a widow, with one little girl. She seemed pleased at the suggestion; and so it was arranged that she, little Elsie, and I should go for a fortnight to Pindale, a small, prettily situated village about twenty miles out of Birmingham.

Elsie was a sweet little maiden of four, the pet of the whole household, and the very apple of her grandfather's eye.

"So mother and Aunt Hester are going to take you into the country, are they?" said Mr. Grantham, as Elsie climbed up on his knees and imparted the joyful intelligence

It was the first time uncle had spoken kindly of me since Nellie's failure.

It was, therefore, with a lighter heart than I had had for many a day that I started one Monday morning, with Marian and Elsie, for Pindale. George was to come down the following Saturday, and stay over Sunday.

Pindale was a charming spot. The freedom of country life had the effect of making Elsie rapturously happy; while in watching her delight, all misunderstanding between Marian and myself soon ceased to exist; so that I was well pleased we had come away together.

However, when George came down on the Saturday, he thought we were not looking much better for the change.

"I hope the drains are all right," he observed. "You are all rather pale, especially Elsie."

And again on the Monday morning, as we three were standing on the platform, seeing him off, George remarked—

"If I were you, Marian, I wouldn't give Elsie milk without boiling it first."

"You don't think there is anything really the matter with her, do you, George?" Marian asked, in some anxiety.

"No; I suspect she has been running about rather too much. Still, it's just as well to be careful."

Marian boiled Elsie's milk, and we both did all we could to keep her from over-tiring herself.

"Poor little mite! she does look pale!" exclaimed Marian to me that evening.

She was peevish, too, and kept putting her hand up to her throat. "It hurts," she complained more than once. We noticed that her throat was a little swollen, and that the glands behind the ears were slightly enlarged; but we were too inexperienced to attach much importance to these symptoms.

"I am afraid she has a bad cold coming," said Marian.

We put her to bed, and gave her some hot arrowroot. She refused to take more than a few spoonfuls, and was very cross and fretful. She was naturally such a bright, sweet-tempered child, that I almost wonder her peevishness did not alarm us more.

She was very restless all night, but in the morning she seemed better. As the day wore on, however, she got worse again, and in the evening she was in a high state of fever. She kept constantly complaining of her throat hurting her, and she appeared to experience some difficulty in breathing.

"I shall send for a doctor," announced Marian; "I have never seen her like this before when she has had a cold."

The doctor lived a couple of miles off. However, our landlady kindly offered to go for him. Marian was much relieved, as she did not like the prospect of being left alone with Elsie.

A horrible dread had assailed me, so that I was not altogether taken by surprise when the doctor, after a few minutes' examination, declared Elsie to be suffering from diphtheria. But poor Marian was in a terrible state.

"Will she die?" she asked, with volumes of pent-up agony in her voice.

XUM



"'You must have been mad to let her do it.'"—*p.* 946.

"There is no immediate danger; but she will require very careful watching."

In the morning she again seemed a little better. But the doctor did not appear reassured; so that later in the day we telegraphed for George. We knew, however, that he could not possibly arrive before the next morning.

Towards sunset Elsie got rapidly worse. We again sent for the doctor. When he arrived he looked very grave. However, he declared that even then there was no *immediate* danger. But he would, he said, call in last thing that night, and bring his assistant with him.

Elsie grew worse and worse, until we could hardly control our impatience for the doctor's return.

"Oh, Hester, is she dying?"

"No; *not yet*." The words were wrung out of me.

It was awful to watch the child struggling for breath, and to be so powerless to help her.

"Can't we do anything for her, Hester?"

"I think the doctor will be able to relieve her when he comes, Marian."

"If he would only come!"

A few minutes after that he did arrive.

"There is no time to be lost," he said to his assistant. "We must do it at once: it 's the only chance."

"Do what?" asked Marian.

"Operate on her."

"Operate on her! How?" And Marian looked the alarm she felt.

"The usual operation of tracheotomy is necessary." Then the doctor turned to speak to his assistant.

It was what I had dreaded. Tracheotomy was, I knew, performed only in the most desperate cases, the percentage of recoveries after it being very small.

Elsie lay in Marian's lap, and I held the light while the doctor and his assistant divided the rings of the trachea and inserted a tube.

The operation relieved the child greatly. The doctor stayed till about twelve o'clock, and then left, saying he would call first thing in the morning.

During the next hour Elsie was comparatively quiet. Then the distressing symptoms returned, and their severity gradually increased. She threw her head back; now her arms were thrown up, then they were seizing hold of her throat violently, as if to remove the painful respiration; her nostrils were in perpetual motion, and her face became puffed and distorted.

And there were we—two lonely, helpless women—in a strange, silent house during the still hours of the night, watching the agonies of a dying child whom we dearly loved.

"Oh, Hester! couldn't you fetch him again?"

I shook my head. "She would be dead before I could bring him back; besides, he couldn't do anything. Tracheotomy is the last resource. When that fails, there is nothing more to be done."

"*Nothing?* Oh, my poor, poor darling!"

Elsie's agony was frightful to witness.

Suddenly I sprang to my feet. Yes, I remembered about it now; and I would try it. I don't think I could have helped making the attempt even if my reason had bidden me desist, my heart was so lacerated by the sight of poor little Elsie's dreadful sufferings.

I paused a moment to consider. Had I any anywhere? Then I snatched up a pair of scissors, and the hat I had trimmed for myself for country wear with artificial poppies and India muslin.

"Whatever *are* you going to do, Hester?"

But I was too excited to explain.

In another moment I had cut away from the trimming of my hat a piece of muslin about three or four inches square, and had steeped it in disinfecting fluid. I also rinsed my mouth out with the fluid.

Placing the muslin on Elsie's windpipe, and so arranging it that it formed a small sac over the orifice, I knelt down, and bent over the little sufferer.

"What are you going to do, Hester?" again inquired Marian.

"Suck the tube and clear it of the obstructing membrane, if I can."

"But, Hester, isn't it dreadfully dangerous? Oh, do you think you dare do it?" Anxiety for her child kept Marian from making more than a faint protest.

"George said that if that poor young doctor at the hospital had used a piece of muslin, there would have been little or no risk. But, Marian, if I—die, give my dearest love to uncle, and tell him——"

Here Elsie had another terrible paroxysm, which threatened to cause immediate suffocation. There was not a moment to be lost; so I received the sac into my mouth, and commenced drawing up the diphtheritic films.

The operation was successful even beyond my wildest hopes. Elsie's struggles ceased almost immediately; and in the morning, when the doctor came, he pronounced his little patient out of danger. He, however, expressed great surprise at the wonderful improvement in her condition, admitting that on the previous evening he had entertained but little hope of her recovery. So Marian told him what I had done, and he listened with grave attention.

Then he turned to me, and said such kind things that I should blush to repeat them. But when he had finished complimenting me, he felt my pulse, looked very grave, and said he would call again in the evening.

George arrived by the first train from Birmingham, and Marian went through the whole story again for his benefit.

"You must have been mad to let her do it!" exclaimed George, as soon as Marian had finished speaking.

"But Elsie was dying, George; and Hester said you declared no risk was incurred if a piece of muslin were used."

"That is only a theory," exclaimed George, impatiently; "I have never tested it. You ought to have known better than to have let her do it."

Here Marian began to cry. It was so natural that she should think no sacrifice too great to save her child's life: natural, too, I suppose, that George should regret I had incurred any risk. Yet I felt sure he would have done the same himself had he been in my place.

"Anyhow, all's well that ends well, George," I put in.

"But you are not out of the wood yet, Hester; in fact, it is at present impossible to tell what effect it may have on you."

I was not to escape. I had a sharp attack of diphtheria, and suffered terribly, but I had more strength to battle against it than poor little Elsie. However, it left me very weak, and the date originally fixed for my wedding was long past before I was strong enough to return to Birmingham.

But when I did return, I was made very happy by uncle's reception of me.

"Hester, my own brave girl!" he said, as he put his hands on my shoulders and kissed my forehead.

And then I heard what was to me the best of news: Nellie had gone as nursery governess to the children of a young married lady with whom we were slightly acquainted.

She came in to see me on the night of my return, and spoke very hopefully of her new position.

"It is work I like, and that I feel I can do well," she said. "I don't mean to be conceited, but I do think Mrs. Wood is satisfied with me."

"Hester was about right, after all: it 's no use trying to fit a round peg into a square hole," uncle observed, rather gruffly.

We all felt this to be a great concession on Mr. Grantham's part, because he was not given to admitting himself to have been in the wrong.

SHORT ARROWS.

NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK IN ALL FIELDS.

LIFE'S SUNSET-TIME.



"I AM a good many years older than *you* are, sir!"—"Perhaps you are none the better for that!" Such was the style of conversation we heard of late between two travellers, who had entered into hot debate, apparently political. It suggests to us, among other things, the question: *Are* we better for growing old, for nearing life's sunset-time? The hearts that have weathered life's storms ought to be considerably better in many ways than those whose barques are but lately launched. Not only should we be richer in judgment, in experience, in knowledge than those treading behind us, but infinitely richer in tenderness, sympathy, and patience. Severe were our verdicts and sweeping our condemnations in the years gone by. Our heroes were on the topmost pinnacle; those with whom we did not agree were completely and utterly wrong, and nothing remained to be said in their favour. Now, though we love our brethren better, we are not so exacting in our expectations from them; and having fallen so far short ourselves of what we would fain have been, and knowing that the hearts around us have cares and difficulties known only to God, we judge not our neighbours, for the time that is left is too short for aught save love and help. Our age should be like the flower of evening, which puts forth its blossom of sweetness when day is ending. Emerson reminds us that of a certain Spanish prince it was said, "The more you took from him, the greater he looked." Let not our hearts fail us if the relentless scythe of Time has swept life's roses from us, and much that we possessed of energy, intellectual force, ability for work, faculty for organisation. Much has been taken from us, but we who are kings and priests unto God are the greater for Time's work. The years have brought us a harvest beyond what we have lost, and, lending a helping hand and drawing for others from the stores of dearly-bought experience, we pass onward gently in the sunset-glow, content to linger here or to answer the home-call, as God shall please. By His great might, it is ours, infirm as we are, to "live like light, or die in light like dew."

ENCOURAGEMENT WON FROM OPPONENTS.

One of the most encouraging signs of the success of Christian mission work in India is that unintentionally given by those who least desire to encourage it. Recently a spirit of antagonism to Christianity has been aroused both among the Mohammedans and the Hindus. The most learned moulvies of the former have been called upon seriously to examine the question as to whether permission should be granted to Christian ladies to enter the Zenanas and teach the inmates, and have decided that such permission ought not to be granted, since it was imperilling the Mohammedan faith. The establishment of a Tract Society among the Hindus, avowedly to counteract the work of the Christian missionaries, shows that the adherents of Hinduism share the alarm of the Mohammedans. The wife of a missionary at Bellary tells of a book shown her by a native woman describing the punishments in store for those who listen to the Christian teachers. This book is liberally enriched with illustrations depicting men being pounded in mortars, or being hacked to pieces with knives, or being thrown upon trees (apparently of a species cultivated for the purpose, as each several leaf is a razor), or being subjected to various other tortures. Such attempts at intimidation are likely to overreach themselves, and to lead to a comparison between Brahmanical and Christian teaching which will be in favour of the latter. At any rate it is evidence that the leaders of the faiths which Christians are seeking to supersede in India are not congratulating themselves on the "great missionary failure," and this ought to be an encouragement alike to the missionaries and to those who sympathise with them.

THE DYING KING AND THE HUGUENOT NURSE.

It seems, we are told in one of the *Protestant Papers for the People*, that Charles had bargained for the lives of some Huguenot domestics in his household, and amongst the rest, for that of his faithful old nurse, Philippine Flipote. And now, when the king fell into that strange and mortal malady—of which his physicians declared they had never seen the like (the only man, since Christ, who is known to have sweat blood)—when his complexion became flushed, his eyes glaring, and his slumbers disturbed by visions of murdered men, then this pious woman would soothe him and speak gentle and hopeful words to her distracted master. She was, indeed, the only person who could comfort him, and when cardinals and priests retired horror-struck and despairing from his chamber, it was whispered in Court, "If he opens his heart to take in true hope, it will be from the voice of old Philippine." And so it was: the king kept crying, "My God! my God! what horrors—what blood!" She took from him his tear-drenched and blood-drenched handkerchief,

and spoke to him of "the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and speaketh better things than that of Abel." And it was she who heard and treasured up his last words: "If the Lord Jesus will indeed receive me into the company of the blessed——" How remarkable that sort of double retribution of justice and mercy—this monarch made a spectacle of pity to men and angels for his representative part in this bloodshed, and yet saved and taught by a poor Huguenot, for whose life he had interceded.



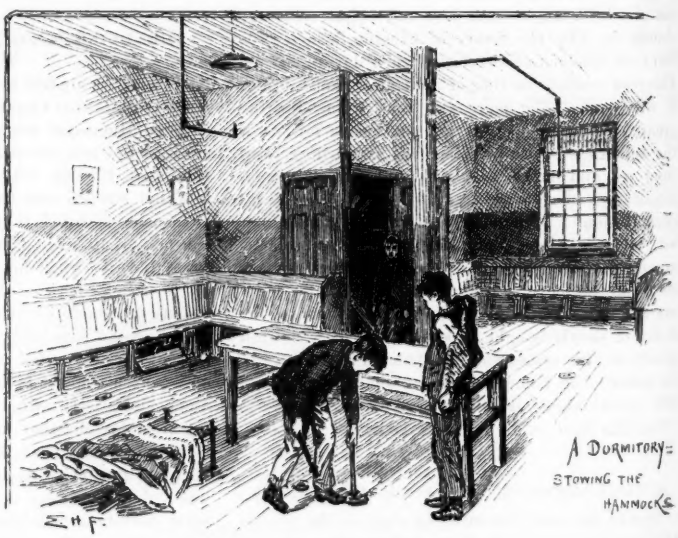
MR. WHEATLEY.

LENDING A HELPING HAND.

At St. Giles's Christian Mission, Brooke Street, Holborn, may be seen two Homes: one for discharged adult male prisoners, the other for boys. The latter is one of three Homes started of late for receiving juvenile criminals direct from prison, and rescuing them from a life of crime. Mr. Wheatley, the indefatigable secretary of the mission, whose portrait accompanies this note, visits the different prisons and lays claim to the young misdemeanants; in other words, they are given into his charge, instead of remaining for a time in gaol and being afterwards cast back upon the streets to resume their career of theft. There are now between fifty and sixty in the Homes, most of whom are employed by various firms during the day, and return to the Homes at night, bringing their receipts with them. They are under constant supervision, and are generally found to prefer a course of virtuous labour to the evil one to which they have too often been driven either by starvation or wicked associations. Many have remained two years in the Home, and have subsequently kept their situations for indefinite periods of one or two years, and are at the present moment respectably placed. Others have gone to sea or emigrated to the colonies, and satisfactory letters and reports are constantly received from or of them. The inmates of the Homes are expected to go twice every Sunday to Wilde Street Mission Chapel, and to subscribe their names on a register kept there in token of their presence. It was at this chapel, in the year 1877, that Mr. George Hatton began his work among prisoners anxious to reform; and it would be impossible to calculate the numbers snatched from a life of crime during these thirteen years. The Homes for boys are an offshoot of this, and a more hopeful sight could scarcely be seen than these lads when gathered together for any particular occasion, respectably dressed, and with no "outward or visible sign" of the juvenile criminal in their appearance or look. Indeed, the Homes in Brooke Street, and the mission generally, deserve every possible support; for the most sceptical people must confess that it is cheaper, better, and certainly more Christian, to help both men and boys to maintain themselves, than to pay heavy rates for their maintenance in prison.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT.

Nowhere is the prodigality of youth more conspicuous than in the waste of affection and happiness. When young and surrounded by friends, we treat affection in a scornful way as if it could never cease to flow to us. When it does cease, we look back with sorrowful wonder at our folly. The old home is broken up which we did not care to visit until too late. Now the warmest welcome we get



A SKETCH IN BROOKE STREET.

anywhere is at an inn. The caress which we took as a matter of course, if we did not reject it, is no longer proffered. We wasted affection, and now we want it. We cared for no one, and now no one cares for us. "Blind and deaf that we are: oh, think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust-clouds and idle dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late." In the same way pure and peaceful happiness is too often despised, while we rush after unsatisfying excitement.

"NOT ABSENT ONCE."

Some months ago (April, 1890, page 478) we drew attention, under this title, to the report of a Transatlantic superintendent, who had in his Sunday-school a teacher who had not been absent once in twelve years, and a scholar who had made the full number of attendances for fourteen consecutive years. This record seemed to us, as we confessed at the time, unique. But we are glad to learn from correspondents all over the kingdom that it is not quite so. From the south-west of Scotland we hear of a teacher whose home is nearly three miles from his school and the church at which he worships, but who has, nevertheless, only been absent three times from either in forty-six years. Liverpool boasts a Bible-class in which a stonemason, who is one of its members, has made, at the rate of two each Sunday, 1,227 consecutive attendances, and who also devotes part of the time between the meetings of the class to tract distribution and other good works. A Birmingham teacher is able to report nearly a quarter of a century's regular attendance, during the whole of which long time he has not been fifteen minutes late. From far Kirkwall we hear of a teacher whose record is just that of our American friend—twelve years' unbroken service. A school at Dresden, near Longton, reports that of 350 scholars, seven have not been late or absent once for ten years, five for eleven years, two for twelve years, five for thirteen years, and one for fourteen years. And one ceases to wonder at this splendid record when he reads that of the teachers there are about a dozen who had previously made fourteen years' regular attendance as scholars.

HOW WE KILL OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

Though suicide is acknowledged a great sin in Christian England, and though hardly any crime carries with it so much horror as that of murder, how many there are who, by their culpable carelessness, if not deliberately and with malice aforethought, kill themselves and others! We are entrusted with our own welfare and with that of others, yet even serious people seldom reflect how the care of their health is a religious duty; and as for our thoughtlessness concerning the health of others, many of us seem to consider murder a fine art. Although the guilt is not so great, the effect of careless homicide is the same as wilful murder. And yet the speculative builder who professes to be a Christian, and who feels unfeigned horror at Burmese or Bulgarian atrocities, is not at all disturbed in his sleep or peace of mind by the fact that his badly-built, badly-drained houses are slaying their victims by slow torture. Murder most foul is committed by those who sell adulterated food; by employers who take no care to counteract the unhealthy influences which necessarily belong to several trades; by parents who will not isolate their children when they have infectious disease; and by every careless, thoughtless person.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.



A TEACHER'S PREPARATION.

We once heard the wish expressed by a wise and excellent pastor that the many aids provided by the printer for our spiritual progress were cremated or otherwise destroyed. He was of the opinion that in the case of Sunday-school teachers, for instance, it would be better for them to prepare, individually instructed by the Spirit, than for them to lean on the help of the thoughts of others. Now, if all Christian teachers and workers had plenty of leisure, there might have been more room for so sweeping a condemnation; but we have a noble army of self-sacrificing helpers who are earning their living all the week, and have neither time nor opportunity for research, yet long to bring to their classes the best and highest that is possible. Some may say, "Then let them bring what the Holy Spirit teaches as they study the Book of books; they want no book but that." Yet let us remember that the

Master speaks to others besides ourselves; and when He has given a message to those who have the opportunity of printing it, He surely *means* them to pass it on, and thus to make that message an inspiration to hundreds. It seems to us that it is right and reasonable gratefully to use all such aids as are within our reach; though the teacher's personal contact with the Master must render his instruction *alive*, and his own individuality ought to permeate all that he has brought to his scholars. There is doubtless a danger in leaning *entirely* upon what others have provided. God's Word has a special message for *us* too, and no other study will avail if we neglect what Scott, in his last illness, described as "the only complete, perfect Book." Better hear no more sermons, read no more spiritual instructions, rather than accept these *in the place of* personal study of the Scriptures. One of the martyrs was informed once by an ecclesiastic that the Bible holds enough for our salvation, but not for our *instruction*. The sensible answer was, "Well, then, sir, God send me *salvation*, and take you the *instruction!*"

PIETY AT HOME.

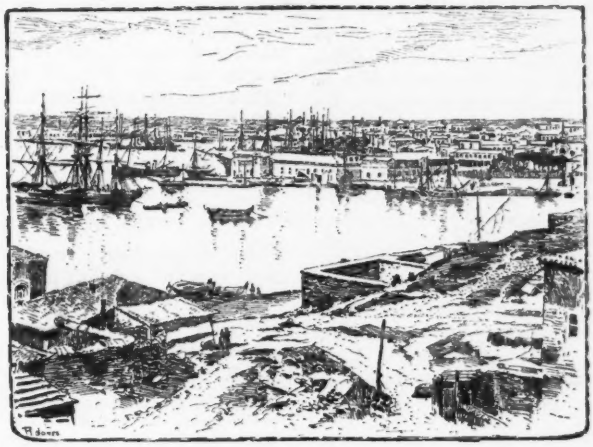
When Jesus had cast the unclean spirit out of the Gadarene, he said to him: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Every Christian should so live as to be able to say with the good Methodist preacher, "If you don't believe I am a Christian, ask my wife." "I would not give much for that man's religion," said Rowland Hill, "whose very cat and dog are not better for it."

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY.

Under the authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a committee was appointed not long ago to draw up a scheme for four years' series of lessons to be used in Sabbath schools. The scheme was drawn up, and includes 40 lessons on the Old Testament; two series of 40 lessons each on the Life, Teaching, and Works of our Lord; and a fourth series of 40 lessons on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. The committee was further authorised to prepare a series of lesson-helps for the use of teachers in schools where these courses were adopted; and the result of their labours is seen in three handsome volumes that have just been issued by Messrs. R. and R. Clark, of Edinburgh, under the title of "The Scottish Sabbath School Teachers' Book." Each volume covers the whole four series, but with special view to the differing needs of teachers of three grades of scholars—first, those from seven to ten years of age; second, those from ten to fourteen; and third, those above fourteen years of age. In each grade the various courses of lessons have been allotted to different writers, sometimes two or more writers dividing the work of a single course. This secures great thoroughness of treatment throughout; and in the important matter of suitability to scholars of the age aimed at in each grade, the editors have had the advantage of the advice of qualified educational experts. Primarily, no doubt, these three volumes will be of use to those of our Scotch friends who adopt these courses of lessons, but many a worker who speaks to children south of the Tweed will be glad of their assistance in the preparation of lessons or addresses for young people. We are glad to see that the editors throughout emphasise the fact that these volumes are for the *help* of teachers in the preparation of their lessons, and must not be regarded as substitutes for preparation. A work intended rather for the use of preachers and students than for teachers is Dr. Bullinger's reprint of Thomas Boys's "Key to the Psalms" (published by the editor at 7, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.)—an extension of a work first issued some five-and-sixty years ago. It is a most valuable index, analytical and synthetical, of the Psalms, showing the parallelisms in each, and the plan upon which, humanly speaking, it is built up. A work more suggestive of thought it would be difficult to take up. Our young readers will find in "Nigel Browning" (Longmans) a capital story by that good friend of all girl readers, Miss Agnes Giberne. Now that we are once more at the season of lengthening evenings, this story ought to find many a reader, as should another single-volume story from the same publishers, under the title of "Hurstleigh Dene," by Mrs. O'Reilly, whose work is illustrated by our old friend Mr. E. Edwards. As gift-books or prizes these two volumes would be most acceptable. A pleasantly told and most instructive work for children is "The Story of Denmark," by Charlotte S. Sidgwick, also published by Messrs. Longmans. If children are in after years rightly to understand the relations of our own land to other countries, they cannot too soon learn something of their history; and from such a work as this they may do it under most favourable conditions.

AN OLD MAN'S DEMAND.

An amusing instance of the way in which the European missionary is sometimes regarded as a kind of universal provider comes to us from South India. A poor widow who procured a precarious living by keeping a small shop, was regularly visited by a missionary lady. One day, while the missionary was giving her lesson, the widow's father—an old man of over eighty years of age and a cripple—hobbled in. At the close of the lesson he said: "There are two things I wish you to do for me. Will you promise to do them?" The natural reply was given that the two things must be known before the promise could be made. So the old cripple said: "You see I have lost the use of my legs and cannot walk easily; I want you to give me a small cart to go about in. The second thing I want you to do is to advise my daughter here to have me married



THE PIRÆUS.

again." The missionary lady thought that, considering his years and infirmities, it would seem more suitable for him to be preparing for death rather than for marriage, and told him so. But that suggestion troubled him. He had no inclination to think of death. He did not want to die but to marry. His widowed daughter tried to change the subject, but in vain. At last the missionary jokingly promised to make inquiries for some aged and discreet woman suited for partnership with such a venerable man as he. The old man was disgusted. He wanted no aged woman but a young bride! This is certainly an amusing incident, but it has its serious value in showing that our missionaries have inspired a feeling of confidence in those amongst whom they lovingly and self-denyingly labour.

"LOOK ON THE FIELDS."

The Evangelical Church in the kingdom of Greece is faithfully putting forth efforts to extend the knowledge of the simple Gospel. "At Volo," we read, "one old couple, having come to the table of the Lord, could hardly eat the rest of the day, and talked of nothing but the great things God had done for them in bringing them out of the darkness of superstition." Piræus is mentioned as an encouraging field, a place of worship being required to take the place of the overcrowded room where meetings have been held. Christian workers visit the ships and hospitals, distribute tracts, sell Bibles, and read the Scriptures from house to house. The outlook in the Syrian mission-field is bright and hopeful; the Sabbath-school children form quite a multitude. And in Beyrout, in the Tripoli field, towards Sidon, and along the slopes of Lebanon, there are to be found the fruits of devoted labours, the stars in the crowns of heroic missionaries. Our brethren report "missions at Latakia, Schweir, and Damascus, in Palestine and Egypt, are in most happy and hearty sympathy, co-operating in the service of one Lord and Master." A worker in Albania speaks of the sympathy of a Mohammedan who frequently attends the Christian worship. He would take no money for repairing a book-satchel used in the Mission, his testimony being, "The object of the Society is a good and holy one, and I am happy to contribute the work of my hands." Well may the workers in the Turkish Missions' Aid Society, witnessing what God has inspired His people to attempt, and what He has wrought already, exclaim, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

ANCIENT GRECIAN AND MODERN ENGLISH GRIEF.

What struck me most when on a recent occasion I visited Athens, writes a friend, and walked through the ancient Greek cemetery, was the calm, dignified grief which was expressed by the reliefs upon the tombs. There is no violence, no despair, no exaggeration. The survivors are represented as shaking hands with him who is going away, and a faithful dog is generally to be seen bidding farewell in his way. And yet we know that though the ancient Greeks were unable to shake off a belief in life after death, they could not conceive that state as anything but a shadowy and wretched echo of the real life upon earth. It was a gloomy and dark existence, burdened with the memory of lost happiness, and the longing for lost enjoyment. Yet, with less hope about death than we Christians profess to have, the ancient Greeks never imagined anything so suggestive of despair as are many of our modern funerals.

"WELL, THAT'S PAST."

This is what a man with a healthy mind says to himself when any circumstance causes him to look back upon opportunities lost or mistakes done in the past. One day Sir Henry Lawrence and his sister were reading together the "Life of Washington." Looking up between the chapters, Letitia soliloquised "that it was a pity they had not been better taught." Henry mildly replied, "*Well, that's past. We can now teach ourselves.*"

THE USES OF FLOWERS.

Even when summer days end, the Bible Flower Mission is disinclined to give up its cheering work.



THE FLOWERS OF THE SEA.

The text-messages to hospital patients and others of our brethren in need have power to bring comfort though the flowers are falling asleep, and any one who has "everlastings," ornamental grasses, ivy, mosses, seaweed, small cones, dried leaves, bramble-foliage, and the like to spare should bear in mind this Mission that spreads the good seed of the Kingdom, linked with the beauteous works of our Father's hand. A worker writes concerning a gift of lavender-bags to those journeying abroad in the troopships:—"They have been warmly, almost excitedly, welcomed, and formed such a happy introduction." Not only soldiers and their families, but those in lodging-houses, railway and gas-works, have come in for a share of welcome offerings winged with heavenly messages. A lady held out to a patient afflicted with asthma a bunch of flowers with the text, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He replied, sullenly, "There is no rest for me either in this world or the next." He was an out-patient of the hospital, and, though sought for, he appeared among them no more. One day, however, she was called to an in-patient, passing away. She did not recognise him; but he fumbled under his pillow, and the nurse produced a handkerchief, in which the flower and the text were wrapped up. The lady asked, "Have you taken that rest?" And pointing up, with the whisper, "*Thank God!*" the freed soul passed "to where beyond these voices there is peace."

"THE QUIVER" FUND.

List of contributions received from July 18th, 1890, up to and including August 22nd, 1890. Subscriptions received after this date will be acknowledged next month:—

For "*The Quiver*" *Waifs' Fund:* Reader of THE QUIVER, Notting Hill, 10s. 6d.; A Friend, Kilburn, 5s.; J. J. E. (33rd donation), 5s.; S. H., Hampton, 2s. 6d.; J. J. E. (34th donation), 5s.; J. C. F., Stockton-on-Tees, 2s.; Eileen, Waterford, 1s.; a Glasgow Mother, 1s.

For *The Children's Country Holiday Fund:* N. W. G., 2s. 6d.; Thank-offering, Grampound, 2s.; a Children's Nurse, 5s.; G. Atkinson, 10s.; N. L. E., 10s.

For *Dr. Barnardo's Homes:* A Well-wisher, Sheffield, 5s.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 873.

121. His liberality to the poor, and his restoring fourfold to those whom he had wronged. (St. Luke xix. 8.)

122. Jesus wept; thus setting forth His deep sympathy with the sorrowing. (St. John xi. 35.)

123. They express so exactly the meaning of the words used by the angels when appearing to the shepherds at our Lord's birth. (St. Luke xix. 38, and ii. 14.)

124. By the imprisonment and persecution of God's prophets. (1 Kings xix. 14; Jer. xxxvii. 15, 16; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.)

125. He taught the people as one having authority. (St. Matt. vii. 29.)

126. Twice; once at the beginning of His ministry, and again at the end. (St. John ii. 13—17; St. Luke xix. 45, 46.)

127. Because He knew the fearful misery which would befall Jerusalem during the siege which He then foretold. (St. Luke xix. 41—44.)

128. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians. (Ps. cxviii. 22; St. Luke xx. 17; Eph. ii. 20.)

129. St. Peter and St. John, who were guided to the place by a man bearing a pitcher of water, about whom Jesus had spoken to them. (St. Luke xxii. 8—10.)

130. The institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. (St. Luke xxii. 17—21.)

131. Psalms cxiv. to cxviii., which were called the "Great Hallel." (St. Matt. xxvi. 30.)

132. Both commemorate a deliverance: one from the bondage of Egypt, the other from the bondage of sin. Both are feasts of thanksgiving; both to be observed throughout all generations. (St. Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 26—30.)



THE CALL OF THE BELLS.

See p. 04.



THE SAVIOUR'S KINGDOM.

REJOICE, rejoice, O Zion!
Behold, thy King doth come,
To heal thee of thy sickness,
And make thy mourning dumb.
Wouldst share, O thou, His glory?
Then pure must be thy heart;
Within the Saviour's Kingdom
Only the pure have part.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Zion!
Behold, thy King is nigh;
Thy King is meek and lowly—
He doth not strive nor cry.
Wouldst share, O thou, His glory?
Then humble be thy heart:
Within the Saviour's Kingdom
Only the meek have part

Rejoice, rejoice, O Zion!
Thy King rides on apace;
Thy King is very tender,
And full of love and grace.
Wouldst share, O thou, His glory?
Then love must rule thy heart;
Within the Saviour's Kingdom
None without love hath part.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Zion!
Thy King the gate doth win;
Thy King is very holy—
He cannot look on sin.
Wouldst share, O thou, His glory?
Then let Him wash thy heart;
Within the Saviour's Kingdom
Only the cleansed hath part.

F. LANGBRIDGE.

FRANCES KANE'S FORTUNE.

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "THE BEAUFORTS OF BEATRICE GARDENS," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a very sunny June day, and a girl was pacing up and down a sheltered path in an old-fashioned garden. She walked slowly along the narrow gravelled walk, now and then glancing at the carefully trimmed flowers of an elaborate ribbon border at her right, and stopping for an instant to note the promise of fruit on some well-laden peach and pear trees. The hot sun was pouring down almost vertical rays on her uncovered head, but she was either impervious to its power or, like a salamander, she rejoiced in its fierce noonday heat.

"We have a good promise of peaches and pears," she said to herself; "I will see that they are sold this year. We will just keep a few for my father to eat, but the rest shall go. It is a pity Watkins spends so much time over the ribbon border: it does not pay, and it uses up so many of our bedding plants."

She frowned slightly as she said these last words, and put up her hand to shade her face from the sun, as though for the first time she noticed its dazzling light and heat.

"Now I will go and look to the cabbages," she said, continuing her meditations aloud. "And those early peas ought to be fit for pulling now.—Oh, is that you, Watkins? Were you calling me? I wanted to speak to you about this border. You must not use up so many geraniums and calceolarias here. I don't mind the foliage plants, but the others cost too much, and cannot be made use of to any profit in a border of this kind."

"You can't make a ribbon, what 's worthy to be called a ribbon, with foliage plants," gruffly retorted the old gardener. "Master would be glad to see you in the house, Miss Frances, and yer 's a letter what carrier has just brought."

"Post at this hour?" responded Frances, a little eagerness and interest lighting up her face; "that

is unusual, and a letter in the middle of the day is quite a treat. Well, Watkins, I will go to my father now, and see you at six o'clock in the kitchen garden about the cabbages and peas."

"As you please, Miss Frances; the wegitables won't be much growed since you looked at them yester-night, but I 'm your sarvint, miss. Carrier called at the post-office and brought two letters: one for you and t'other for master. I 'm glad you 're pleased to get 'em, Miss Frances."

Watkins' back was a good deal bent: he certainly felt the heat of the sun, and was glad to hobble off into the shade.

"Fuss is no word for her," he said; "though she 's a good gel and means well, werry well."

After the old gardener had left her, Frances stood quite still: the sun beat upon her slight figure, upon her rippling, abundant dark-brown hair, and lit up a face which was a little hard, a tiny bit soured, and scarcely young enough to belong to so slender and lithe a figure. The eyes, however, now were full of interest, and the lips melted into very soft curves as Frances turned her letter round, examined the postmarks, looked with interest at the seal, and studied the handwriting. Her careful perusal of the outside of the letter revealed at a glance how few she got, and how such a comparatively uninteresting event in most lives was regarded by her.

"This letter will keep," she said to herself, slipping it into her pocket. "I will hear what father has to tell me first. It is a great treat to have an unopened letter to look forward to. I wonder where this is from. Who can want to write to me from Australia? If Philip were alive——" Here she paused and sighed. "In the first place, I heard of his death three years ago; in the second, being alive, why should he write? It is ten years since we met."

Her face, which was a very bright and practical one, notwithstanding those few hard lines, looked pensive for a moment. Then its habitual expression of cheerfulness returned to it, and when she entered the house Frances Kane looked as practical and business-like a woman as could be found anywhere in the whole of the large parish in the north of England where she and her father lived.

Squire Kane, as he was called, came of an old family; and in the days before Frances was born he was supposed to be rich. Now, however, nearly all his lands were mortgaged, and it was with difficulty that the long, low, old-fashioned house, and lovely garden which surrounded it, could be kept together. No chance at all would the squire have had of spending his last days in the house where he was born, and where many generations of ancestors had lived and died, but for Frances; she managed the house and the gardens, and the few fields which were not let to surrounding farmers. She managed Watkins, too, and the under-gardener, and the two house-servants; and most of all, she managed Squire Kane.

He had been a hale and hearty man in his day, with a vigorous will of his own, and a marvellous and fatal facility for getting through money; but now he leant on Frances, was guided by her in all things, never took an opinion or spent a shilling without her advice; and yet all the time he thought himself to be the ruler, and she the ruled. For Frances was very tactful, and if she governed with a rod of iron she was clever enough to encase it well in silk.

"I want you, Frances," called a rather querulous old voice. The squire was ensconced in the sunniest corner of the sunny old parlour; his feet were stretched out on a hassock, he wore a short circular cape over his shoulders, and a black velvet skull-cap was pushed a little crooked over his high bald forehead. He had aquiline features, an aristocratic mouth, and sunken but somewhat piercing eyes. As a rule his expression was sleepy, his whole attitude indolent; but now he was alert, his deep-set eyes were wide open and very bright, and when his daughter came in, he held out a somewhat trembling hand, and drew her to his side.

"Sit down, Frances—there, in the sun, it 's so chilly in the shade—don't get into that corner behind me, my dear; I want to look at you. What do you think? I have got a letter, and news, great news! It is not often that news comes to the Firs in these days. What do you think, Frances? But you will never guess. Ellen's child is coming to live with us!"

"What?" said Frances. "What! Little Fluff we used to call her? I don't understand you, father; surely Ellen would never part with her child."

"No, my dear, that is true. Ellen and her child were bound up in each other, but she is dead—died three months ago in India. I have just received a letter from that good-for-nothing husband of hers, and the child is to leave school and come here. Major Danvers can't have her in India, he says, and her mother's wish was—her mother's last wish—that she should make her home with us. She will be here within a week after the receipt of this letter, Frances. I call it great news: fancy a young thing about the house again!"

Frances Kane had dark straight brows; they were drawn together now with a slight expression of surprise and pain.

"I am not so old, father," she said: "compared to you I am quite young. I am only eight-and-twenty."

"My dear," said the squire, "you were never young. You are a good woman, Frances, an excellent, well-meaning woman, but you were never either child or girl. Now this little thing—how long is it since she and her mother were here, my love?"

"It was just before cousin Ellen went to India," responded Frances, again knitting her brows and casting back her memory. "Yes, it was six years ago; I remember it, because we planted the new asparagus bed that year."

"Ay, ay; and a very productive bed it turned out," responded the squire. "Fluff was like a ball then, wasn't she?—all curly locks, and dimples, and round cheeks, and big blue eyes like saucers! The merriest little kitten—she plagued me, but I confess I liked her. How old would she be now, Frances?"

"About seventeen," replied Frances. "Almost a grown-up girl; dear, dear, how time does fly! Well, father, I am glad you are pleased. I will read the letter, if you will let me, by-and-bye, and we must consult as to what room to give the child. I hope she won't find it very dull."

"Not she, my dear, not she. She was the giddiest mortal—always laughing, and singing, and skipping about in the sunshine. Dear heart! it will do me good to see anything so lively again."

"I am glad she is coming," repeated Frances, rising to her feet. "Although you must remember, father, that six years make a change. Ellen may not be quite so kittenish and frolicsome now."

"Ellen!" repeated the squire; "I'm not going to call the child anything so formal. Fluff she always was and will be with me—a kittenish creature with a kittenish name; I used to tell her so, and I expect I shall again."



"Once again she played with the envelope, and examined the writing."—*p. 6.*

"You forget that she has just lost her mother," said Frances. "They loved each other dearly and you cannot expect her not to be changed. There is also another thing, father! I am sorry to have to mention it, but it is necessary. Does Major Danvers propose to give us an allowance for keeping his daughter here? Otherwise, it will be impossible for us to have her except on a brief visit."

The squire pulled himself with an effort out of his deep arm-chair. His face flushed, and his eyes looked angry.

"You are a good woman, Frances, but a bit hard," he said. "You don't suppose that a question of mere money would keep Ellen's child away from the Firs? While I am here she is sure of a welcome. No, there was nothing said about money in this letter, but I have no doubt the money part is right enough. Now I think I'll go out for a stroll. The sun is going off the south parlour, and whenever I get into the shade I feel chilly. If you'll give me your arm, my dear, I'll take a stroll before dinner. Dear, dear! it seems to me there isn't half the heat in the sun there used to be. Let's get up to the South Walk, Frances, and pace up and down by the ribbon border—it's fine and hot there—what I like. You don't wear a hat, my dear; quite right—let the sun warm you all it can."

CHAPTER II.



IT was quite late on that same afternoon before Frances found a leisure moment to read her own letter. It was not forgotten as it lay in her pocket, but she was in no hurry to ascertain its contents.

"Until it is read, it is something to look forward to," she said to herself; "afterwards — oh! of course there can be nothing of special interest in it."

She sighed; strong and special interests had never come in her way.

The afternoon which followed the receipt of the two letters was a specially busy one. The squire never grew tired of discussing the news which his own letter had brought him. He had a thousand conjectures which must be dwelt upon and entered into; how and when had Ellen Danvers died, what would the child Ellen be like, which bedroom would suit her best, would she like the South Walk as much as the old squire did himself, would she admire the ribbon border, would she appreciate the asparagus which she herself had seen planted?

The old man was quite garrulous and excited, and Frances was pleased to see him so interested in anything. When she had walked with him for nearly an hour she was obliged to devote some time to Watkins in the vegetable garden; then came dinner; but after that meal there always was a lull in the day's occupation for Frances, for the squire went to sleep over his pipe, and never cared to be aroused or spoken to until his strong coffee was brought to him at nine o'clock.

On this particular evening, Frances felt her heart beat with a pleased and quickened movement. She had her unopened letter to read. She would go to the rose arbour, and have a quiet time there while her father slept. She was very fond of Keats, and she took a volume of his poems under her arm, for of course the letter would not occupy her many moments. The rose arbour commanded a full view of the whole garden, and Frances made a graceful picture in her soft light grey dress, as she stepped into it. She sat down in one of the wicker chairs, laid her copy of Keats on the rustic table, spread the bright shawl on her lap, and took the foreign letter out of her pocket.

"It is sure to be nothing in the least interesting," she said to herself. "Still there is some excitement about it till it is opened." And as she spoke she moved to the door of the arbour.

Once again she played with the envelope, and examined the writing. Then she drew a closely written sheet out of its enclosure, spread it open on her lap, and began to read.

As she did so, swiftly and silently there rose into her cheeks a beautiful bloom. Her eyelids quivered, her hand shook; the bloom was succeeded by a pallor. With feverish haste her quick eyes flew over the paper. She turned the page and gasped slightly for breath. She raised her head, and her big, dark eyes were full of tears, and a radiant, tender smile parted her lips.

"Thank God!" she said; "oh, this is wonderful! Oh, thank God!"

Once again she read the letter, twice, three times, four times. Then she folded it up, raised it to her lips, and kissed it. This time she did not return it to her pocket, but opening her dress, slipped it inside, so that it lay against her heart.

"Miss Frances;" old Watkins was seen hobbling down the path. "You hasn't said what's to be done with the bees. They are sure to swarm to-morrow, and—and—why, miss, I seem to have startled you like——"

"Oh, not at all, Watkins; I will come with you now, and we will make some arrangement about the bees."

Frances came out of the arbour. The radiant light was still in her eyes, a soft colour mantled her cheeks, and she smiled like summer itself on the old man.

He looked at her with puzzled, dull wonder and admiration.

"What's come to Miss Frances?" he said to himself. "She looks rare and handsome, and she's none so old."

The question of the bees was attended to, and then Frances paced about in the mellow June twilight until it was time for her father to have his coffee. She came in then, sat down rather in the shadow, and spoke abruptly. Her heart was beating with great bounds, and her voice sounded almost cold in her effort to steady it.

"Father! I, too, have had a letter to-day."

"Ay, ay, my love. I saw that the carrier brought two. Was it of any importance? If not, we might go on with our 'History of Greece.' I was

interested in where we left off, last night. You might read to me for an hour before I go to bed, Frances; unless, indeed, you have anything more to say about Fluff, dear little soul! Do you know it occurred to me that we ought to get fresh curtains and knick-knacks for her room? It ought to look nice for her, dear, bright little thing!"

"So it shall, father." There was no shade of impatience in Frances's tone. "We will talk of Fluff presently. But it so happens that my letter was of importance. Father, you remember Philip Arnold?"

"Arnold—Arnold? Dimly, my dear, dimly. He was here once, wasn't he? I rather fancy that I heard of his death. What about him, Frances!"

Frances placed her hand to her fast-beating heart. Strange—her father remembered dimly the man whom she had thought of, and dreamt of, and secretly mourned for for ten long years.

"Philip Arnold is not dead," she said, still trying to steady her voice. "It was a mistake, a false rumour. He has explained it—my letter was from him."

"Really, my love? Don't you think there is a slight draught coming from behind that curtain? I am so sensitive to draughts, particularly after hot days. Oblige me, Frances my dear, by drawing that curtain a little more to the right. Ah, that is better. So Arnold is alive. To tell the truth, I don't remember him very vividly, but of course I 'm pleased to hear that he is not cut off in his youth. A tall, good-looking fellow, wasn't he? Well, well, this matter scarcely concerns us. How about the dimity in the room which will be Fluff's? My dear Frances, what is the matter? I must ask you not to fidget so."

Frances sprang suddenly to her feet.

"Father, you must listen to me. I am going to say something which will startle you. All these quiet years, all the time which has gone by and left only a dim memory of a certain man, to you, have been spent by me smothering down regrets, stifling my youth, crushing what would have made me joyous and womanly—for Philip Arnold has not been remembered at all dimly by me, father, and when I heard of his death I lived through something which seemed to break the spring of energy and hope in me. I did not show it, and you never guessed, only you told me to-day that I had never been young, that I had never been either child or girl. Well, all that is over now, thank God! hope has come back to me, and I have got my lost youth again. You will have two young creatures about the house, father, and won't you like it?"

"I don't know," said the squire. He looked up at his daughter in some alarm; her words puzzled him; he was suddenly impressed too by the brightness in her eyes, and the lovely colouring on her cheeks.

"What is all this excitement, Frances?" he said. "Speak out; I never understand riddles."

Frances sat down as abruptly as she had risen.

"The little excitement was a prelude to my letter, dear father," she said. "Philip is alive, and is coming to England immediately. Ten years ago he saw something in me—I was only eighteen then—he saw something which gave him pleasure, and—and—more. He says he gave me his heart ten years ago, and now he is coming to England to know if I will accept him as my husband. That is the news which my letter contains, father. You see, after all, my letter is important—as important as yours."

"Bless me!" said the squire. The expression of his face was not particularly gratified; his voice was not too cordial. "A proposal of marriage to you, Frances? Bless me!—why, I can scarcely remember the fellow. He was here for a month, wasn't he? It was the summer before your mother died. I think it is rather inconsiderate of you to tell me news of this sort just before I go to bed, my dear. I don't sleep over-well, and it is bad to lie down with a worry on your pillow. I suppose you want me to answer the letter for you, Frances, but I 'll do nothing of the kind, I can tell you. If you encouraged the young man long ago, you must get out of it as best you can, now."

"Out of it, father? Oh, don't you understand?"

"Then you mean to tell me you care for him? You want to marry a fellow you haven't seen for ten years! And pray what am I to do if you go away and leave me?"

"Something must be managed," said Frances.

She rose again. Her eyes no longer glowed happily; her lips so sweet five minutes ago had taken an almost bitter curve.

"We will talk this over quietly in the morning, dear father," she said. "I will never neglect you, never cast you aside; but a joy like this cannot be put out of a life. That is, it cannot be lightly put away. I have always endeavoured to do my duty—God will help me to do it still. Now, shall I ring for prayers?"

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Frances got to her room she took out pen and ink, and without a moment's hesitation wrote an answer to her letter.

"My Dear Philip,—I have not forgotten you—I remember the old times, and all the things to which you alluded in your letter. I thought you were dead, and for the last three or four years always remembered you as one who had quite done with this world. Your letter startled me to-day, but your hope about me has been abundantly fulfilled, for I have never for a moment forgotten you. Philip, you have said very good words to me in your letter, and whatever happens, and however matters may be arranged between us in the future, I shall always treasure the words, and bless you for comforting my heart with them. But, Philip, ten years is a long

time—in ten years we none of us stay still, and in ten years some of us grow older than others. I think I am one of those who grow old fast, and nothing would induce me to engage myself to you, or even to tell you that I care for you, until after we have met again. When you reach England—I will send this letter to the address you give me in London—come down here. My dear and sweet mother is dead, but I daresay my father will find you a room at the Firs, and if not, there are good lodgings to be had at the White Hart in the village. If you are of the same mind when you reach England as you were when you wrote this letter, come down to the old place, and let us renew our acquaintance. If, after seeing me, you find I am not the Frances you had in your heart all these years, you have only to go away without speaking, and I shall understand. In any case, thank you for the letter, and believe me, yours faithfully,

"FRANCES KANE."

This letter was quickly written, as speedily directed and stamped, and, wrapping her red shawl over her head, Frances herself went out in the silent night, walked half a mile to the nearest pillar-box, kissed the letter passionately before she dropped it through the slit, and then returned home, with the stars shining over her and a wonderful new peace in her heart. Her father's unsympathetic words were forgotten, and she lived over and over again on what her hungry heart had craved for all these years.

The next morning she was up early; for the post of housekeeper, head-gardener, general accountant, factotum, amanuensis, reader, etc., etc., to John Kane, Esq., of the Firs, was not a particularly light post, and required undivided attention, strong brains, and willing feet, from early morning to late night every day of the week. Frances was by no means a grumbling woman, and if she did not go through her allotted tasks with the greatest possible cheerfulness and spirit, she performed them ungrudgingly, and in a sensible matter-of-fact style.

On this particular morning, however, the joy of last night was still in her face; as she followed Watkins about, her merry laugh rang in the air; work was done in half the usual time, and never done better, and after breakfast she was at leisure to sit with her father and read to him as long as he desired it.

"Well, Frances," he said, in conclusion, after the reader's quiet voice had gone on for over an hour and a half, "you have settled that little affair of last night, I presume, satisfactorily. I have thought the whole matter over carefully, my love, and I have really come to the conclusion that I cannot spare you. You see you are, so to speak, *necessary* to me, dear. I thought I would mention this to you now, because in case you have not yet written to that young Arnold it will simplify matters for you. I should recommend you not to enter on the question of your own feelings at all, but state the fact simply —'My father cannot spare me.'"

"I wrote to Philip last night," said Frances. "I have neither refused him nor accepted him. I have asked him on a visit here; can we put him up at the Firs?"

"Certainly, my love: that is a good plan. It will amuse me to have a man about the house again, and travellers are generally entertaining. I can also intimate to him, perhaps with more propriety than you can, how impossible it would be for me to spare you. On the whole, my dear, I think you have acted with discernment. You don't age well, Frances, and doubtless Arnold will placidly acquiesce in my decision. By all means have him here."

"Only I think it right to mention to you, father;" here Frances stood up and laid her long, slender white hand with a certain nervous yet imperative gesture on the table. "I think it right to mention that if after seeing me Philip still wishes to make me his wife, I shall accept him."

"My dear!" Squire Kane started. Then a satisfied smile played over his face. "You say this as a sort of bravado, my dear. But we really need not discuss this theme; it positively wearies me. Have you yet made up your mind, Frances, what room Ellen's dear child is to occupy?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE day on which Ellen Danvers arrived at the Firs was long remembered, all over the place, as the hottest which had been known in that part of the country for many a long year. It was the first week of July, and the sun blazed fiercely and relentlessly—not the faintest little zephyr of a breeze stirred the air—in the middle of the day, the birds altogether ceased singing, and the Firs, lying in its sheltered valley, was hushed into a hot, slumberous quiet, during which not a sound of any sort was audible.

Even the squire preferred a chair in the south parlour, which was never a cool room, and into which the sun poured, to venturing abroad; even he shuddered at the thought of the south walk to-day. He was not particularly hot—he was too old for that—but the great heat made him feel languid, and presently he closed his eyes and fell into a doze.

Frances, who in the whole course of her busy life never found a moment for occasional dozes, peeped into the room, smiled with satisfaction when she saw him, tripped lightly across the floor to steal a pillow comfortably under his white head, arranged the window curtains so as to shade his eyes, and then ran up-stairs with that swift and wonderfully light movement which was habitual to her. She had a great deal to do, and she was not a person who was ever much affected by the rise or fall of the temperature. First of all, she paid a visit

to a charming little room over the porch. It had lattice windows, which opened like doors, and all round the sill, and up the sides, and over the top of the window, monthly roses and jasmine, wisteria and magnolia, climbed. A thrush had built its nest in the honeysuckle over the porch window, and there was a faint sweet twittering sound heard there now, mingled with the perfume of the roses and jasmine. The room inside was all white, but daintily relieved here and there with touches of pale blue, in the shape of bows and drapery. The room was small, but the whole effect was light, cool, pure. The pretty bed looked like a nest, and the room, with its quaint and lovely window, somewhat resembled a bower.

Frances looked round it with pride, gave one or two finishing touches to the flowers which stood in pale-blue vases on the dressing-table, then turned away with a smile on her lips. There was another room just beyond, known in the house as the guest-chamber proper. It was much more stately and cold, and was furnished with very old dark mahogany; but it, too, had a lovely view over the peaceful homestead, and Frances's eyes brightened as she reflected how she and Ellen would transform the room with heaps of flowers, and make it gay and lovely for a much-honoured guest.

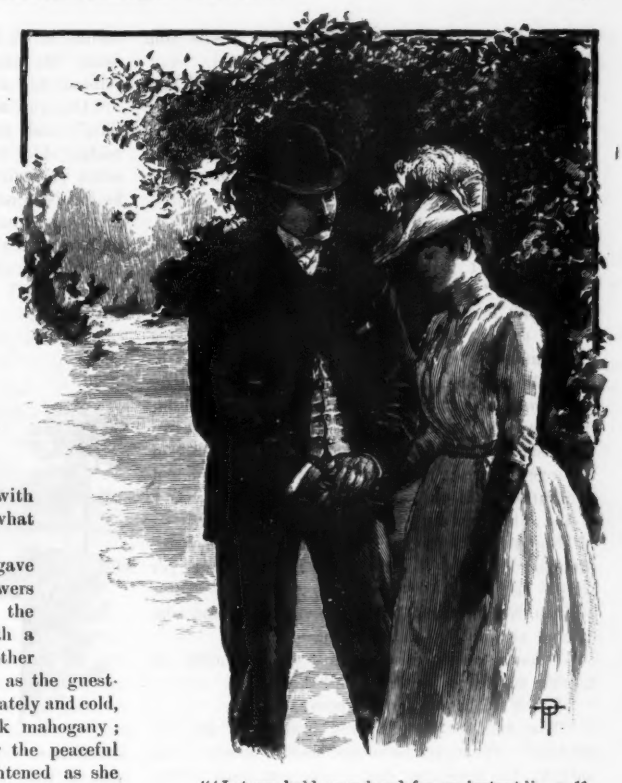
She looked at her watch, uttered a hurried exclamation, fled to her own rather insignificant little apartment, and five minutes later ran down-stairs, looking very fresh, and girlish, and pretty, in a white summer dress. She took an umbrella from the stand in the hall, opened it to protect her head, and walked fast up the winding avenue towards the Lodge gates.

"I hear some wheels, Miss Frances," said Watkins' old wife, hobbling out of the house. "Eh, but it is a hot day; we'll have thunder afore night, I guess. Eh, Miss Frances, but you do look well, surely."

"I feel it," said Frances, with a very bright smile. "Ah, there's my little cousin—poor child! how hot she must be.—Well, Fluff, so here you are, back with your old Fanny again!"

There was a cry—half of rapture, half of pain—from a very small person in the lumbering old trap. The horse was drawn up with a jerk, and a girl, with very little of the woman about her, for she was still all curls, and curves, and childlike roundness, sprang lightly out of the trap, and put her arms round Frances's neck.

"Oh, Fan, I am glad to see you again! Here I am back just the same as ever; I haven't grown a bit, and I'm as much a child as ever. How is your father? I was always so fond of him. Is he as faddy as of old?—That's right; my mission in life is to knock fads out of people. Frances, dear, why do you look at me in that perplexed way? Oh, I suppose because I'm in white. But I couldn't wear black on a day like this, as it wouldn't make mother any happier to know that every breath I drew was a torture. There, we won't talk of it. I have a black sash in my pocket; it's all crumpled, but I'll tie it on, if you'll help me. Frances dear, you never did think, did you, that trouble would come to me? but it did. Fancy Fluff and trouble spoken of in the same breath; it's like putting a weight of care on a butterfly; it isn't fair—you don't think it fair, do you, Fan?"



"'Let me hold your hand for an instant.'"—*p.* 11.

The blue eyes were full of tears, the rosy baby lips pouted sorrowfully.

"We won't talk of it now, at any rate, darling," said Frances, stooping and kissing the little creature with much affection.

Ellen brightened instantly.

"Of course we won't. It's delicious coming here; how wise it was of mother to send me! I shall love being with you more than anything. Why, Frances,

you don't look a day older than when I saw you last."

"My father says," returned Frances, "that I age very quickly."

"But you don't, and I'll tell him so. Oh, no, he's not going to say those rude, unpleasant things when I'm by. How old are you, Fan, really? I forget."

"I am twenty-eight, dear."

"Are you?"

Fluff's blue eyes opened very wide.

"You don't look old, at any rate," she said presently. "And I should judge from your face you didn't feel it."

The ancient cab, which contained Ellen's boxes and numerous small possessions, trundled slowly down the avenue; the girls followed it arm-in-arm. They made a pretty picture—both faces were bright, both pairs of eyes sparkled, their white dresses touched, and the dark, earnest, and sweet eyes of the one were many times turned with unfeigned admiration to the bewitchingly round and baby face of the other.

"She has the innocent eyes of a child of two," thought Frances. "Poor little Fluff! And yet sorrow has touched even her."

Then her pleasant thoughts vanished, and she uttered an annoyed exclamation.

"What does Mr. Spens want? Why should he trouble my father to-day of all days?"

"What is the matter, Frances?"

"That man in the gig," said Frances. "Do you see him? Whenever he comes, there is worry; it is unlucky his appearing just when you come to us, Fluff. But never mind; why should I worry you? Let us come into the house."

At dinner that day Frances incidentally asked her father what Mr. Spens wanted.

"All the accounts are perfectly straight," she said. "What did he come about? and he stayed for some time."

The slow blood rose into the old squire's face.

"Business," he said; "a little private matter for my own ear. I like Spens; he is a capital fellow, a thorough man of business, with no humbug about him. By the way, Frances, he does not approve of our selling the fruit, and he thinks we ought to make more of the ribbon border. He says we have only got the common yellow calceolarias—he does not see a single one of the choicer kinds."

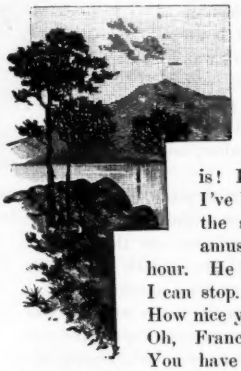
"Indeed!" said Frances. She could not help a little icy tone coming into her voice.—"Fluff, won't you have some cream with your strawberries?—I did not know, father, that Mr. Spens had anything to say of our garden."

"Only an opinion, my dear, and kindly meant.—Now, Fluff" (the squire turned indulgently to his little favourite), "do you think Frances ought to take unjust prejudices?"

"But she doesn't," said Fluff. "She judges by instinct, and so do I. Instinct told her to dislike Mr. Spens's back as he sat in his gig, and so do I dislike it. I hate those round fat backs and short necks like his, and I hate of all things that little self-satisfied air."

"Oh, you may hate in that kind of way if you like," said the squire. "Hatred from a little midget like you is very different from Frances's sober prejudice. Besides, she knows Mr. Spens; he has been our excellent man of business for years. But come, Fluff, I am not going to talk over weighty matters with you. Have you brought your guitar? If so, we'll go into the south parlour and have some music."

CHAPTER V.



"ONE, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—good!—nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen—excellent! Oh, how out of breath I am, and how hot it is! Is that you, Frances? See, I've been skipping just before the south parlour window to amuse the squire for the last hour. He has gone to sleep now, so I can stop. Where are you going? How nice you look! Grey suits you. Oh, Frances, what extravagance! You have retrimmed that pretty shady hat! But it does look well. Now where are you off to?"

"I thought I would walk up the road a little way," said Frances. Her manner was not quite so calm and assured as usual. "Our old friend Philip Arnold is coming to-night, you know, and I thought I would like to meet him."

"May I come with you? I know I'm in a mess, but what matter? He's the man about whom all the fuss is made, isn't he?"

Frances blushed.

"What do you mean, dear?" she asked.

"Oh, don't I know? I heard you giving directions about his room, and didn't I see you walking round and round the garden for nearly two hours to-day choosing all the sweetest things—moss-roses, and sweetbriar, and sprays of clematis? Of course there's a fuss made about him, though nothing is said. I know what I shall find him—— There, I'm not going to say it—I would not vex you for worlds, Fan dear."

Frances smiled.

"I must start now, dear," she said, "or he will have reached the house before I leave it. Do you want to come with me, Fluff? You may if you like."

"No, I won't. I'm ever so tired, and people who are fussed about are dreadfully uninteresting. Do start for your walk, Frances, or you won't be in time to welcome your hero."

Frances started off at once. She was amused at Fluff's words. "It is impossible for the little creature to guess anything," she said to herself; "that would never do. Philip should be quite unbiassed. It would be most unfair for him to come here as anything but a perfectly free man. Ten years ago he said he loved me, but am I the same Frances? I am older; father says I am old for twenty-eight—then I was eighteen. Eighteen is a beautiful age—a careless and yet a grave age. Girls are so full of desires then, life stretches before them like a brilliant line of light. Everything is possible; they are not really at the top of the hill, and they feel so fresh and buoyant that it is a pleasure to climb. There is a feeling of morning in the air. At eighteen it is a good thing to be alive. Now, at eight-and-twenty, one has learned to take life hard; a girl is old then, and yet not old enough. She is apt to be over-worried; I used to be, but not since his letter came, and to-night I think I am back at eighteen. I hope he wont find me much altered. I hope this dress suits me. It would be awful now, when the cup is almost at my lips, if anything dashed it away; but, no! God has been very good to me, and I will have faith in Him."

All this time Frances was walking uphill. She had now reached the summit of a long incline, and, looking ahead of her, saw a dusty traveller walking quickly with the free-and-easy stride of a man who is accustomed to all kinds of athletic exercises.

"That is Philip," said Frances. Her heart beat almost to suffocation; she stood still for a moment, then walked on again more slowly, for her joy made her timid.

The stranger came on. As he approached he took off his hat, revealing a very tanned face and light short hair; his well-opened eyes were blue; he had a rather drooping moustache, otherwise his face was clean shaven. If ten years make a difference in a woman, they often effect a greater change in a man. When Arnold last saw Frances he was twenty-two; he was very slight then, his moustache was little more than visible, and his complexion was too fair. Now he was bronzed and broadened. When he came up to Frances and took her hand, she knew that not only she herself, but all her little world, would acknowledge her lover to be a very handsome man.

"Is that really you, Frances?" he began.

His voice was thoroughly manly, and gave the girl who had longed for him for ten years an additional thrill of satisfaction.

"Is that really you? Let me hold your hand for an instant; Frances, you are changed."

"Older, you mean, Philip."

She was blushing and trembling—she could not hide this first emotion.

He looked very steadily into her face, then gently withdrew his hand.

"Age has nothing to do with it," he said. "You are changed, and yet there is some of the old Frances left. In the old days you had a petulant tone when people said things which did not quite suit you; I hope—I trust—it has not gone. I am not perfect, and I don't like perfection. Yes, I see it is still there. Frances, it is good to come back to the old country, and to you."

"You got my letter, Philip?"

"Of course; I answered it. Were you not expecting me this evening?"

"Yes; I came out here on purpose to meet you. What I should have said, Philip, was to ask you if you agreed to my proposal."

"And what was that?"

"That we should renew our acquaintance, but, for the present, both be free."

Arnold stopped in his walk, and again looked earnestly at the slight girl by his side. Her whole face was eloquent—her eyes were bright with suppressed feeling, but her words were measured and cold. Arnold was not a bad reader of character. Inwardly, he smiled. "Frances was a pretty girl," he said to himself; "but I never imagined she would grow into such a beautiful woman."

Aloud, he made a quiet reply—

"We will discuss this matter to-morrow, Frances. Now tell me about your father. I was greatly distressed to see by your letter that your mother is dead."

"She died eight years ago, Philip. I am accustomed to the world without her now; at first it was a terrible place to me. Here we are, in the old avenue again. Do you remember it? Let us get under the shade of the elms.—Oh, Fluff, you quite startled me!"

Fluff, all in white—she was never seen in any other dress, unless an occasional black ribbon was introduced for the sake of propriety—came panting up the avenue. Her face was flushed, her lips parted, her words came out fast and eagerly—

"Quick, Frances! quick! The squire is ill! I tried to awake him, and I couldn't. Oh, he looks so dreadful!"

"Take care of Philip, and I will go to him," said Frances. "Don't be frightened, Fluff; my father often sleeps heavily.—Philip, let me introduce my little cousin, Ellen Danvers.—Now, Nelly, be on your best behaviour, for Philip is an old friend, and a person of importance."

"But we had better come back to the house with you, Frances," said Arnold. "Your father may be really ill. Miss—Miss Danvers seems alarmed."

"But I am not," said Frances, smiling first at Philip and then at her little cousin. "Fluff—we call this child Fluff as a pet name—does not know my father as I do. He often sleeps heavily, and when he does his face gets red, and he looks strange. I know what to do with him. Please don't come in, either of you, for half an hour. Supper will be ready then."

She turned away, walking rapidly, and a bend in the avenue soon hid her from view.

Little Ellen had not yet quite recovered her

breath. She stood holding her hand to her side, and slightly panting.

"You seem frightened," said Arnold kindly.

"It is not that," she replied. Her breath came quicker, almost in gasps. Suddenly she burst into tears.

"It's all so dreadful," she said.

"What do you mean?" said Arnold.

To his knowledge he had never seen a girl cry in his life. He had come across very few girls while in Australia. One or two women he had met, but they were not particularly worthy specimens of their sex; he had not admired them, and had long ago come to the conclusion that the only perfect, sweet, and fair girl in existence was Frances Kane. When he saw Fluff's tears he discovered that he was mistaken—other women were sweet and gracious, other girls were lovable.

"Do tell me what is the matter," he said, in a tone of deep sympathy; for these fast-flowing tears alarmed him.

"I'm not fit for trouble," said Fluff. "I'm afraid of trouble, that's it. I'm really like the butterflies—I die if there's a cloud. It is not long since I lost my mother, and—now, now—— I know the squire is much more ill than Frances thinks. Oh, I know it. What shall I do if the squire really gets very ill—if he—he dies? Oh, I'm so awfully afraid of death."

Her cheeks paled visibly, her large, wide-open blue eyes dilated; she was acting no part—her terror and distress were real. A kind of instinct told Arnold what to say to her.

"You are standing under these great shady trees," he said. "Come out into the sunshine. You are young and apprehensive. Frances is much more likely to know the truth about Squire Kane than you are. She is not alarmed; you must not be, unless there is really cause. Now is not this better? What a lovely rose! Do you know, I have not seen this old-fashioned kind of cabbage-rose for over ten years!"

"Then I will pick one for you," said Fluff. She took out a scrap of cambric, dried her eyes like magic, and began to flit about the garden, humming a light air under her breath. Her dress was of an old-fashioned sort of book-muslin—it was made full and billowy; her figure was round and yet lithe, her hair was a mass of frizzy soft rings, and when the dimples played in her cheeks, and the laughter came back to her intensely blue eyes, Arnold could not help saying—and there was admiration in his voice and gaze—

"What fairy godmother named you so appropriately?"

"What do you mean? My name is Ellen."

"Frances called you Fluff; Thistledown would be as admirably appropriate."

While he spoke Fluff was handing him a rose. He took it and placed it in his button-hole. He was not very skilful in arranging it, and she stood on tiptoe to help him. Just then Frances came out of the house; the sun was shining full on the pair; Fluff was laughing, Arnold was making a complimentary speech. Frances did not know why a shadow seemed to fall between her and the sunshine which surrounded them. She walked slowly across the grass to meet them. Her light dress was a little long, and it trailed after her. She had put a bunch of Scotch roses into her belt. Her step grew slower and heavier as she walked across the smoothly kept lawn, but her voice was just as calm and clear as usual as she said gently—

"Supper is quite ready. You must be so tired and hungry, Philip."

"Not at all," he said, leaving Fluff and coming up to her side. "This garden rests me. To be back here again is perfectly delightful. To appreciate an English garden and English life, and—and English ladies;" here his eyes fell for a brief moment on Fluff, "one must have lived for ten years in the backwoods of Australia. How is your father, Frances? I trust Miss Danvers had no real cause for alarm?"

"Oh, no; Ellen is a fanciful little creature. He did sleep rather heavily. I think it was the heat; but he is all right now, and waiting to welcome you in the supper-room. Won't you let me show you the way to your room? You would like to wash your hands before eating."

Frances and Arnold walked slowly in the direction of the house. Fluff had left them; she was engaged in an eager game of play with an overgrown and unwieldy pup, and a Persian kitten. Arnold had observed with some surprise that she had forgotten even to inquire for Mr. Kane.

CHAPTER VI.

ON the morning after Arnold's arrival the squire called his daughter into the south parlour.

"My love," he said, "I want a word with you."

As a rule Frances was very willing to have words with her father: she was always patient and gentle and sweet with him, but she would have been more than human if she had not cast some wistful glances into the garden where Philip was waiting for her. He and she also had something to talk about that morning, and why did Fluff go out, and play those bewitching airs softly to herself on the guitar? And why did she sing in that wild-bird voice of hers? and why did Philip pause now and then in his walk, as though he was listening?—which indeed he was, for it would be difficult for anyone to shut their ears to such light and harmonious sounds. Frances hated herself for feeling jealous: no, of course she was not jealous; she could not stoop to anything so mean. Poor darling little Fluff! and Philip her true lover, who had remained constant to her for ten long years.

With a smile on her lips, and the old look of patience in her steady eyes, she turned her back to the window and prepared to listen to what the squire had to say.

"The fact is, Frances——" he began. "Sit down, my dear, sit down ; I hate to have people standing, it fidgets me so. Oh ! you want to be out with that young man ; well, Fluff will amuse him—dear little thing, Fluff—most entertaining. Has a way of soothing a man's nerves, which few women possess. You my dear, have often a most irritating way with you : not that I complain—we all have our faults. You inherit this intense over-wrought sort of manner from your mother, Frances."

Frances, who was standing absolutely quiet and still again, smiled slightly.

"You had something to talk to me about," she said, in her gentlest of voice.

"To be sure I had. I can tell you I have my worries—wonder I'm alive, and since your mother died never a bit of sympathy do I get from mortal. There, read that letter from Spens, and see what you make of it. Impudent, uncalled-for ? I should think so, but I really do wonder what these lawyers are coming to. Soon there'll be no distinctions between man and man anywhere, when a beggarly country lawyer dares to write to a gentleman like myself in that strain. But read the letter, Frances ; you'll have to see Spens this afternoon. *I'm* not equal to it."

"Let me see what Mr. Spens says," answered Frances.

She took the lawyer's letter from the squire's shaking old fingers, and opened it. Then her face became very pale, and as her eyes glanced rapidly over the contents, she could not help uttering a stifled exclamation.



"Fluff fingered her guitar lovingly."—*p.* 15.

"Yes, no wonder you're in a rage," said the squire. "The impudence of that letter beats everything."

"But what does Mr. Spens mean ?" said Frances. "He says here—unless you can pay the £6,000 owing within three months, his client has given him instructions to sell the Firs. What does he mean, father ? I never knew that we owed a penny. Oh, this is awful !"

"And how do you suppose we have lived ?" said the squire, who was feeling all that undue sense of

irritation which guilty people know so well. "How have we had our bread and butter? How has the house been kept up? How have the wages been met? I suppose you thought that that garden of yours—those vegetables and the fruit—have kept everything going? That's all a woman knows. Besides, I've been unlucky—two speculations have failed—every penny I put in lost in them. Now what's the matter, Frances? You have a very unpleasant manner of staring."

"There was my mother's money," said Frances, who was struggling hard to keep herself calm. "That was always supposed to bring in something over £200 a year. I thought—I imagined—that with the help I was able to give from the garden and the poultry yard that we—we lived within our means."

Her lips trembled slightly as she spoke. Fluff was playing "Sweethearts" on her guitar, and Arnold was leaning with his arms folded against the trunk of a wide-spreading oak tree. Was he listening to Fluff, or waiting for Frances? She felt like a person struggling through a horrible nightmare.

"I thought we lived within our means," she said faintly.

"Just like you—women are always imagining things. We have no means to live on; your mother's money has long vanished—it was lost in that silver mine in Peru. And the greater part of the £6,000 lent by Spens has one way or another pretty nearly shared the same fate. I've been a very unlucky man, Frances, and if your mother were here, she'd pity me. I've had no one to sympathise with me since her death."

"I do, father," said his daughter.

She went up and put her arms round his old neck.

"It was a shock, and I felt half stunned. But I fully sympathise."

"Not that I'm going to sell the Firs," said the squire, not returning Frances's embrace, but allowing her to take his limp hand within her own. "No, no; I've no idea of that. Spens and his clients, whoever they are, must wait for the money, and that's what you've got to see him about, Frances. Come now, you must make the best terms you can with Spens—a woman can do what she likes with a man when she knows how to manage."

"But what am I to say, father?"

"Say? Why, that's your look-out. Never heard of a woman yet who couldn't find words. Say? Anything in the world you please, provided you give him clearly to understand that come what may I will *not* sell the Firs."

Frances stood still for two whole minutes. During this time she was thinking deeply—so deeply that she forgot the man who was waiting outside—she forgot everything but the great and terrible fact that, notwithstanding all her care and all her toil, beggary was staring them in the face.

"I will see Mr. Spens," she said at last, slowly; "it is not likely that I shall be able to do much. If you have mortgaged the Firs to these clients of Mr. Spens, they will most probably require to sell, in order to realise their money; but I will see him, and let you know the result."

"You had better order the gig, then, and go now; he is sure to be in at this hour. Oh, you want to talk to the man that you fancy is in love with you; but lovers can wait, and business can't. Understand, clearly once for all, Frances, that if the Firs is sold, I die."

"Dear father," said Frances—again she took his unwilling hand in hers—"do you suppose I want the Firs to be sold? Don't I love every stone of the old place, and every flower that grows here? If words can save it, they won't be wanting on my part. But *you* know better than I do that I am absolutely powerless in the matter."

She went out of the room, and the squire sat with the sun shining full on him, and grumbled. What was a blow to Frances, a blow which half stunned her in its suddenness and unexpectedness, had come gradually to the squire. For years past he knew that while his daughter was doing her utmost to make two ends meet—was toiling early and late to bring in a little money to help the slender household purse—she was only postponing an evil day which could never be averted. From the first, Squire Kane in his own small way had been a speculator—never at any time had he been a lucky one, and now he reaped the results.

After a time he pottered to his feet, and strolled out into the garden. Frances was nowhere visible, but Arnold and Ellen were standing under a shady tree, holding an animated conversation together.

"Here comes the squire," said Fluff, in a tone of delight. She flew to his side, put her hand through his arm, and looked coaxingly and lovingly into his face.

"I'm so glad you are not asleep," she said. "I don't like you when you fall asleep and get so red in the face; you frightened me last night—I was terrified—I cried. Didn't I, Mr. Arnold?"

"Yes," replied Arnold, "you seemed a good deal alarmed. Do you happen to know where your daughter is, Mr. Kane?"

"Yes; she is going into Martinstown on business for me.—Ah, yes, Fluff, you always were a sympathising little woman." Here the squire patted the dimpled hand; he was not interested in Philip Arnold's inquiries.

"If Frances is going to Martinstown, perhaps she will let me accompany her," said Arnold. "I will go and look for her."

He did not wait for the squire's mumbling reply, but started off quickly on his quest.

"Frances does want the gift of sympathy," said the squire, once more addressing himself with affection to Ellen. "Do you know, Fluff, that I am in considerable difficulty; in short, that I am going through just now a terrible trouble—oh, nothing

that you can assist me in, dear. Still, one does want a little sympathy, and poor dear Frances, in that particular, is sadly, painfully deficient."

"Are you really in great trouble?" said Fluff. She raised her eyes with a look of alarm.

"Oh, I am dreadfully sorry! Shall I play for you, shall I sing something? Let me bring this arm-chair out here by this pear-tree; I 'll get my guitar; I 'll sing you anything you like—'Robin Adair,' or 'Auld Robin Gray,' or 'A Man's a Man;' you know how very fond you are of Burns."

"You are a good little girl," said the squire. "Place the arm-chair just at that angle, my love. Ah, that's good! I get the full power of the sun here. Somehow it seems to me, Fluff, that the summers are not half as warm as they used to be. Now play 'Bonnie Dundee'—it will be a treat to hear you."

Fluff fingered her guitar lovingly. Then she looked up into the wizened discontented face of the old man opposite to her.

"Play," said the squire. "Why don't you begin?"

"Only that I'm thinking," said the spoilt child, tapping her foot, petulantly. "Squire, I can't help saying it—I don't think you are quite fair to Frances."

"Eh, what?" said Squire Kane, in a voice of astonishment. "Highty-tighty, what next! Go on with your playing, miss."

"No, I won't! It isn't right of you to say she's not sympathetic."

"Not right of me! What next, I wonder! Let me tell you, Fluff, that although you're a charming little chit, you are a very saucy one."

"I don't care whether I'm saucy or not. You ought not to be unfair to Frances."

These rebellious speeches absolutely made the squire sit upright in his chair.

"What do you know about it?" he queried.

"Because she *is* sympathetic; she has the dearest, tenderest, most unselfish heart in the world. Oh, she's a darling! I love her."

"Go on with your playing, Fluff," said the squire.

Two bright spots of surprise and anger burnt on his cheeks, but there was also a reflective look on his face.

Fluff's eyes blazed. Her fair cheeks crimsoned, and she tried to thunder out a spirited battle march on her poor little guitar.

CHAPTER VII.

ARNOLD went quickly round to the back of the house. Although he had been absent for ten years, he still remembered the ways of the old place, and knew where to find the almost empty stables, and the coach-houses which no longer held conveyances.

"This place requires about £4,000 a year to keep it up properly," murmured Arnold to himself, "and from the look of things I should say these dear good folks had not as many hundreds. I wonder if Frances will have me—I wonder if——" here he paused.

His heart was full of Frances this morning, but it was also full of a strange kind of peace and thanksgiving. He was not greatly anxious: he had a curious sensation of being rested all over. The fact was, he had gone through the most hairbreadth escapes, the most thrilling adventures, during the last ten years. He had escaped alive, at the most fearful odds. He had known hunger and thirst; he had been many, many times face to face with death. For more than half the time of his exile things had gone against him, and hard indeed had been his lot; then the tide had slowly turned, and after five more years Philip Arnold had been able to return to his native land, and had felt that it was allowed to him to think with hope of the girl he had always loved.

He was in the same house with Frances now. She had not yet promised to be his, but he did not feel anxious. The quiet of the English home, the sweet, old-fashioned peace of the garden, the shade under the trees, the songs of the old-fashioned home birds the scent of the old-fashioned home flowers, and the bright eyes and gentle voice of the prettiest little English girl he had ever seen, had a mesmerising effect upon him. He wanted Frances; Frances was his one and only love; but he felt no particular desire to hurry on matters, or to force an answer from her until she was ready to give it.

He strolled into the stable yard, where Pete, the under-gardener, message-boy, and general factotum, a person whom Watkins, the chief manager, much bullied, was harnessing a shaggy little pony to a very shaky-looking market cart. The cart wanted painting, the pony grooming, and the harness undoubtedly much mending.

"What are you doing, Pete?" said Arnold.

"This yer is for Miss Frances," drawled the lad. "She's going into Martinstown, and I 'm gwine with her to hold the pony."

"No, you're not," said Arnold. "I can perform that office. Go and tell her that I 'm ready when she is."

Pete sauntered away, but before he reached the back entrance to the house Frances came out. She walked slowly, and when she saw Philip her face did not light up. He was startled, not at an obvious, but an indefinable change in her. He could not quite tell where it lay, only he suddenly knew that she was quite eight-and-twenty, that there were hard lines round the mouth which at eighteen had been very curved and beautiful. He wished she would wear the pretty hat she had on last night; he did not think that the one she had on was particularly becoming. Still, she was his Frances, the girl whose face had always risen before him during the five years of horror through which he had lived,



"'I wish this tea might last for ever.'"—p. 21.

and during the five years of hope which had succeeded them.

He came forward and helped her to get into the little old-fashioned market cart. Then, as she gathered up the reins, and the pony was moving off, he prepared to vault into the vacant seat by her side. She laid her hand on it, however, and turned to him a very sad and entreating face.

"I think you had better not, Philip," she said. "It will be very hot in Martinstown to-day. I am obliged to go on a piece of business for my father. I am going to see Mr. Spens, our lawyer, and I may be with him for some time. It would be stupid for you to wait outside with the pony. Pete had better come with me. Go back to the shade of the garden, Philip. I hear Fluff now playing her guitar."

"I am going with you," said Arnold. "Forgive me, Frances, but you are talking nonsense. I came here to be with you, and do you suppose I mind a little extra sunshine?"

"But I am a rather dull companion to-day," she said, still objecting. "I am very much obliged to you—you are very kind, but I really have nothing to talk about. I am worried about a bit of business of father's. It is very good of you, Philip, but I would really rather you did not come in to Martinstown."

"If that is so, of course it makes a difference," said Arnold. He looked hurt. "I won't bother you," he said. "Come back quickly. I suppose we can have a talk after dinner?"

"Perhaps so; I can't say. I am very much worried about a piece of business of my father's."

"Pete, take your place behind your mistress," said Arnold.

He raised his hat, and there was a flush on his face as Frances drove down the shady lane.

"I have offended him," she said to herself; "I suppose I meant to. I don't see how I can have anything to say to him now, he can't marry a beggar; and besides, I must somehow or other support my father. Yes, it's at an end—the brightest of dreams. The cup was almost at my lips, and I did not think God would allow it to be dashed away so quickly. I must manage somehow to make Philip cease to care for me, but I think I am the most miserable woman in the world."

Frances never forgot that long, hot drive into Martinstown. She reached the lawyer's house a little before noon, and the heat was then so great that when she found herself in his office she nearly fainted.

"You look really ill, Miss Kane," said the man of

business, inwardly commenting under his breath on how very rapidly Frances was aging. "Oh, you have come from your father; yes, I was afraid that letter would be a blow to him; still, I see no way out of it—I really don't!"

"I have never liked you much, Mr. Spens," said Frances Kane. "I have mistrusted you, and been afraid of you; but I will reverse all my former opinions—all—now, if you will only tell me the exact truth with regard to my father's affairs."

The lawyer smiled and bowed.

"Thank you for your candour," he remarked. "In such a case as yours the plain truth is best, although it is hardly palatable. Your father is an absolutely ruined man. He cannot possibly repay the six thousand pounds which he has borrowed. He obtained the money from my client by mortgaging the Firs to him. Now my client's distinct instructions are to sell, and realise what we can. The property has gone much to seed. I doubt if we shall get back what was borrowed; at any rate, land, house, and furniture, all must go."

"Thank you—you have indeed spoken plainly," said Frances. "One question more: when must you sell?"

"In three months from now. Let me see: this is July. The sale will take place early in October."

Frances had been sitting. She now rose to her feet.

"And there is really no way out of it?" she said, lingering for a moment.

"None; unless your father can refund the six thousand pounds."

"He told me, Mr. Spens, that if the Firs is sold he will certainly die. He is an old man, and feeble now. I am almost sure that he speaks the truth when he says such a blow will kill him."

"Ah! painful, very," said the lawyer. "These untoward misfortunes generally accompany rash speculation. Still, I fear—I greatly fear—that this apprehension, if likely to be realised, will not affect my client's resolution."

"Would it," said Frances, "would it be possible to induce your client to defer the sale until after my father's death? Indeed—indeed—indeed, I speak the truth when I say I do not think he will have long to wait for his money. Could he be induced to wait, Mr. Spens, if the matter were put to him very forcibly?"

"I am sure he could not be induced, Miss Kane; unless, indeed, you could manage to pay him the interest at five per cent. on his six thousand pounds. That is, three hundred a year."

"And then?" Frances's dark eyes brightened.

"I would ask him the question, but such a thing is surely impossible."

"May I have a week to think it over? I will come to you with my decision this day week."

"Well, well, I say nothing one way or another. You can't do impossibilities, Miss Kane. But a week's delay affects no one, and I need not go on drawing up the particulars of sale until I hear from you again."

Frances bowed, and left the office without even shaking hands with Mr. Spens.

"She's a proud woman," said the lawyer to himself, as he watched her driving away. "She looks well, too, when her eyes flash, and she puts on that haughty air. Odd that she should be so fond of that cantankerous old father. I wonder if the report is true which I heard of an Australian lover turning up for her. Well, there are worse-looking women than Frances Kane. I thought her very much aged when she first came into the office, but when she told me that she didn't much like me, she looked handsome and young enough."

Instead of driving home, Frances turned the pony's head in the direction of a long shady road which led in a westerly direction away from Martinstown. She drove rapidly for about half an hour under the trees. Then she turned to the silent Pete.

"Pete, you can go back now to the Firs, and please tell your master and Miss Danvers that I shall not be home until late this evening. See, I will send this note to the squire."

She tore a piece of paper out of her pocket-book, and scribbled a few lines hastily.

"Dear Father,—I have seen Mr. Spens. Don't despair. I am doing my best for you.

"Frances."

"I shall be back before nightfall," said Frances, giving the note to the lad. "Drive home quickly, Pete. See that Bob has a feed of oats, and a groom-down after his journey. I shall be home at latest by nightfall."

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR nearly another quarter of a mile Frances walked quickly under the friendly elm-trees. Then she came to some massive and beautifully wrought iron gates, and paused for an instant, pressing her hand to her brow.

"Shall I go on?" she said to herself. "It means giving up Philip—it means deliberately crushing a very bright hope."

She remained quite still for several seconds longer. Her lips, which were white and tired-looking, moved silently. She raised her eyes, and looked full into the blue deep of the sky; then she turned in at one of the gates, and walked up an exquisitely kept carriage-drive.

Some ladies in a carriage bowled past her; the ladies bent forward, bowed, and smiled.

"Why, that is Frances Kane," they said one to another. "How good of her to call—and this is one of Aunt Lucilla's bad days. If she will consent to see Frances it will do her good."

Frances walked on. The avenue was considerably over a mile in length. Presently she came to smaller gates, which were flung open. She now

found herself walking between velvety greenswards interspersed with beds filled with all the bright flowers of the season. Not a leaf was out of place—not an untidy spray was to be seen anywhere; the garden was the perfection of what money and an able gardener could achieve.

The avenue was a winding one, and a sudden bend brought Frances in full view of a large, square, massive-looking house—a house which contained many rooms, and was evidently of modern date. Frances mounted the steps which led to the wide front entrance, touched an electric bell, and waited until a footman in livery answered her summons.

"Is Mrs. Passmore at home?"

"I will inquire, madam. Will you step this way?"

Frances was shown into a cool, beautifully furnished morning-room.

"What name, madam?"

"Miss Kane, from the Firs. Please tell Mrs. Passmore that I will not detain her long."

The man bowed, and closing the door softly after him, withdrew.

Her long walk, and all the excitement she had gone through, made Frances feel faint. It was past the hour for lunch at the Firs, and she had not eaten much at the early breakfast. She was not conscious, however, of hunger, but the delicious coolness of the room caused her to close her eyes gratefully—gave her a queer sensation of sinking away into nothing, and an odd desire, hardly felt before it had vanished, that this might really be the case, and so that she might escape the hard *rôle* of duty.

The rustling of a silk dress was heard in the passage—a quick light step approached, and a little lady most daintily attired, with a charming frank face, stepped briskly into the room.

"My dear Frances, this is delightful—how well—no, though, you are not looking exactly the thing, poor dear. So you have come to have lunch with me; how very, very nice of you! The others are all out, and I am quite alone."

"But I have come to see you on business, Carrie."

"After luncheon, then, dear. My head is swimming now, for I have been worrying over Aunt Lucilla's accounts. Ah, no, alas! this is not one of her good days. Come into the next room, Frances—if you have so little time to spare, you busy, busy creature, you can at least talk while we eat."

Mrs. Passmore slipped her hand affectionately through Frances's arm, and led her across the wide hall to another cool and small apartment where covers were already placed for two.

"I am very glad of some lunch, Carrie," said Frances. "I left home early this morning. I am not ashamed to say that I am both tired and hungry."

"Eat then, my love, eat—these are lamb cutlets; these peas are not to be compared with what you can produce at the Firs, but still they are eatable. Have a glass of this cool lemonade.—Oh, yes, we will help ourselves. You need not wait, Smithson."

The footman withdrew. Mrs. Passmore flitted about the table, waiting on her guest with a sort of loving tenderness. Then she seated herself close to Frances, pretended to eat a mouthful or two, and said suddenly—

"I know you are in trouble. And yet I thought—I hoped—that you would be bringing me good news before long. Is it true, Frances, that Philip Arnold is really alive after all, and has returned to England?"

"It is perfectly true, Carrie. At this moment Philip is at the Firs."

Mrs. Passmore opened her lips—her bright eyes travelled all over Frances' face.

"You don't look well," she said, after a long pause. "I am puzzled to account for your not looking well now."

"What you think is not going to happen, Carrie. Philip is not likely to make a long visit. He came yesterday; he may go again to-morrow or next day. We won't talk of it. Oh, yes, of course it is nice to think he is alive and well. Carrie, does your Aunt Lucilla still want a companion?"

Mrs. Passmore jumped from her seat—her eyes lit up; she laid her two dimpled, heavily ringed hands on Frances's shoulders.

"My dear, you can't mean it! You can't surely mean that you would come? You know what you are to auntie: you can do anything with her. Why, you would save her, Frances; you would save us all."

"I do think of accepting the post, if you will give it to me," said Frances.

"Give it to you? you darling! As if we have not been praying and longing for this for the last two years!"

"But, Carrie, I warn you that I only come because necessity presses me—and—and—I must make conditions—I must make extravagant demands."

"Anything, dearest. Is it a salary? Name anything you fancy. You know Aunt Lucilla is rolling in money. Indeed, we all have more than we know what to do with. Money can't buy everything, Frances. Ah, yes, I have proved that over and over again; but if it can buy *you*, it will for once have done us a good turn. What do you want, dear? Don't be afraid to name your price—a hundred a year? You shall have it with pleasure."

"Carrie, I know what you will think of me, but if I am never frank again I must be now. I don't come here to oblige you, or because I have a real, deep, anxious desire to help your aunt. I come—I come alone because of a pressing necessity; there is no other way out of it that I can see, therefore my demand must be extravagant. If I take the post of companion to your Aunt Lucilla, I shall want £300 a year."

Mrs. Passmore slightly started, and for the briefest instant a frown of disappointment and

annoyance knit her pretty brows. Then she glanced again at the worn face of the girl who sat opposite to her; the steadfast eyes looked down, the long, thin, beautifully-cut fingers trembled as Frances played idly with her fork and spoon.

"No one could call Frances Kane mercenary," she said to herself. "Poor dear, she has some trouble upon her. Certainly her demand is exorbitant; never before since the world was known did a companion receive such a salary. Still, where would one find a second Frances?"

"So be it, dear," she said aloud. "I admit that your terms are high, but in some ways your services are beyond purchase. No one ever did or ever will suit Aunt Lucilla as you do. Now, when will you come?"

"I am not quite sure yet, Carrie, that I can come at all. If I do it will probably be in a week from now. Yes, to-morrow week; if I come at all I will come then; and I will let you know certainly on this day week."

"My dear, you are a great puzzle to me; why can't you make up your mind now?"

"My own mind is made up, Carrie, absolutely and fully, but others have really to decide for me. I think the chances are that I shall have my way. Carrie dear, you are very good; I wish I could thank you more."

"No, don't thank me. When you come you will give as much as you get. Your post won't be a sinecure."

"Sinecures never fell in my way," said Frances. "May I see your aunt for a few minutes to-day?"

"Certainly, love—you know her room. You will find her very poorly and fractious this afternoon. Will you tell her that you are coming to live with her, Frances?"

"No; that would be cruel, for I may not be able to come after all. Still, I think I shall spend some time in doing my utmost to help you and yours, Carrie."

"God bless you, dear! Now run up to auntie. You will find me in the summer-house whenever you like to come down. I hope you will spend the afternoon with me, Frances, and have tea; I can send you home in the evening."

"You are very kind, Carrie, but I must not stay. I will say good-bye to you now, for I must go back to Martinstown for a few minutes early this afternoon. Good-bye, thank you. You are evidently a very real friend in need."

Frances kissed Mrs. Passmore, and then ran lightly up the broad and richly carpeted stairs. Her footsteps made no sound on the thick Axminster. She flitted past down a long gallery hung with portraits, presently stopped before a baize door, paused for a second, then opened it swiftly and went in.

She found herself in an ante-room, darkened and rendered cool with soft green silk drapery. The ante-room led to a large room beyond. She tapped at the door of the inside room, and an austere-looking woman dressed as a nurse opened it immediately. Her face lighted up when she saw Frances.

"Miss Kane, you're just the person of all others my mistress would like to see. Walk in, miss, please. Can you stay for half an hour? If so, I'll leave you."

"Yes, Jennings. I am sorry Mrs. Carnegie is so ill to-day."

Then she stepped across the carpeted floor, the door was closed behind her, and she found herself in the presence of a tall thin woman, who was lying full length on a sofa by the open window. Never was there a more peevish face than the invalid wore. Her brows were slightly drawn together, her lips had fretful curves; the pallor of great pain, of intense nervous suffering, dwelt on her brow. Frances went softly up to her.

"How do you do, Mrs. Carnegie?" she said, in her gentle voice.

The sound was so low and sweet that the invalid did not even start. A smile like magic chased the furrows from her face.

"Sit down, Frances, there's a dear child," she said. "Now, I have been wishing for you more than for anyone. I'm at my very worst to-day, dear. My poor back is so bad—oh, the nerves, dear child, the nerves! I really feel that I cannot speak a civil word to anyone, and Jennings is so awkward, painfully awkward—her very step jars me; and why will she wear those stiff-starched caps and aprons? But there, few understand those unfortunates who are martyrs to nerves."

"You have too much light on your eyes," said Frances.

She lowered the blind about an inch or two.

"Now tell me, have you been down-stairs to-day?"

"How can you ask me, my love. when I can't even crawl? Besides, I assure you, dear, dearest one"—here Mrs. Carnegie took Frances's hand and kissed it—"that they dislike having me. Freda and Alicia quite show their dislike in their manner. Carrie tries to smile and look friendly, but she is nothing better than a hypocrite. I can read through them all. They are only civil to me; they only put up with their poor old aunt because I am rich, and they enjoy my comfortable house. Ah! they none of them know what nerves are—the rack, the tear, to the poor system, that over-strained nerves can give. My darling, you understand, you pity me."

"I am always very sorry for you, Mrs. Carnegie, but I think when you are better you ought to exert yourself a little more, and you must not encourage morbid thoughts. Now shall I tell you what I did with that last five-pound note you gave me?"

"Ah, yes, love, that will be interesting. It is nice to feel that even such a useless thing as money can make some people happy. Is it really, seriously the case, Frances, that there are any creatures so

destitute in the world as not to know where to find a five-pound note?"

"There are thousands and thousands who don't even know where to find a shilling," replied Frances.

Mrs. Carnegie's faded blue eyes lighted up.

"How interesting," she said. "Why, it must make existence quite keen. Fancy being anxious about a shilling! I wish something would make life keen for me; but my nerves are in such a state that really everything that does not thrill me with torture, palls."

"I will tell you about the people who have to find their shillings," responded Frances.

She talked with animation for about a quarter of an hour, then kissed the nervous sufferer, and went away.

Half an hour's brisk walking brought her back to Martinstown. She reached the lawyer's house, and was fortunate in finding him within.

"Will you tell your client, Mr. Spens, that if he will hold over the sale of the Firs until after my father's death, I will engage to let him have five per cent. on his money? I have to-day accepted the post of companion to Mrs. Carnegie, of Arden. For this I am to have a salary of £300 a year."

"Bless me!" said the lawyer. "Such a sacrifice! Why! that woman can't keep even a servant about her. A heartless, selfish hypochondriac! even her nieces will scarcely stay in the house with her. I think she would get you cheap at a thousand a year, Miss Kane; but you must be joking."

"I am in earnest," responded Frances. "Please don't make it harder for me, Mr. Spens. I know what I am undertaking. Will you please tell your client that I can pay him his interest? If he refuses to accept it, I am as I was before; if he consents, I go to Arden. You will do me a great favour by letting me know his decision as soon as possible."

The lawyer bowed.

"I will do so," he said. Then he added, "I hope you will forgive me, Miss Kane, for saying that I think you are a very brave and unselfish woman, but I don't believe even *you* will stand Mrs. Carnegie for long."

"I think you are mistaken," responded Frances, gently. "I do it for the sake of £300 a year, to save the Firs for my father during his lifetime."

The lawyer thought he had seldom seen anything sadder than Frances's smile. It quite haunted him as he wrote to his client, urging him to accept her terms.

CHAPTER IX.

SQUIRE KANE had spent by no means an unhappy day. The misfortune, which came like a sudden crash upon Frances, he had been long prepared for. Only last week Mr. Spens had told him that he might expect some such letter as had been put into his hands that morning. He had been a little nervous while breaking his news to Frances: a little nervous and a little cross. But when once she was told, he was conscious of a feeling of relief; for all his hard words to her, he had unbounded faith in this clever managing daughter of his; she had got him out of other scrapes, and somehow, by hook or by crook, she would get him out of this.

Except for Fluff's rather hard words to him when he spoke to her about Frances, he had rather an agreeable day. He was obliged to exert himself a little, and the exertion did him good and made him less sleepy than usual. Both Fluff and Philip did their best to make matters pass agreeably for him, and when Frances at last reached home, in the cool of the evening, she found herself in the midst of a very cheerful domestic scene.

At this hour the squire was usually asleep in the south parlour; on this night he was out of doors. His circular cape, it is true, was over his shoulders, and Fluff had tucked a white shawl round his knees, but still he was sitting out of doors, cheering, laughing, and applauding while Arnold and Miss Danvers sang to him. Fluff had never looked more lovely. Her light gossamery white dress was even more cloudy than usual; a softer, richer pink mantled her rounded cheeks; her big blue eyes were lustrous, and out of her parted lips poured a melody as sweet as a nightingale's. Arnold was standing near her—he also was singing—and as Frances approached he did not see her, for his glance, full of admiration, was fixed upon Miss Danvers.

"Hullo! here we are, Frances!" called out the squire; "and a right jolly time we've all had. I'm out of doors, as you see; broken away from my leading-strings when you're absent; ah, ah! How late you are, child: but we didn't wait dinner. It doesn't agree with me, as you know, to be kept waiting for dinner."

"You look dreadfully tired, Frances," said Philip.

He dropped the sheet of music he was holding and ran to fetch a chair for her. He no longer looked at Ellen, for Frances's pallor and the strained look in her eyes filled him with apprehension.

"You don't look at all well," he repeated.

And he stood in front of her, shading her from the gaze of the others.

Frances closed her eyes for a second.

"It was a hot, long walk," she said then, somewhat faintly. And she looked up and smiled at him. It was the sweetest of smiles, but Arnold, too, felt, as well as the lawyer, that there was something unnatural and sad in it.

"I don't understand it," he said to himself. "There's some trouble on her; what can it be? I'm afraid it's a private matter, for the squire's right enough. Never saw the old boy looking jollier." Aloud he said, turning to Fluff, "Would it not be a good thing to get a cup of tea for Frances? —No?—now I insist. I mean you must let us wait on you, Frances: Miss Danvers and I will bring the tea out here. We absolutely forbid you to stir a step until you have taken it."

His "we" meant "I."

Frances was only too glad to lie back in the comfortable chair, and feel, if only for a few minutes, she might acknowledge him her master.

The squire, finding all this fuss about Frances wonderfully uncongenial, had retired into the house, and Arnold and Fluff served her daintily—Arnold very solicitous for her comfort, and Fluff very merry, and much enjoying her present office of waiting-maid.

"I wish this tea might last for ever," suddenly exclaimed Frances.

Her words were spoken with energy, and her dark eyes, as they glanced at Arnold, were full of fire.

It was not her way to speak in this fierce and spasmodic style, and the moment the little sentence dropped from her lips, she blushed.

Arnold looked at her inquiringly.

"Are you too tired to have a walk with me?" he said. "Not far: down there under the shade of the elm-trees. You need not be cruel, Frances. You can come with me as far as that."

Frances blushed still more vividly.

"I am really very tired," she answered. There was unwillingness in her tone.

Arnold gazed at her in surprise and perplexity.

"Perhaps," he said, suddenly, looking at Fluff, "perhaps, if you are quite too tired even to stir a few steps, Frances, Miss Danvers would not greatly mind leaving us alone here for a little."

Before she could reply, he went up to the young girl's side, and took her hand apologetically.

"You don't mind," he said. "I mean, you won't think me rude when I tell you that I have come all the way from Australia to see Frances."

"Rude? I am filled with delight," said Fluff.

Her eyes danced—she hummed the air of "Sweethearts" quite in an obtrusive manner as she ran into the house.

"Oh, squire," she said, running up to the old man, who had seated himself in his favourite chair in the parlour, "I have discovered such a lovely secret."

"Ah, what may that be, missy? By the way, Fluff, you will oblige me very much if you will call Frances here. This paraffin lamp has never been trimmed—if I light it, it will smell abominably; it is really careless of Frances to neglect my comforts in this way. Oblige me by calling her, Fluff; she must have finished her tea by this time."

"I'm not going to oblige you in that way," said Fluff. "Frances is particularly engaged—she can't come. Do you know he came all the way from Australia on purpose? What can a lamp matter?"

"What a lot of rubbish you're talking, child! Who came from Australia? Oh, that tiresome Arnold. A lamp does matter, for I want to read."

"Well, then, I'll attend to it," said Fluff. "What is the matter with it?"

"The wick isn't straight—the thing will smell, I tell you."

"I suppose I can put it right. I never touched a lamp before in my life. Where does the wick come?"



"'I should not mind at all,' said Fluff."—*p.* 26.

"Do be careful, Ellen, you will smash that lamp—it cost three-and-sixpence. There, I knew you would; you've done it now."

The glass globe lay in fragments on the floor. Fluff gazed at the broken pieces comically.

"Frances would have managed it all right," she said. "What a useless little thing I am—I can do nothing but dance, and sing, and talk. Shall I talk to you, squire? We don't want light to talk, and I'm dying to tell you what I've discovered."

"Well, child, well—I hate a mess on the floor like that. Well, what is it you've got to say to me, Fluff? It's really unreasonable of Frances not to come. She must have finished her tea long ago."

"Of course, she has finished her tea; she is talking to Mr. Arnold. He came all the way from Australia to have this talk with her. I'm so glad. You'll find out what a useful, dear girl Frances is, by-and-bye, when you never have her to trim your lamps."

"What do you mean, you saucy little thing? When I don't have Frances; what do you mean?"

"Why, you can't have her when she's—she's married. It must be wonderfully interesting to be married; I suppose I shall be some day. Weren't you greatly excited long, long, long ago, when you married?"

"One would think I lived in the last century, miss. As to Frances, well—well, she knows my wishes. Where did you say she was? Really, I'm very much disturbed to-day; I had a shock, too, this morning—oh! nothing that you need know about; only Frances might be reasonable. Listen to me, Fluff; your father is in India, and, it so happens, cannot have you with him at present, and your mother, poor soul, poor dear soul, she's dead; it was the will of Heaven to remove her, but if there is a solemn duty devolving upon a girl, it is to see to her parents, provided they are with her. Frances has her faults, but I will say, as a rule, she knows her duty in this particular."

The squire got up restlessly as he spoke, and try as she would Fluff found she could no longer keep him quiet in the dark south parlour. He went to the open window, and called his daughter in a high and peevish voice. Frances, however, was nowhere within hearing.

The fact was, when they were quite alone Philip took her hand, and said, almost peremptorily—

"There is a seat under the elm-trees; we can talk there without being disturbed."

"It has come," thought Frances. "I thought I might have been spared to-night. I have no answer ready—I don't know what is before me. The chances are that I must have nothing to say to Philip; every chance is against our marrying, and yet I cannot—I know I cannot refuse him to-night."

They walked slowly together through the gathering dusk. When they reached the seat under the elm-tree Arnold turned swiftly, took Frances's hand in his, and spoke.

"Now, Frances, now; and at last!" he said, "I have waited ten years for this moment. I have loved you with all my heart and strength for ten years."

"It was very—very good of you, Philip."

"Good of me! Why do you speak in that cold, guarded voice? Goodness had nothing to say to the matter. I could not help myself. What's the matter, Frances? A great change has come over you since the morning. Are you in trouble? Tell me what is troubling you, my darling."

Frances began to cry, silently.

"You must not use loving words to me," she said, "they—they wring my heart. I cannot tell you what is the matter, Philip—at least, for a week. And—oh! if you would let me answer you in a week—and oh! poor Philip, I am afraid there is very little hope."

"Why so, Frances; don't you love me?"

"I—I—ought not to say it. Let me go back to the house now."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. Do you love me?"

"Philip, I said I would give you an answer in a week."

"This has nothing to say to your answer. You surely know now whether you love me or not."

"I—Philip, can't you see? Need I speak?"

"I see that you have kept me at a distance, Frances; that you have left me alone all day; that you seem very tired and unhappy. What I see—yes, what I see—does not, I confess, strike me in a favourable light."

Frances, who had been standing all this time, now laid her hand on Arnold's shoulder. Her voice had grown quiet, and her agitation had disappeared.

"A week will not be long in passing," she said. "A heavy burden has been laid upon me, and the worst part is the suspense. If you have waited ten years, you can wait another week, Philip. I can give you no other answer to-night."

The hand which unconsciously had been almost caressing in its light touch was removed, and Frances returned quickly to the house. She came in by a back entrance, and going straight to her own room locked the door. Thus she could not hear her father when he called her.

But Philip remained for a long time in the elm walk, hurt, angry, and puzzled.

CHAPTER X.

FRANCES spent a very unhappy night. She could not doubt Philip's affection for her, but she knew very little about men, and was just then incapable of grasping its depth. Like many another woman, she overlooked the fact that in absolutely sacrificing herself she also sacrificed the faithful heart of the man who had clung to her memory for ten long years.

Frances was too humble to suppose it possible that

any man could be in serious trouble because he could not win her.

"I know what will happen," she said to herself, as she turned from side to side of her hot, unrestful pillow. "I know exactly how things will be. The man to whom my father owes the money will accept the interest from me. Yes, of course, that is as it should be. That is what I ought to wish for and pray for. In about a week from now I shall go to live at Arden, and the next few years of my life will be taken up soothing Mrs. Carnegie's nerves. It is not a brilliant prospect, but I ought to be thankful if in that way I can add to my poor father's life. Of course, as soon as I hear from Mr. Spens, I must tell Philip I can have nothing to say to him. I must give Philip up. I must pretend that I don't love him. Perhaps he will be disappointed for a while; but, of course, he will get over it. He'll get another wife by-and-bye; perhaps he'll choose Fluff. Fluff is just the girl to soothe a man and make him happy. She is so bright and round and sweet, she has no hard angles anywhere, and she is so very pretty. I saw Philip looking at her with great admiration to-night. Then she is young, too. In every way she is more suited to him than I am. Oh, it won't be at all difficult for Philip to transfer his affections to Fluff! Dear little girl, she will make him happy. They will both be happy, and I must hide the pain in my heart somehow. I do believe, I do honestly believe, that Fluff is more suited to Philip than I am; for now and then, even if I had the happiest lot, I must have my sad days. I am naturally grave, and sometimes I have a sense of oppression. Philip would not have liked me when I was not gay. Some days I must feel grave and old, and no man would like that. No doubt everything would be for the best; at least, for Philip, and yet how much—how much I love him!"

Frances buried her head in the bedclothes, and sobbed, long and sadly. After this fit of crying she fell asleep.

It was early morning, and the summer light was filling the room when she woke. She felt calmer now, and she resolutely determined to turn her thoughts in practical directions. There was every probability that the proposal she had made to Mr. Spens would be accepted, and if that were so she had much to do during the coming week.

She rose at her usual early hour, and going downstairs occupied herself first in the house, and then with Watkins in the garden. She rather dreaded Philip's appearance, but if he were up early he did not come out, and when Frances met him at breakfast his face wore a tired, rather bored expression. He took little or no notice of her, but he devoted himself to Fluff, laughing at her gay witty sallies, and trying to draw her out.

After breakfast Frances had a long conversation with her father. She then told him what she meant to do in order that he might continue to live at the Firs. She told her story in a very simple, ungarnished manner, but she said a few words in a tone which rather puzzled the squire at the end.

"I will now tell you," she said, "that when Philip wrote to me asking me to be his wife I was very, very glad. For all the long years of his absence I had loved him, and when I thought he was dead I was heart-broken. I meant to marry him after he wrote me that letter, but I would not say so at once, for I knew that I had grown much older, and I thought it quite possible that when he saw me he might cease to love me. That is not the case; last night he let me see into his heart, and he loves me very, very deeply. Still, if your creditor consents to the arrangement I have proposed, I cannot marry Philip—I shall then absolutely and for ever refuse him. But I do this for you, father, for my heart is Philip's. I wish you to understand, therefore, that I could not give up more for you than I am doing. It would be a comfort for me if, in return, you would give me a little affection."

Frances stood tall and straight and pale by her father's side. She now looked full into his face. There were no tears in her eyes, but there was the passion of a great cry in the voice which she tried to render calm.

The squire was agitated in spite of himself; he was glad Fluff was not present. He had an uneasy consciousness of certain words Fluff had said to him yesterday.

"You are a good girl, Frances," he said, rising to his feet and laying his trembling old hand on her arm. "I love you after my fashion, child—I am not a man of many words. By-and-bye, when you are old yourself, Frances, you won't regret having done something to keep your old father for a short time longer out of his grave. After all, even with your utmost endeavour, I am not likely to trouble anyone long. When I am dead and gone, you can marry Philip Arnold, Frances."

"No, father."

Frances's tone was quiet and commonplace now.

"Sit down, please; don't excite yourself. I am not a woman to keep any man waiting for me. I trust, long before you are dead, father, Philip will be happy with another wife."

"What! Fluff, eh?" said the old man. "What a capital idea! You will forgive my saying that she will suit him really much better than you, Frances. Ah, there they go down the elm-walk together. She certainly is a fascinating little thing. It will comfort you, Frances, to know that you do Philip no injury by rejecting him; for he really gets a much more suitable wife in that pretty young girl—you are decidedly *passée*, my love."

Frances bit her lips hard.

"On the whole, then, you are pleased with what I have done," she said, in a constrained voice.

"Very much pleased, my dear. You have acted well, and really with uncommon sense for a woman. There is only one drawback that I can see to your

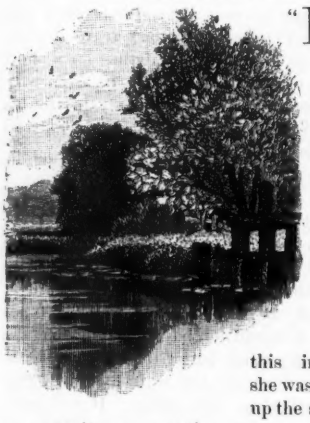
scheme. While you are enjoying the luxuries and comforts of Arden, who is to take care of me at the Firs?"

"I have thought of that," said Frances. "I acknowledge there is a slight difficulty; but I think matters can be arranged. First of all, father, please disabuse yourself of the idea that I shall be in a state of comfort and luxury. I shall be more or less a close prisoner; I shall be in servitude. Make of that what you please."

"Yes, yes, my love—a luxurious house, carriages, and horses—an affectionate and most devoted friend in Lucilla Carnegie—the daintiest living, the most exquisitely furnished rooms. Yes, yes, I'm not complaining. I'm only glad your lot has fallen in such pleasant places, Frances. Still, I repeat, what is to become of me?"

"I thought Mrs. Cooper, our old housekeeper, would come back and manage matters for you, father. She is very skilful and nice, and she knows your ways. Watkins quite understands the garden, and I myself, I am sure, will be allowed to come over once a fortnight or so. There is one thing—you must be very, very careful of your money, and Watkins must try to sell all the fruit and vegetables he can. Fluff, of course, cannot stay here. My next thought is to arrange a home for her, but even if I have to leave next week, she need not hurry away at once. Now, father, if you will excuse me, I will go out to Watkins, for I have a great deal to say to him."

CHAPTER XI.



"I HAVE something to say to you, Fluff," said Frances. The young girl was standing in her white dress, with her guitar hung in its usual attitude by her side. She scarcely ever went anywhere without this instrument, and she was fond of striking up the sweetest, wildest songs to its accompaniment at any moment.

Fluff, for all her extreme fairness and babyishness, had not a doll's face. The charming eyes could show many emotions, and the curved lips reveal many shades either of love or dislike. She had not a passionate face: there were neither heights nor depths about little Fluff, but she had a very warm heart, and was both truthful and fearless.

She had been waiting in a sheltered part of the garden for over an hour for Arnold. He had promised to go down with her to the river—he was to sketch, and she was to play. It was intensely hot, even in the shadiest part of the squire's garden, but by the river there would be coolness and a breeze. Fluff was sweet-tempered, but she did not like to wait an hour for any man, and she could not help thinking it aggravating of Arnold to go on pacing up and down in the hot sun by the squire's side. What could the squire and Arnold have to say to one another? And why did the taller and younger man rather stoop as he walked? And why was his step so depressed, so lacking in energy that even Fluff, under her shady tree in the distance, noticed it?

She was standing so when Frances came up to her; now and then her fingers idly touched her guitar, her rosy lips pouted, and her glowing dark blue eyes were fixed reproachfully on Arnold's distant figure.

Frances looked pale and fagged: she was not in the becoming white dress which she had worn during the first few days of Arnold's visit; she was in grey, and the grey was not particularly fresh nor cool in texture.

"Fluff, I want to speak to you," she said. And she laid her hand on the girl's shoulder—then her eyes followed Fluff's; she saw Arnold, and her cheeks grew a little whiter than before.

"Fluff misses him already," she whispered to her heart. "And he likes her. They are always together. Yes, I see plainly that I shan't do Philip any serious injury when I refuse him."

"What is it, Frances?" said Fluff, turning her rather aggrieved little face full on the new-comer. "Do you want to say anything to me very badly? I do call it a shame of Mr. Arnold: he and the squire have chatted together in the south walk for over an hour. It's just too bad. I might have been cooling myself by the river now; I'm frightfully hot."

"No, you're not really very hot," said Frances, in the peculiarly caressing tone she always employed when speaking to her little cousin. "But I own it is very annoying to have to wait for anyone—more particularly when you are doing nothing. Just lay your guitar on the grass, Fluff, and let us walk up and down under the shade here. I have something to say to you, and it will help to pass the time."

Fluff obeyed at once.

"You don't look well, Frances," she said, in her affectionate way, linking her hand through her cousin's arm. I have noticed that you haven't looked yourself ever since the day you went to Martinstown: nearly a week ago now. Now I wonder at that, for the weather has been so perfect, and everything so sweet and nice; and I must say it is a comfort to have a pleasant man like Mr. Arnold in the house. I have enjoyed myself during the past week, and I greatly wonder you haven't, Frances."

"I am glad you have been happy, dear," said Frances, ignoring the parts of Fluff's speech which

related to herself. "But it is on that very subject I want now to speak to you. You like living at the Firs, don't you, Fluff?"

"Why, of course, Frances. It was poor mamma's"—here the blue eyes brimmed with tears—"it was darling mother's wish that I should come here to live with you and the squire. I never could be so happy anywhere as at the Firs; I never, never want to leave it."

"But of course you will leave it some day, little Fluff, for in the ordinary course of things you will fall in love and you will marry, and when this happens you will love your new home even better than this. However, Fluff, we need not discuss the future now, for the present is enough for us. I wanted to tell you, dear, that it is very probable, almost certain, that I shall have to go away from home. What is the matter, Fluff?"

"You go away? Then I suppose that is why you look ill. Oh, how you have startled me!"

"I am sorry to have to go, Fluff, and I cannot tell you the reason. You must not ask me, for it is a secret. But the part that concerns you, dear, is that if I go I do not see how you can stay on very well at the Firs."

"Of course I should not dream of staying, Francie. With you away and Mr. Arnold gone," here she looked hard into Frances's face, "it would be dull. Of course, I am fond of the squire, but I could not do without another companion. Where are you going, Frances? Could not I go with you?"

"I wish you could, darling. I will tell you where I am going to-morrow or next day: it is possible that I may not go, but it is almost certain that I shall."

"Oh, I trust, I hope, I pray that you will not go."

"Don't do that, Fluff, for that too means a great trouble. Oh, yes, a great trouble and desolation. Now, dear, I really must talk to you about your own affairs. Leave me out of the question for a few moments, pet. I must find out what you would like to do, and where you would like to go. If I go away I shall have little or no time to make arrangements for you, so I must speak to you now. Have you any friends who would take you in until you would hear from your father, Fluff?"

"I have no special friends. There are the Harewoods, but they are silly and flirty, and I don't care for them. They talk about dress—you should hear how they go on—and they always repeat the silly things the men they meet say to them. No, I won't go to the Harewoods. I think if I must leave you, Frances, I had better go to my old schoolmistress, Mrs. Hopkins. She would be always glad to have me."

"That is a good thought, dear. I will write to her to-day just as a precautionary measure. Ah, and here comes Philip.—Philip, you have tried the patience of this little girl very sadly."

In reply to Frances's speech Arnold slightly raised his hat; his face looked drawn and worried; his eyes avoided Frances, but turned with a sense of refreshment to where Fluff stood looking cool and sweet and with a world of tender emotion on her sensitive little face.

"A thousand apologies," he said. "The squire kept me. Shall I carry your guitar? No, I won't sketch, thanks, but if you will let me lie on my back in the long grass by the river, and if you will sing me a song or two, I shall be grateful ever after."

"Then I will write to Mrs. Hopkins, Fluff," said Frances. And as the two got over a stile which led down a sloping meadow to the river she turned away. Arnold had neither looked at her nor addressed her again.

"My father has been saying something to him," thought Frances. And she was right.

The squire was not a man to take up an idea lightly and then drop it. He distinctly desired come what might that his daughter should not marry Arnold; he came to the sage conclusion that the best way to prevent such a catastrophe was to see Arnold safely married to someone else. The squire had no particular delicacy of feeling to prevent his alluding to topics which might be avoided by more sensitive men. He contrived to see Arnold alone, and then rudely, for he did not care to mince his words, used expressions the reverse of truthful, which led Arnold, whose faith was already wavering in the balance, to feel almost certain that Frances never had cared for him and never would do so. He then spoke of Fluff, praising her enthusiastically, and without stint, saying how lucky he considered the man who won not only a beautiful but a wealthy bride, and directly suggested to Arnold that he should go in for her.

"She likes you now," said the squire; "bless her little heart, she'd like anyone who was kind to her. She's just the pleasantest companion any man could have—a perfect dear all round. To tell the truth, Arnold, even though she is my daughter, I think you are well rid of Frances."

"I'm ashamed to hear you say so, sir. If what you tell me is true, your daughter has scarcely behaved kindly to me, but, notwithstanding that, I consider Frances quite the noblest woman I know."

"Pshaw!" said the squire. "You agree with Fluff—she's always praising her too. Of course, I have nothing to say against my daughter—she's my own uprearing, so it would ill beseem me to run her down. But for a wife, give me a fresh little soft roundabout, like Fluff yonder."

Arnold bit his lip.

"You have spoken frankly to me, and I thank you," he said. "If I am so unfortunate as not to win Miss Kane's regard, there is little use in my prolonging my visit here, but I have yet to hear her decision from her own lips. If you will allow me, I will leave you now, squire, for I promised Miss Danvers to spend some of this afternoon with her by the river."

"With Fluff? Little puss—very good—very good—Ah!

"'The time I've spent in wooing,'

never wasted, my boy, never wasted. I wish you all success from the bottom of my heart."

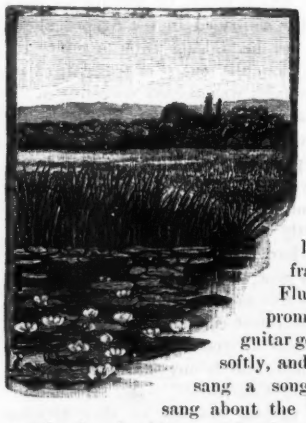
"Insufferable old idiot!" growled Arnold under his breath.

But he was thoroughly hurt and annoyed, and when he saw Frances, could not bring himself even to say a word to her.

The squire went back to the house to enjoy his afternoon nap, and to reflect comfortably on the delicious fact that he had done himself a good turn.

"There is no use playing with edge tools," he murmured. "Frances means well, but she confessed to me she loved him. What more likely, then, that she would accept him, and, notwithstanding her good resolutions, leave her poor old father in the lurch? If Frances accepts Arnold, it will be ruin to me, and it simply must be prevented at all hazards."

CHAPTER XII.



FLUFF found her companion strangely dull. They reached the river, where Arnold, true to his promise, did stretch himself at full length in the long fragrant grass; and Fluff, true to her promise, touched her guitar gently, and gently, softly, and sympathetically sang a song or two. She sang about the "Auld acquaintance" who should never be forgot; she sung of "Robin Adair;" and, lastly, her clear little notes warbled out the exquisite Irish melody, "She is far from the land." Never had Fluff sung better. She threw feeling and sympathy into her notes—in short, she excelled herself in her desire to please. But when at the end of the third song Arnold still made no response, when not the flicker of an eyelid or the faintest dawn of a smile showed either approbation or pleasure, the spoilt child threw her guitar aside, and spoke pettishly—

"I won't amuse you any more," she said. "I don't like sulky people; I am going home to my darling Frances. She is often troubled—oh, yes, she knows what trouble is—but she never sulks, never!"

"Look here, Fluff," said Arnold. "I may call you Fluff, may I not?"

"I don't mind."

Fluff's big eyes began to dilate. She stretched out her hand to draw her guitar once more to her side. She was evidently willing to be reasonable.

"Look here," repeated Arnold.

He rose hastily, and leaning on a low wall which stood near, looked down at the bright little girl at his feet.

"Fluff," he said, "should you greatly mind if I threw conventionality to the winds, and spoke frankly to you?"

"I should not mind at all," said Fluff. "I don't know what you have got to say, but I hate conventionalities."

"The fact is, I am very much bothered."

"Oh."

"And I haven't a soul to consult."

Another "Oh!" and an upward glance of two lovely long-fringed eyes.

"And I think you have a kind, affectionate heart, Fluff."

"I have."

"And you won't misunderstand a man who is half distracted?"

"I am sorry you are half distracted. No, I won't misunderstand you."

"That is right, and what I expected. I was thinking of all this, and wondering if I might speak frankly to you when you were singing those songs. That is the reason I did not applaud you, or say thank you, or anything else commonplace."

"I understand now," said Fluff. "I'm very glad. I was puzzled at first, and I thought you rude. Now I quite understand."

"Thank you, Fluff; if I may sit by your side I will tell you the whole story. The fact is I want you to help me, but you can only do so by knowing everything. Why, what is the matter? Are you suddenly offended?"

"No," answered little Ellen, "but I'm surprised. I'm so astonished that I'm almost troubled, and yet I never was so glad in my life. You are the very first person who has ever asked me to help them. I have amused people—oh yes, often; but helped—you are the very first who has asked me that."

"I believe you are a dear little girl," said Arnold, looking at her affectionately, "and if anyone can set things right now, you are the person. Will you listen to my story? May I begin?"

"Certainly."

"Remember, I am not going to be conventional."

"You said that before."

"I want to impress it upon you. I am going to say the sort of things that girls seldom listen to."

"You make me feel dreadfully curious," said Fluff. "Please begin."

"The beginning is this. Ten years ago I came here. I stayed here for a month. I fell in love with Frances."

"Oh—oh! darling Frances; and you fell in love with her ten years ago?"

"I did. I went to Australia. For five years I

had an awful time there; my friends at home supposed me to be dead. The fact is, I was taken captive by some of the bushmen. That has nothing to say to my story, only all the time I thought of Frances. I remained in Australia five more years. During that five years I was making my fortune. As I added pound to pound, I thought still of Frances. I am rich now, and I have come home to marry her."

"Oh," said little Fluff, with a deep-drawn sigh. "What a lovely story. But why, then, is not Frances happy?"

"Ah, that is where the mystery comes in; that is what I want you to find out. I see plainly that Frances is very unhappy. She won't say either yes or no to my suit. Her father gives me to understand that she does not love me; that she never loved me. He proposes that instead of marrying Frances I should try to make you my wife. He was urging me to do so just now when I kept you waiting. All the time he was telling me that Frances never could or would love me, and that you were the wife of all others for me."

"Why do you tell me all this?" said Fluff. Her cheeks had crimsoned, and tears trembled on her eyelashes. "Why do you spoil a beautiful story by telling me this at the end?"

"Because the squire will hint it to you, Fluff; because even Frances herself will begin to think that I am turning my affections in your direction; because if you help me as I want you to help me, we must be much together; because I must talk very freely to you; in short, because it is absolutely necessary that we should quite understand each other."

"Yes," said Fluff. "I see now what you mean; it is all right; thank you very much." She rose to her feet. "I will be a sort of sister to you," she said, laying her little hand in his; "for I love Frances better than any sister, and when you are her husband you will be my brother."

"No brother will ever be truer to you, Fluff; but alas, and alas! is it ever likely that Frances can be my wife?"

"Of course she will," said Fluff. "Frances is so unhappy because she loves you."

"Nonsense."

"Well, I think so, but I'll soon find out."

"You will? If you were my real sister I would call you a darling."

"You may call me anything you please. I *am* your sister, to all intents and purposes, until you are married to my darling, darling Frances. Oh, won't I give it to the squire! I think he's a perfectly horrid old man, and I used to be fond of him."

"But you will be careful, Fluff—a rash word might do lots of mischief."

"Of course I'll be careful. I have lots of tact."

"You are the dearest girl in the world, except Frances."

"Of course I am. That was a very pretty speech, and I am going to reward you. I am going to tell you something."

"What is that?"

"Frances is going away."

Arnold gave a slight start.

"I did not know that," he said. "When?"

"She told me when you were talking to the squire. She is going away very soon, and she wants me to go too. I am to go back to my old schoolmistress, Mrs. Hopkins. Frances is very sorry to go, and yet when I told her that I hoped she would not have to, she said I must not wish that, for that would mean a great calamity. I don't understand Frances at present, but I shall soon get to the bottom of everything."

"I fear it is all too plain," said Arnold, lugubriously. "Frances goes away because she does not love me, and she is unhappy because she does not wish to give me pain."

"You are quite wrong, sir. Frances is unhappy on her own account, not on yours. Well, I'll find out lots of things to-night, and let you know. I'm going to be the cunningest little mouse in the world; but oh, won't the squire have a bad time of it!"

CHAPTER XIII.



THE morning's post brought one letter. It was addressed to Miss Kane, and was written in a business hand. The squire looked anxiously at his daughter as she laid it unopened by her plate. Fluff, who was dressed more becomingly than usual, whose eyes were bright, and who altogether seemed in excellent spirits, could not help telegraphing a quick glance at Arnold; the little party were seated round the breakfast-table, and the squire, who intercepted Fluff's glance, chuckled inwardly. He was very anxious with regard to the letter which Frances so provokingly left unopened, but he also felt a pleasing thrill of satisfaction.

"Ha! ha!" he said to himself, "my good young man, you are following my advice, for all you looked so sulky yesterday. Fluff, little dear, I do you a good turn when I provide you with an excellent husband, and I declare, poor as I am, I won't see you married without giving you a wedding present."

After breakfast the squire rose, pushed aside his chair, and was about to summon his daughter to accompany him to the south parlour when Fluff ran up to his side.

"I want to speak to you most particularly," she

said. "I have a secret to tell you," and she raised her charming, rounded, fresh face to his. He patted her on the cheek.

"Is it very important?" he said, a little uneasily, for he noticed that Philip and Frances were standing silently side by side in the bay window; and that Frances had removed her letter from its envelope, and was beginning to read it.

The squire found himself wheedled and dragged into the south parlour. There he was seated in his most comfortable chair, just as much sunlight as he liked best was allowed to warm him, a footstool was placed under his feet, and Fluff drawing a second forward seated herself on it, laid her hand on his knee, and looked at him with an expression of pleased affection.



"'You have got to prevent it, you know.'"—*p.* 32

"She 'll absolutely tell that fellow the contents of the most important letter she ever received," inwardly grumbled the squire. "He'll know before her father knows." Aloud he said, "I have a little business to talk over with Frances just now, Ellen. I am afraid your secret must wait, little puss."

"But that 's what it can't do," answered Fluff. "Don't call Frances: she 's reading a letter. What a rude old man you are, to think of disturbing her! I 'm quite ashamed of you. Now come with me, for I must tell you my important secret."

"Aren't you dreadfully curious?" she said.

"Oh, yes, Fluff—quite devoured with curiosity. I wonder now what Frances is doing; the fact is, she has received an important letter. It 's about my affairs. I am naturally anxious to know its contents. Tell your secret as quickly as possible, little woman, and let me get to more important matters."

"More important matters! I 'm ashamed of you," said Fluff, shaking her finger at him. "The fact is, squire, you mustn't be in a hurry about seeing

Frances—you must curb your impatience; it's very good for you to curb it—it's a little discipline, and discipline properly administered always turns people out delightful. You'll be a very noble old man when you have had a little of the proper sort of training. Now, now: why, you look quite cross; I declare you're not a bit handsome when you're cross. Frances *can't* come to you at present—she's engaged about her own affairs."

"And what may they be, pray, miss?"

"Ah, that's my secret."

Fluff looked down; a becoming blush deepened the colour in her cheeks; she toyed idly with a rosebud which she held in her hand. Something in her attitude, and the significant smile on her face, made the squire both angry and uneasy.

"Speak out, child," he said. "You know I hate mysteries."

"But I can't speak out," said Fluff. "The time to speak out hasn't come—I can only guess. Squire, I'm so glad—I really do think that Frances is in love with Philip."

"You really do?" said the squire. He mimicked her tone sarcastically, red, angry spots grew on his old cheeks. "Frances in love with Philip, indeed! You have got pretty intimate with that young Australian, Fluff, when you call him by his Christian name."

"Oh yes, we arranged that yesterday. He's like a brother to me. I told you some time ago that he was in love with Frances. Now, I'm so delighted to be able to say that I think Frances is in love with him."

"Tut—tut!" said the squire. "Little girls imagine things. Little girls are very fanciful."

"Tut—tut!" responded Fluff, taking off his voice to the life. "Little girls see far below the surface; old men are very obtuse."

"Fluff, if that's your secret, I don't think much of it. Run away now, and send my daughter to me."

"I'll do nothing of the kind, for if she's not reading her letter she's talking to her true love. Oh, you must have a heart of stone to wish to disturb them!"

The squire, with some difficulty, pushed aside his footstool, hobbled to his feet, and walked to the window where the southern sun was pouring in. In the distance he saw the grey of Frances' dress through the trees, and Philip's square, manly, upright figure walking slowly by her side. He pushed open the window, and hoarsely and angrily called his daughter's name.

"She doesn't hear you," said Fluff. "I expect he's proposing for her now; isn't it lovely? Aren't you delighted? Oh, where's my guitar? I'm going to play 'Sweethearts.' I do hope, squire, you'll give Frances a very jolly wedding."

But the squire had hobbled out of the room.

He was really very lame with rheumatic gout; but the sight of that grey slender figure pacing slowly under the friendly sheltering trees, was too much for him; he was overcome with passion, anxiety, rage.

"She's giving herself away," he murmured. That little vixen Fluff is right—she's in love with the fellow, and she's throwing herself at his head; it's perfectly awful to think of it. She has forgotten all about her old father. I'll be a beggar in my old age; the Firs will have to go: I'll be ruined, undone. Oh, was there ever such an undutiful daughter? I must go to her. I must hobble up to that distant spot as quickly as possible; perhaps when she sees me she may pause before she irrevocably commits so wicked an act. Oh, how lame I am—what agonies I'm enduring; shall I ever be in time? He's close to her—he's almost touching her—good gracious, he'll kiss her if I'm not quick. That little wretch Fluff could have reached them in a twinkling, but she won't do anything to oblige this morning. Hear her now, twanging away at that abominable air, 'Sweethearts'—oh—oh—puff—puff—I'm quite blown. This walk will kill me. Frances—I say, Frances, Fran*ces!*"

The feeble cracked old voice was borne on the breeze, and the last high agonised note reached it's goal.

"I am coming, father," responded his daughter. She turned to Arnold, and held out her hand.

"God bless you!" she said.

"Is your answer final, Frances?"

"Yes—yes. I wish I had not kept you a week in suspense; it was cruel to you, but I thought—oh—I must not keep my father."

"Your father has you always, and this is my last moment. Then you'll never, never love me?"

"I cannot marry you, Philip."

"That is no answer. You never loved me."

"I cannot marry you."

"I won't take 'no,' unless you say with it: 'I never loved you, I never can love you.'"

"Look at my father, Philip; he is almost falling. His face is crimson. I must go to him. God bless you!"

She took his hand, and absolutely, before the squire's horrified eyes, raised it to her lips, then flew lightly down the path, and joined the old man.

"Is anything wrong, father? How dreadful you look."

"You—you have accepted the fellow! You have deserted me; I saw you kiss his hand. Fah! it makes me sick. You've accepted him, and I am ruined."

"On the contrary, I have refused Philip. That kiss was like one we give to the dead. Don't excite yourself; come into the house. I am yours absolutely from this time out."

"Hum—haw—you gave me an awful fright, I can tell you." The squire breathed more freely. "You set that little Fluff on to begin it, and you ended it. I won't be the better of this for some time. Yes, let me lean on you, Frances; it's a comfort to feel I'm not without a daughter. Oh, it

would have been a monstrous thing had you deserted me! Did I not rear you, and bring you up? But in cases of the affections—I mean in cases of those paltry passions, women are so weak."

"But not your daughter, Frances Kane. I, for your sake, have been strong. Now, if you please, we will drop the subject; I will *not* discuss it further. You had better come into the house, father, until you get cool."

"You had a letter this morning, Frances—from Spens, was it not?"

"Oh yes; I had forgotten; your creditors will accept my terms, for the present. I must drive over to Arden this afternoon, and arrange what day I go there."

"I shall miss you considerably, Frances. It's a great pity you couldn't arrange to come home to sleep; you might see to my comforts then, by rising a little earlier in the morning. I wish, my dear, you would propose it to Mrs. Carnegie; if she is a woman of any consideration she will see how impossible it is that I should be left altogether."

"I cannot do that, father. Even you must pay a certain price for a certain good thing. You do not wish to leave the Firs, but you cannot keep both the Firs and me. I will come and see you constantly, but my time from this out belongs absolutely to Mrs. Carnegie. She gives me an unusually large salary, and, being her servant, I must endeavour in all particulars to please her, and must devote my time to her to a certain extent day and night."

"Good gracious, Frances, I do hope that though adversity has come to the house of Kane, you are not going so far to forget yourself as to stoop to menial work at Arden. Why, rather than that—rather than that, it would be better for us to give up the home of our fathers."

"No work need be menial, done in the right spirit," responded Frances.

Her eyes wandered away, far up among the trees, where Arnold still slowly paced up and down. In the cause of pride her father might even be induced to give up the Firs. Was love, then, to weigh nothing in the scale?

She turned suddenly to her father.

"You must rest now," she said. "You need not be the least anxious on your own account any more. You must rest and take things quietly, and do your best not to get ill. It would be very bad for you to be ill now, for there would be no one to nurse you. Remember that, and be careful. Now go and sit in the parlour, and keep out of draughts. I cannot read to you this morning, for I shall be very busy, and you must not call me nor send for me unless it is absolutely necessary. Now, good-bye for the present."

Frances did not, as her usual custom was, establish her father in his easy-chair; she did not cut his morning paper for him, nor attend to the one or two little comforts which he considered essential; she left him without kissing him, only her full, grave, sorrowful eyes rested for one moment with a look of great pathos on his wrinkled, discontented old face, then she went away.

The squire was alone; even the irritating strain of "Sweethearts" no longer annoyed him. Fluff had ceased to play—Fluff's gay little figure was no longer visible; the man who had paced up and down under the distant trees had disappeared; Frances' grey dress was nowhere to be seen.

The whole place was still, oppressively still—not a bee hummed, not a bird sang. The atmosphere was hot and dry, but there was no sunshine; the trees were motionless, there was a feel of coming thunder in the air.

The squire felt calmed and triumphant, at the same time he felt irritated and depressed. His anxiety was over, his daughter had done what he wished her to do—the Firs was saved, at least for his lifetime—the marriage he so dreaded was never to be. At the same time, he felt dull and deserted; he knew what it was to have his desire, and leanness in his soul. It would be very dull at the Firs without Frances, he should miss her much when she went away. He was a feeble old man, and he was rapidly growing blind. Who would read for him, and chat with him, and help to wile away the long and tedious hours? He could not spend all his time eating and sleeping. What should he do now with all the other hours of the long day and night? He felt pleased with Frances—he owned she was a good girl, but at the same time he was cross with her, she ought to have thought of some other way of delivering him. She was a clever woman—he owned she was a clever woman, but she ought not to have effected his salvation by deserting him.

The squire mumbled and muttered to himself. He rose from his arm-chair and walked to the window; he went out and paced up and down the terrace; he came in again. Was there ever such a long and tiresome morning? He yawned, he did not know what to do with himself.

A little after noon the door of the south parlour was quickly opened and Arnold came in.

"I have just come to say good-bye, sir."

The squire started in genuine amazement. He did not love Arnold, but after two hours of solitude he was glad to hear any human voice. It never occurred to him, too, that anyone should feel Frances such a necessity as to alter plans on her account.

"You are going away?" he repeated. You told me yesterday you would stay here for at least another week or ten days."

"Exactly, but I have changed my mind," said Arnold. "I came here for an object—my object has failed. Good-bye."

"But now, really——" the squire strove to retain the young man's hand in his clasp. "You don't seriously mean to tell me that you are leaving a nice place like the Firs in this fine summer weather, because Frances has refused you."

"I am going away on that account," replied Arnold stiffly. "Good-bye."

"You astonish me—you quite take my breath away. Frances couldn't accept you, you know. She had me to see after. I spoke to you yesterday about her, and I suggested that you should take Fluff instead. A dear little thing, Fluff. Young, and with money; who would compare the two?"

"Who would compare the two?" echoed Arnold. "I repeat, squire, that I must now wish you good-bye, and I distinctly refuse to discuss the subject of my marriage any further."

Arnold's hand scarcely touched Squire Kane's. He left the south parlour, and his footsteps died away in the distance.

Once more there was silence and solitude. The sky grew darker, the atmosphere hotter and denser—a growl of thunder was heard in the distance—a flash of lightning lit up the squire's room. Squire Kane was very nervous in a storm—at all times he hated to be long alone—now he felt terrified, nervous, aggrieved. He rang his bell pretty sharply.

"Jane," he said to the servant who answered his summons. "Send Miss Kane to me at once."

"Miss Kane has gone to Martinstown, sir. She drove in in the pony-cart an hour ago."

"Oh—h'm—I suppose Mr. Arnold went with her?"

"No, sir. Mr. Arnold took a short cut across the fields; he says the carrier is to call for his portmanteau, and he's not a-coming back."

"H'm—most inconsiderate—I hate parties broken up in a hurry like this. What a vivid flash that was! Jane, I'm afraid we are going to have an awful storm."

"It looks like it, sir, and the clouds is coming direct this way. Watkins says as the strength of the storm will break right over the Firs, sir."

"My good Jane, I'll thank you to shut the windows, and ask Miss Danvers to have the goodness to step this way."

"Miss Danvers have a headache, sir, and is lying down. She said as no one is to disturb her."

The squire murmured something inarticulate. Jane lingered for a moment at the door, but finding nothing more was required of her, softly withdrew.

Then in the solitude of his south parlour the squire saw the storm come up—the black clouds gathered silently from east and west, a slight shiver shook the trees, a sudden wind agitated the slowly moving clouds—it came between the two banks of dark vapour, and then the thunder rolled and the lightning played. It was an awful storm, and the squire, who was timid at such times, covered his face with his trembling hands, and even feebly tried to pray. It is possible that if Frances had come to him then he would, in the terror fit which had seized him, have given her her heart's desire. Even the Firs became of small account to Squire Kane while the lightning flashed in his eyes and the thunder rattled over his head. He was afraid—he would have done anything to propitiate the Maker of the storm—he would have even sacrificed himself if necessary.

But the clouds rolled away, the sunshine came out. Fear vanished from the squire's breast, and when dinner was announced he went to partake of it with an excellent appetite. Fluff and he alone had seats at the board; Arnold and Frances were both away.

Fluff's eyes were very red. She was untidy, too, and her whole appearance might best be described by the word dishevelled. She scarcely touched her dinner, and her chattering merry tongue was silent.

The squire was a man who never could abide melancholy in others. He had had a fright, his fright was over. He was therefore exactly in the mood to be petted and humoured, to have his little jokes listened to and applauded, to have his thrice-told tales appreciated. He was just in the mood, also, to listen to pretty nothings from a pretty girl's lips, to hear her sing, perhaps to walk slowly with her by-and-bye in the sunshine.

Fluff's red eyes, however, Fluff's disordered, untidy appearance, her downcast looks, her want of appetite, presented to him, just then, a most unpleasing picture. As his way was he resented it, and began to grumble.

"I have had a very dull morning," he began.

"Indeed, sir?—I won't take any peas, thank you, Jane; I'm not hungry."

"I hate little girls to come to table who are not hungry," growled the squire. "Bring the peas here, Jane."

"Shall I go up to my room again?" asked Fluff, laying down her knife and fork.

"Oh no, my love; no, not by any means."

The squire was dreadfully afraid of having to spend as solitary an afternoon as morning.

"I am sorry you are not quite well, Fluff," he said, hoping to pacify the angry little maid; "but I suppose it was the storm. Most girls are very much afraid of lightning. It is silly of them; for really in a room with the windows shut—glass, you know, my dear, is a non-conductor—there is not much danger. But there is no combating the terrors of the weaker sex. I can fancy you, Fluff, burying that pretty little head of yours under the bedclothes. That doubtless accounts for its present rough condition. You should have come to me, my love; I'd have done my best to soothe your nervous fears."

Fluff's blue eyes were opened wide.

"I don't know what you are talking about," she said. "*I* afraid of the storm, and burying my head under the bedclothes, as if I were a baby or a silly old man! Yes, of course I knew there was a storm, but I didn't notice it much, I was too busy packing."

This last remark effectually distracted the squire's attention.

"Packing! good gracious, child, you are not going away too?"

"Of course I am; you don't suppose I am going to stay here without my darling Francie?"

"But what am I to do, Fluff?"

"I don't know, Squire. I suppose you'll stay on at the Firs."

"Alone! Do you mean I'm to stay here alone?"

"I suppose so, now that you have sent Frances away."

"I have not sent her away. What do you mean, miss?"

"I'm not going to say what I mean," said Fluff. "Dear Frances is very unhappy, and I'm very unhappy too, and Philip, I think, is the most miserable of all. As far as I can tell, all this unhappiness has been caused by you, Squire, so I suppose you are happy, but if you think I am going to stay at the Firs without Frances you are very much mistaken. I would not stay with you now on any account, for you are a selfish old man, and I don't love you any longer."

This angry little speech was uttered after Jane had withdrawn, and even while Fluff spoke she pushed some fruit towards the squire.

"You are a selfish old man," she continued, her cheeks burning and her eyes flashing—"you want your comforts—you want to be amused, and to get the best of everything, and if that is so you don't care for others. Well, here is the nicest fruit in the garden—eat it. And by-and-bye I'll sing for you, if my singing gives you pleasure. I'll do all this while I stay, but I'm going away the day after to-morrow. But I don't love you any more, for you are unkind to Frances."

The squire was really too much astonished to reply. Nobody in all his life had ever spoken to him in this way before; he felt like one who was assaulted, and beaten all over. He was stunned, and yet he still clung in a sort of mechanical way to the comforts which were dearer to him than life. He picked out the finest strawberries which Fluff had piled on his plate, and conveyed them to his lips. Fluff flew out of the room for her guitar, and when she returned she began to sing a gay Italian air in a very sprightly and effective manner. In the midst of her song the squire broke in with a sudden question.

"What do you mean by saying I am unkind to Frances?"

Fluff's guitar dropped with a sudden clatter to the floor.

"You won't let her marry Philip—she loves him with all her heart, and he loves her. They have cared for one another for ten long years, and now you are parting them. You are a dreadfully, dreadfully, selfish old man, and I hate you."

Here the impulsive little girl burst into tears, and ran out of the room. The squire sat long over his strawberries.

CHAPTER XIV.

IT was arranged that Frances should take up her abode at Arden on the following Friday, and on Thursday Fluff was to go to London to stay—for a time, at least—under the sheltering wings of her late schoolmistress, Mrs. Hopkins. With regard to her departure, Fluff made an extraordinary request—she earnestly begged that Frances should not accompany her to Martinstown. She gave no reason for this desire; but she enforced it by sundry pettings, by numerous embraces, by both tears and smiles—in short, by the thousand and one fascinations which the little creature possessed. A certain Mrs. Mansfield was to escort Fluff to London; and Frances arranged that the two should meet at the railway station, and catch the twelve o'clock train for town.

"I don't want you to introduce her to me, darling," said Fluff. "I can't possibly mistake her; for she is tall, and has a hooked nose, and always wears black, you say. And you know what I am, just exactly like my name; so it will be impossible for us not to recognise each other."

Thus Fluff got her way, and Frances saw her off, not from the railway platform, but standing under the elm-trees where Fluff had first seen her and Arnold together.

When a turn in the road quite hid Frances Kane from the little girl's view she clasped her hands with a mixture of ecstasy and alarm.

"Now, I can have my way," she said to herself, "and dear Frances will never, never suspect."

A cab had been sent for to Martinstown to fetch away Fluff and her belongings. The driver was a stranger, and Fluff thought it extremely unlikely that, even if he wished to do so, he would be able to tell tales. She arrived in good time at the railway station, instantly assumed a business-like air, looked out for no tall lady with a hooked nose in black, but calmly booked her luggage for a later train, and calling the same cabman, asked him to drive her to the house of the lawyer, Mr. Spens.

The lawyer was at home, and the pretty, excitable little girl was quickly admitted into his presence. Mr. Spens thought he had seldom seen a more radiant little vision than this white-robed, eager, childish creature. Childish, and yet womanly just then, with both purpose and desire in her face.

"You had my letter, hadn't you?" said Fluff. "I am Ellen Danvers; Miss Kane is my cousin, and my dearest, my most dear friend."

"I have had your letter, Miss Danvers, and I remained at home in consequence. Won't you sit down? What a beautiful day this is!"

"Oh, please, don't waste time over the weather. I am come to talk to you about Frances. You have got to prevent it, you know."

"My dear young lady, to prevent what?"

"Well, she's not to go to Arden. She's not to spend the rest of her days with a dreadful, fanciful

old woman! She 's to do something else quite different. You 've got to prevent Frances making herself and—and—others miserable all her life. Do you hear, Mr. Spens?"

"Yes, I certainly hear, Miss Danvers. But how I am to alter or affect Miss Kane's destiny is more than I can at present say. You must explain yourself. I have a very great regard for Miss Kane; I like her extremely. I will do anything in my power to benefit her; but as she chose entirely of her own free will — without anyone, as far as I am aware, suggesting it to her—to become companion to Mrs. Carnegie, I do not really see how I am to interfere."

"Yes, you are," said Fluff, whose eyes were now full of tears. "You are to interfere because you are at the bottom of the mystery. You know why Frances is going to Mrs. Carnegie, and why she is refusing to marry Philip Arnold, who has loved her for ten years, and whom she loves with all her heart. Oh, I can't help telling you this! It is a secret, a kind of secret, but you have got to give me another confidence in return."

"I did not know about Arnold, certainly," responded Spens. "That alters things. I am truly sorry; I am really extremely sorry. Still, I don't see how Miss Kane can act differently. She has promised her father now: it is the only way to save him. Poor girl! I am sorry for her, but it is the only way to save the squire."

"Oh, the squire!" exclaimed Fluff, jumping up in her seat, and clasping her hands with vexation. "Who cares for the squire? Is he to have everything? Is nobody to be thought of but him? Why should Frances make all her days wretched on his account? Why should Frances give up the man she is so fond of, just to give him a little more comfort and luxuries that he doesn't want? Look here, Mr. Spens, it is wrong—it must not be! I won't have it!"

Mr. Spens could not help smiling.

"You are very eager and emphatic," he said. "I should like to know how you are going to prevent Miss Kane taking her own way."

"It is not her own way, it is the squire's way."

"Well, it comes to the same thing. How are you to prevent her taking the squire's way?"



"'Won't you go down and have a chat with him?'"—*p.* 37.

"Oh, you leave that to me! I have an idea. I think I can work it through. Only I want you, Mr. Spens, to tell me the real reason why Frances is going away from the Firs, and why she has to live at Arden. She will explain nothing; she only says it is necessary. She won't give any reason either to Philip or me."

"Don't you think, Miss Danvers, I ought to respect her confidence? If she wished you to know, she would tell you herself."

"Oh, please — please tell me! Do tell me! I won't do any mischief, I promise you. Oh, if only you knew how important it is that I should find out!"

The lawyer considered for a moment. Fluff's pretty words and beseeching gestures were having an effect upon him. After all, if there was any chance of benefiting Miss Kane, why should the squire's miserable secret be concealed? After a time he said—

"You look like a child, but I believe you have sense. I suppose whatever I tell you, you intend to repeat straightway to Mr. Arnold?"

"Well, yes; I certainly mean to tell him."

"Will you promise to tell no one but Arnold?"

"Yes, I can promise that."

"Then the facts are simple enough. The squire owes six thousand pounds to a client of mine in London. My client wants to sell the Firs in order to recover his money. The squire says if he leaves the Firs he must die. Miss Kane comes forward

and offers to go as companion to Mrs. Carnegie, Mrs. Carnegie paying her £300 a year, which sum she hands over to my client as interest at 5 per cent. on the six thousand pounds. These are the facts of the case in a nutshell, Miss Danvers. Do you understand them?"

"I think I do. I am very much obliged to you. What is the name of your client?"

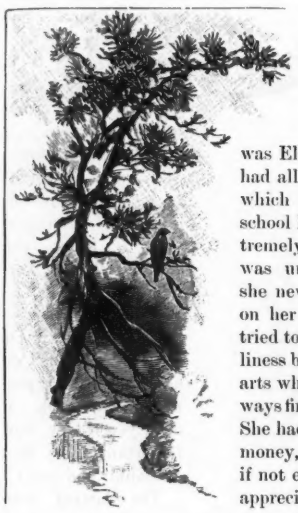
"You must excuse me, young lady—I cannot divulge my client's name."

"But if Philip wanted to know very badly, you would tell him?"

"That depends on the reason he gave for requiring the information."

"I think it is all right, then," said Fluff, rising to her feet. "Good-bye, I am greatly obliged to you. Oh, that dear Frances! Mr. Spens, I think I hate the squire."

CHAPTER XV.



IF there was a girl who was a prime favourite with her schoolfellows that girl was Ellen Danvers. She had all the qualifications which insure success in school life. She was extremely pretty, but she was unconscious of it; she never prided herself on her looks, she never tried to heighten her loveliness by a thousand little arts which schoolgirls always find out and despise. She had always plenty of money, which at school, if not elsewhere, is much appreciated. She was generous, she was bright, she was loving; she was not sufficiently clever to make anyone envious of her, but at the same time she was so very smart and quick that not the cleverest girl in the school could despise her.

When Fluff went away from Merton House the tribulation experienced on all sides was really severe. The girls put their heads together, and clubbed to present her with a gold bangle, and she in return left them her blessing, a kiss all round, and a pound's-worth of chocolate creams.

The school was dull when Fluff went away; she took a place which no one else quite held. She was not at all weak or namby-pamby, but she was a universal peace-maker. Fluff made peace simply by throwing oil on troubled waters, for she certainly was not one to preach; and as to pointing a moral, she did not know the meaning of the word.

It was with great rejoicing, therefore, that the young ladies of Mrs. Hopkins' select seminary were informed on a certain Thursday morning that their idol was about to return to them. She was no longer to take her place in any of the classes; she was to be a parlour boarder, and go in and out pretty much as she pleased, but she was to be in the house again, and they were to see her bright face, and hear her gay laugh, and doubtless she would once more be everyone's confidante and friend.

In due course Fluff arrived. It was late when she made her appearance, for she had missed the train by which Frances had intended her to travel. But late as the hour was—past nine o'clock—Fluff found time to pay a visit to the school-room, where the elder girls were finishing preparations for to-morrow, to rush through the dormitories, and kiss each expectant little one.

"It's just delicious!" whispered Sybil Lake, the youngest scholar in the school. "We have you for the last fortnight before we break up. Just fancy, you will be there to see me if I get a prize!"

"Yes, Sibyl, and if you do I'll give you sixpennyworth of chocolate creams."

Sibyl shouted with joy.

The other children echoed her glee. One of the teachers was obliged to interfere. Fluff vanished to the very select bedroom that she was now to occupy, and order was once more restored.

Fluff's name was now in everyone's mouth. Didn't she look prettier than ever? Wasn't she nicer than ever? Hadn't she a wonderfully grown-up air?

One day it was whispered through the school that Fluff had got a lover. This news ran like wildfire from the highest class to the lowest. Little Sybil asked what a lover meant, and Marion Jones, a lanky girl of twelve, blushed while she answered her.

"It isn't proper to speak about lovers," said Katie Phillips. "Mother said we weren't to know anything about them. I asked her once, and that was what she said. She said it wasn't proper for little girls to know about lovers."

"But grown girls have them," responded Marion. "I think it must be captivating. I wish I was grown up."

"You're much too ugly, Marion, to have a lover," responded Mary Mills. "Oh, for goodness' sake, don't get so red and angry! She's going to strike me! Save me, girls!"

"Hush!" exclaimed Katie, "hush! come this way. Look through the lattice. Look through the wire fence just here. Can you see? There's Fluff, and there's her lover. He's rather old, isn't he? But hasn't he *l'air distingué?* Isn't Fluff pretty when she blushes? The lover is rather tall. Oh, do look, Mary, can you see—can you see?"

"Yes, he has fair hair," responded Mary. "It curls. I'm sorry it is fair and curly, for Fluff's is the same. He should be dark, like a Spaniard. Oh,

girls, girls, he has got such lovely blue eyes, and such white teeth! He smiled just now, and I saw them."

"Let me peep," said Marion. "I haven't got one peep yet."

But here the voices became a little loud, and the lovers, if they were lovers, passed out of sight behind the yew hedge.

"That's it," said Fluff, when she had finished her story, "it's all explained now. I hope you're obliged to me."

"No brother could love you better, nor appreciate you more than I do, Fluff."

"Thank you; I'll tell you how much I care for those words when you let me know what you are going to do."

Arnold put his hand to his forehead; his face grew grave, he looked with an earnest half-puzzled glance at the childish creature by his side.

"I really think you are the best girl in the world, and one of the cleverest," he said. "I have a feeling that you have an idea in your head, but I am sorry to say nothing very hopeful up to the present time has occurred to me. It does seem possible, after your explanation, that Frances may love me, and yet refuse me; yes, certainly, that does now seem possible."

"How foolish you are to speak in that doubting tone," half snapped Fluff (certainly, if the girls had seen her now they would have thought she was quarrelling with her lover). "How can you say 'perhaps Frances loves you'? Loves you! She is breaking her heart for you. Oh! I could cry when I think of Frances's pain!"

"Dear little friend!" said Arnold. "Then if that is so—God grant it, oh, God grant it!—Frances and I must turn to you to help us."

Fluff's face brightened.

"I will tell you my plan," she said. "But first of all you must answer me a question."

"What is it? I will answer anything."

"Mr. Arnold——"

"You said you would call me Philip."

"Oh, well, Philip—I rather like the name of Philip—Philip, are you a rich man?"

"That depends on what you call riches, Fluff. I have brought £15,000 with me from the other side of the world. I took five years earning it, for all those five years I lived as a very poor man, for I was adding penny to penny, and pound to pound, to Frances's fortune."

"That is right," exclaimed Fluff, clapping her hands. "Frances's fortune—then of course you will spend it in saving her."

"I would spend every penny to save her, if I only knew how."

"How stupid you are!" said Fluff. "Oh, if only I were a man!"

"What would you do, if you were?"

"What would I not do? You have £15,000, and Frances is in all this trouble because of £6,000. Shall I tell you, must I tell you what you ought to do?"

"Please—pray tell me."

"Oh, it is so easy. You must get the name of the old horror in London to whom the squire owes £6,000, and you must give him six out of your fifteen, and so pay off the squire's debt. You must do this and—and——"

"Yes, Fluff; I really do think you are the cleverest little girl I ever came across."

"The best part is to come now," said Fluff. "Then you are to go to the squire; tell him that you will sell the Firs over his head, unless he allows you to marry Frances. Oh, it is so easy, so, *so* delightful!"

"Give me your hand, Fluff. Yes, I see light, yes. God bless you, Fluff."

"There is no doubt she has accepted him," reported Mary Mills to her fellows. "They have both appeared again round the yew-hedge, and he has taken her hand, and he is smiling. Oh! he is lovely when he smiles."

"I wish I was grown up," sighed Marion, from behind. "I 'd give anything in all the world to have a lover."

"It will be interesting to watch Fluff at supper to-night," exclaimed Katie Phillips. "Of course she'll look intensely happy. I wonder if she'll wear an engagement-ring."

The supper-hour came. Fluff took her seat among the smaller girls; her face was radiant enough to satisfy the most exacting, but her small dimpled fingers were bare.

"Why do you all stare at my hands so?" she exclaimed, once.

"It's on account of the ring," whispered little Sybil. "Hasn't he given you the ring yet?"

"Who is 'he,' dear?"

"Oh, I wasn't to say. His name is Mr. Lover."

CHAPTER XVI.



MRS. CARNEGIE could scarcely be considered the most cheerful companion in the world. There was a general sense of rejoicing when Frances took up her abode at Arden, but the victim who was to spend the greater part of her life in Mrs. Carnegie's heated chambers, could scarcely be expected to participate in it. This good lady, having turned her thoughts inwards for so long, could only see the world from this extremely narrow standpoint. She was hypochondriacal, she was fretful, and although Frances managed her, and,

in consequence, the rest of the household experienced a good deal of ease, Frances herself, whose heart just now was not of the lightest, could not help suffering. Her cheeks grew paler, her figure slighter and thinner. She could only cry at night, but then she certainly cried a good deal.

On a certain sunny afternoon, Mrs. Carnegie, who thought it her bounden duty on all occasions to look out for grievances, suddenly took it upon herself to complain of Frances's looks.

"It is not that you are dull, my dear," she remarked. "You are fairly cheerful, and your laugh is absolutely soothing; but you are pale, dreadfully pale, and pallor jars on my nerves, dear. Yes, I assure you, in the sensitive state of my poor nerves a pale face like yours is absolutely excruciating to them, darling."

"I am very sorry," replied Frances. She had been a month with Mrs. Carnegie now, and the changed life had certainly not improved her. "I am very sorry." Then she thought a moment. "Would you like to know why I am pale?"

"How interesting you are, my love!—so different from every other individual that comes to see me. It is good for my poor nerves to have my attention distracted to any other trivial matter. Tell me, dearest, why you are so pallid. I do trust the story is exciting—I need excitement, my darling. Is it an affair of the heart, precious?"

Frances's face grew very red. Even Mrs. Carnegie ought to have been satisfied for one brief moment with her bloom.

"I fear I can only give you a very prosaic reason," she said, in her gentle, sad voice. "I have little or no colour because I am always shut up in hot rooms, and because I miss the open-air life to which I was accustomed."

Mrs. Carnegie tried to smile, but a frown came between her brows.

"That means," she said, "that you would like to go out. You would leave your poor friend in solitude."

"I would take my friend with me," responded Frances. "And she should have the pleasure of seeing the colour coming back into my cheeks."

"And a most interesting sight it would be, darling. But oh, my poor, poor nerves! The neuralgia in my back is positively excruciating at this moment, dearest; I am positively on the rack; even a zephyr would slay me."

"On the contrary," replied Frances in a firm voice, "you would be strengthened and refreshed by the soft sweet air outside. Come, Mrs. Carnegie, I am your doctor and nurse, as well as your friend, and I prescribe a drive in the open air for you this morning. After dinner, too, your sofa shall be placed in the arbour; in short, I intend you to live out of doors while this fine weather lasts."

"Ah, dear imperious one! And yet you will kill me with this so-called kindness."

"On the contrary, I will make you a strong woman if I can. Now I am going to ring to order the carriage."

She bustled about, had her way, and to the amazement of everyone Mrs. Carnegie submitted to a drive for an hour in an open carriage.

All the time they were out Frances regaled her with stories of poor and suffering people. She told her stories with great skill, knowing just where to leave off, and just the points that would be most likely to interest her companion. So interesting did she make herself that never once during the drive was Mrs. Carnegie heard to mention the word nerves, and so practical and to the point were her words that the rich woman's purse was opened, and two five-pound notes were given to Frances to relieve those who stood most in need of them.

"Positively I am better," explained Mrs. Carnegie, as she ate her dainty dinner with appetite.

An hour later she was seated cosily in the arbour which faced down the celebrated Rose-walk, a place well known to all the visitors at Arden.

"You are a witch," she said to Frances, "for positively I do declare, the racking, torturing pain in my back is easier. The jolting of the carriage ought to have made it ten times worse, but it didn't. I positively can't understand it, my love."

"You forget," said Frances, "that although the jolting of the carriage might have tried your nerves a very little, the soft sweet air and change of scene did them good."

"And your conversation, dearest—the limpid notes of that sweetest voice. Ah, Frances, your tales were harrowing!"

"Yes, but they were more harrowing to be lived through. You, dear Mrs. Carnegie, to-day have relieved a certain amount of this misery."

"Ah, my sweet, how good your words sound! They are like balm to this tempest-tossed heart and nerve-racked form. Frances dear, we have an affinity one for the other. I trust it may be our fate to live and die together."

Frances could scarcely suppress a slight shudder. Mrs. Carnegie suddenly caught her arm.

"Who is that radiant-looking young creature coming down the Rose-walk?" she exclaimed—"See, ah, my dear Frances, what a little beauty! What style, what exquisite bloom!"

"Why, it is Fluff!" exclaimed Frances. She rushed from Mrs. Carnegie's side, and the next moment Miss Danvers' arms were round her neck.

"Yes, I've come, Frances," she exclaimed. "I have really come back. And who do you think I am staying with?"

"Oh, Fluff—at the Firs! It would be kind of you to cheer my poor old father up with a visit."

"But I'm not cheering him up with any visit—I'm not particularly fond of him. I'm staying with Mr. and Mrs. Spens."

Frances opened her eyes very wide; she felt a kind of shock, and a feeling of almost distrust crept over her.

"Mr. Spens? Surely you don't mean my father's lawyer, Mr. Spens, who lives in Martinstown, Fluff?"

"Yes, I don't mean anybody else."

"But I did not think you knew him."

"I did not when I last saw you, but I do now—very well, oh, very well indeed. He's a darling."

"Fluff! How can you speak of dull old Mr. Spens in that way? Well, you puzzle me. I don't know why you are staying with him."

"You are not going to know just at present, dearest Francie. There's a little bit of a secret afloat. Quite a harmless, innocent secret, which I promise you will break nobody's heart. I like so much being with Mr. Spens, and so does Philip—Philip is there too."

"Philip? Then they are engaged," thought Frances. "It was very soon. It is all right, of course, but it is rather a shock. Poor little Fluff—dear Philip—may they be happy!"

She turned her head away for a moment, then with a white face, but steady, quiet eyes, said in her gentlest tones—

"Am I to congratulate you, then, Fluff?"

"Yes, you are—yes, you are. Oh, I am so happy, and everything is delicious! It's going on beautifully. I mean the—the affair—the secret. Frances, I left Philip at the gate. He would like to see you so much. Won't you go down and have a chat with him?"

"I cannot; you forget that I am Mrs. Carnegie's companion. I am not my own mistress."

"That thin, cross-looking woman staring at us out of the bower, yonder? Oh, I'll take care of her. I promise you I'll make myself just as agreeable as you can. There, run down, run down—I see Philip coming to meet you. Oh, what a cold wretch you are, Frances! You don't deserve a lover like Philip Arnold—no, you don't."

"He is not my lover, he is yours."

"Mine? No, thank you—there, he is walking down the Rose-path. He is sick of waiting, poor fellow. I am off to Mrs. Carnegie. Oh, for goodness' sake, Francie, don't look so foolish!"

Fluff turned on her heel, put wings to her feet, and in a moment, panting and laughing, stood by Mrs. Carnegie's side.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she exclaimed when she could speak. "I know who you are, and I am dear Frances's cousin, Fluff. I knew you would not mind giving the poor things a chance, and allowing me to stay and try to entertain you for a little."

"Sit down, my dear, sit down. You really are a radiant little vision. It is really most entertaining to me to see anything so fresh and pretty. I must congratulate you on the damask roses you wear in your cheeks, my pretty one."

"Thank you very much; I know I have plenty of colour. Do you mind sitting a little bit, just so—ah, that is right. Now we'll have our backs to the poor things, and they'll feel more comfortable."

"My dear, extraordinary, entertaining little friend, what poor things do you mean?"

"Why, Frances and——"

"Frances, my companion—Frances Kane?"

"Yes, your companion. Only she oughtn't to be your companion, and she won't be long. Your companion, and my darling cousin, Frances Kane, and her lover."

"Her lover! I knew there was a love affair. That accounts for the pallor! Oh, naughty Frances; oh, cruel maiden, to deceive your Lucilla! I felt it, I guessed it, it throbbed in the air. Frances and her lover! My child, I adore lovers—let me get a peep at him. Dear Frances, dear girl. And is the course of true love going smoothly, miss—miss—I really don't know your name, my little charmer."

"My name is Fluff—please don't look round. It's a very melancholy love affair just at present, but I'm making it right."

"My little bewitching one, I would embrace you, but my poor miserable nerves won't permit of the least exertion. And so Frances, my Frances, has a lover! It was wrong of her, darling, not to tell of this."

"She gave him up to come to you."

"Oh, the noble girl! But do you think, my child, I would permit such a sacrifice? No, no; far rather would Lucilla Carnegie bury her sorrows in the lonely tomb. Lend me your handkerchief, sweet one—I can't find my own, and my tears overflow, Ah, my Frances, my Frances—I always knew you loved me, but to this extent—oh, it is too much!"

"But she didn't do it for you," said Fluff. "She wanted the money to help her father—he's such a cross, selfish old man. He wouldn't let her marry Philip, although Philip loved her for ten years, and saved all his pence in Australia to try and get enough money to marry her, and was nearly eaten himself by the blacks, but never forgot her day or night—and she loved him beyond anything. Don't you think, Mrs. Carnegie, that they ought to be married? Don't you think so?"

"My child, my little fair one, you excite me much. Oh, I shall suffer presently! But now your enthusiasm carries that of Lucilla Carnegie along with you. Yes, they ought to be married."

"Mrs. Carnegie, they *must* be married. I'm determined, and so is Philip, and so is Mr. Spens. Won't you be determined, too?"

"Yes, my child. But, oh, what shall I not lose in my Frances? Forgive one tear for myself—my little rose in June."

"You needn't fret for yourself at all. You'll be ever so happy when you've done a noble thing. Now listen. This is our little plot—only first of all promise, promise most faithfully, that you won't say a word to Frances."

"I promise, my child. How intensely you arouse my curiosity! Really I begin to live."

"You won't give Frances a hint?"

"No, no, you may trust me, little bright one."

"Well, I do trust you. I know you won't spoil all our plans. You'll share them and help us. Oh, what a happy woman you'll be by-and-bye! Now listen."

Then Fluff seated herself close to Mrs. Carnegie, and began to whisper an elaborately got-up scheme into that lady's ears, to all of which she listened with glowing eyes, her hands clasping Fluff's, her attention riveted on the sweet and eager face.

"It's my plot," concluded the little narrator. "Philip doesn't much like it—not some of it—but I say that I will only help him in my own way."

"My dear love, I don't think I ever heard anything more clever and original and absolutely to the point."

"Now did you? I can't sleep at night, thinking of it—you'll. be sure to help me?"

"Help you? With my heart, my life, my purse!"

"Oh, we don't want your purse. You see there's plenty of money—there's the fortune Philip made for Frances. It would be a great pity anything else should rescue her from this dilemma."

"Oh, it is so sweetly romantic!" said Mrs. Carnegie, clasping her hands.

"Yes, that's what I think. You'll be quite ready when the time comes?"

"Oh, quite! More than ready, my brightest fairy!"

"Well, here comes Frances—remember, you're not to let out a word, a hint.—I think I've amused Mrs. Carnegie quite nicely, Francie."

Frances's cheeks had that delicate bloom on them which comes now and then as a special and finishing touch, as the last crown of beauty to very pale faces. Her eyes were soft, and her dark eyelashes were still a little wet with some tears which were not unhappy ones.

"Philip wrung a confession out of me," she whispered to her little cousin. "No, Fluff—no, dear Fluff, it does no good—no good whatever. Still I am almost glad I told him."

"You told him what?"

"I won't say. It can never come to anything."

"I know what you said—you have made Philip very happy, Frances. Now I must run away."

CHAPTER XVII.

IT is necessary for some people to go away to be missed. There are certain very quiet people in the world, who make no fuss, who think humbly of themselves, who never on any occasion blow their own trumpets, who under all possible circumstances keep in the background, but who yet have a knack of filling odd corners, of smoothing down sharp angles, of shedding the sunshine of kindness and unselfishness over things generally. There are such people, and they are seldom very much missed until they go away.

Then there is a hue and cry. Who did this? Whose duty was the other? Where is such a thing to be found? Will nobody attend to this small but necessary want? The person who never made any talk, but did all the small things and made all the other people comfortable, is suddenly missed, and in an instant his or her virtues are discovered.

This was the case at the Firs when Frances on a certain morning drove away.

Watkins missed her—the stable-boy, the house-servants—the cat, the dog—many other domestic pets—and most of all, Squire Kane.

He was not neglected, but he had a sense of loneliness which began the moment he awoke, and never left him till he went to sleep again.

He had his meals regularly; he was called in good time in the morning; the new housekeeper lit his candle and brought it to him at night; his favourite fruit and his favourite flowers were still set before him, and the newspaper he liked best always lay by his plate at breakfast-time. Watkins was really an excellent gardener, and the ribbon border still bloomed and flourished, the birds sang in the trees as of yore, the lawn was smoothly kept. It was early September now, but the old place never looked gayer, sweeter, brighter. Still, somehow or other the squire was dull. His newspaper was there, but there was no one to cut it, no one to read it aloud to him. The flowers were making a wonderful bloom, but there was no special person to talk them over with. He had no one to tell his thoughts to, no one to criticise, no one to praise, and—saddest want of all to a nature like his—not a soul in the world to blame.

Really, Frances was very much missed—he could not have believed it before she went, for she was such a quiet grave woman, but there wasn't the least doubt on the subject. She had a way of making a place pleasant and home-like. Although she was so quiet herself, wherever she went the sun shone. It was quite remarkable how she was missed—even the Firs, even the home of his ancestors was quite dull without her.

Frances had been away for five weeks, and the squire was beginning to wonder if he could endure much more of his present monotonous life, when one day as he was passing up and down in the sunny south walk, he was startled, and his attention pleasingly diverted, by the jangling sweet sound of silver bells. A smart little carriage drawn by a pair of Arab ponies, and driven by a lady, drew up somewhere in the elm avenue, a girl in white jumped lightly out, and ran towards him.

"Good gracious!" he said to himself, "why, it's that dear little Fluff. Well, I am glad to see her."

He hobbled down the path as fast as he could, and as Fluff drew near, sang out cheerily—

"Now this is a pleasing surprise! But welcome to the Firs, my love, welcome most heartily to the Firs."

"Thank you, squire," replied Fluff. "I've come

to see you on a most important matter. Shall we go into the house, or may I talk to you here?"

"I hope, my dear, that you have come to say that you are going to pay me another visit—I do hope that is your important business. Your little room can be got ready in no time, and your guitar—I hope you've brought your guitar, my dear. It really is a fact, but I haven't had one scrap of entertainment since Frances went away—preposterous, is it not?"

"Well, of course I knew you'd miss her," said Fluff in a tranquil voice. "I always told you there was no one in the world like Frances."

"Yes, my dear, yes—I will own, yes, undoubtedly, Frances, for all she is so quiet, and not what you would call a young person, is a good deal missed in the place. But you have not answered my query yet, Fluff. Have you come to stay?"

"No, I've not come to stay: at least, I think not. Squire, I am glad you appreciate dear Frances at last."

"Of course, my love, of course. A good creature—not young, but a good worthy creature. It is a great affliction to me, being obliged, owing to sad circumstances, to live apart from my daughter. I am vexed that you cannot pay me a little visit, Fluff. Whose carriage was that you came in? and what part of the world are you staying in at present?"

"That dear little pony-trap belongs to Mrs. Carnegie, of Arden; and her niece, Mrs. Passmore, drove me over. I am staying with Mr. and Mrs. Spens, at Martinstown."

"Spens the lawyer?"

"Yes, Spens the lawyer. I may stay with him if I like, may I not? I am a great friend of his. He sent me over here to-day to see you on most important business."

"My dear Fluff! Really, if Spens has business with me, he might have the goodness to come here himself."

"He couldn't: he has a very bad influenza cold; he's in bed with it. That was why I offered to come. Because the business is so very important."

"How came he to talk over my affairs with a child like you?"

"Well, as you'll learn presently, they happen to be my affairs too. He thought, as he couldn't stir out of his bed, and I knew all the particulars, that I had better come over and explain everything to you, as the matter is of such great importance and as a decision must be arrived at to-day."

Fluff spoke with great eagerness. Her eyes were glowing, her cheeks burning, and there wasn't a scrap of her usual fun about her.

In spite of himself the squire was impressed.

"I cannot imagine what you have to say to me," he said; "but perhaps we had better go into the house."

"I think we had," said Fluff; "for as what I have got to say will startle you a good deal, you had better sit in your favourite arm-chair, and have some water near you in case you feel faint."

As she spoke she took his hand, led him through the French windows into his little parlour, and seated him comfortably in his favourite chair.

"Now I'll begin," said Fluff. "You must not interrupt me, although I'm afraid you will be a little startled. You have mortgaged the Firs for six thousand pounds."

"My dear Ellen!"—an angry flush rose in the squire's cheeks.—"Who has informed you with regard to my private affairs? Frances has done very——"

"Frances has had nothing to say to it; I won't go on if you interrupt me. You have mortgaged the Firs for six thousand pounds, to some people of the name of Dawson and Blake, in London. Frances lives at Arden, in order to pay them £300 a year interest on the mortgage."

"Yes, yes; really Frances—really Spens——"

"Now do stop talking; how can I tell my story if you interrupt every minute? Messrs. Dawson and Blake were very anxious to get back their money, and they wanted to sell the Firs in order to realise it. Mr. Spens had the greatest work in the world to get them to accept Frances's noble offer. He put tremendous pressure to bear, and at last, very unwillingly, they yielded."

"Well, well, my dear"—the squire wiped the moisture from his brow—"they have yielded, that is the great thing—that is the end of the story, at least for the present."

"No, it is not the end of the story," said Fluff, looking up angrily into the old man's face. "You thought to make it the end. You were quite satisfied, for it seemed all right to you; you were to stay on quietly here, and have your comforts, and the life you thought so pleasant; and Frances was to give up Philip Arnold, whom she loves, and go away to toil and slave and be miserable. Oh, it was all right for you, but it was bitterly all wrong for Frances!"

"My dear little Fluff, my dear Ellen, pray try and compose yourself; I assure you my side of the bargain is dull, very dull. I am alone: I have no companionship. Not a living soul who cares for me is now to be found at the Firs. My side is not all sunshine, Fluff; and I own it—yes, I will own it, Fluff, I miss Frances very much."

"I am glad of that, I am very glad. Now I am coming to the second part of my story. A week ago Mr. Spens had a letter from Messrs. Dawson and Blake to say that they had sold their mortgage on the Firs to a stranger; a man who had plenty of money, but who had taken a fancy to the Firs, and who wished to get it cheap."

The squire sat upright on his chair.

"Mr. Spens wrote at once to the new owner of the mortgage, and asked him if he would take five per cent. interest on his money, and not disturb you while you lived. Mr. Spens received a reply yesterday, and it is because of that I am here now."

The squire's face had grown very white; his lips trembled a little.

"What was the reply?" he asked. "Really—really, a most extraordinary statement; most queer of Spens not to come to me himself about it. What was the reply, Fluff?"

"I told you Mr. Spens was ill and in bed. The stranger's reply was not favourable to your wishes. He wishes for the Firs; he has seen the place, and would like to live there. He says you must sell; or, there is another condition."

"What is that? This news is most alarming and disquieting. What is the other condition—the alternative?"

Fluff rose, yawned slightly, and half turned her back to the squire.

"It is scarcely worth naming," she said, in a light and indifferent voice; "for as Frances loves Philip, of course she would not think of marrying anyone else. But it seems that this stranger, when he was poking about the place, had caught sight of Frances, and he thought her very beautiful and very charming. In short, he fell in love with her, and he says if you will let him marry her, that he and she can live here, and you need never stir from the Firs. I mention this," said Fluff, "but of course there's no use in thinking of it, as Frances loves Philip."

"But there is a great deal of use in thinking of it, my dear; I don't know what you mean by talking in that silly fashion. A rich man falls in love with my daughter. Really, Frances must be much better-looking than I gave her credit for. This man, who practically now owns the Firs, wishes to release me from all difficulties if I give him Frances. Of course I shall give him Frances. It is an admirable arrangement. Frances would be most handsomely provided for, and I shall no longer be lonely with my daughter and son-in-law residing at the Firs."

"But Frances loves Philip!"

"Pooh! a boy-and-girl affair. My dear, I never did, and never will, believe in anything between Frances and Arnold. I always said Arnold should be your husband."

"I don't want him, thank you."

"Frances was always a good girl," continued the squire; "an excellent, good, obedient girl. She refused Philip because I told her to, and now she'll marry this stranger because I wish her to. Really, my dear, on the whole your news is pleasant; only, by the way, you have not told me the name of the man who now holds my mortgage."

"He particularly wishes his name to be kept a secret for the present, but he is a nice fellow; I have seen him. I think, if Frances could be got to consent to marry him, he would make her an excellent husband."

"My dear, she must consent. Leave my daughter to me; I'll manage her."

"Well, the stranger wants an answer to-day."

"How am I to manage that? I must write to Frances, or see her. Here she is at this moment, driving down the avenue with Mrs. Carnegie. Well, that is fortunate. Now, Fluff, you will take my part; but, of course, Frances will do what I wish."

"You can ask her, squire. I'm going to walk about outside with Mrs. Carnegie."

"And you won't take my part?"

"I won't take anybody's part. I suppose Frances can make up her own mind."

When Miss Kane came into her father's presence her eyes were brighter, and her lips wore a happier expression than the squire had seen on them for many a long day. She stepped lightly, and looked young and fresh.

Fluff and Mrs. Carnegie paced up and down in the south walk. Mrs. Carnegie could walk now, and she was certainly wonderfully improved in appearance.

"Beloved little fairy," she whispered to her companion, "this excitement almost overpowers me. It was with the utmost difficulty I could control myself as we drove over. Our sweet Frances looks happy, but I do not think she suspects anything. Dear little one, are you certain, quite certain, that the hero of the hour has really arrived?"

"Philip? I have locked him up in the dining-room," said Fluff, "and he is pacing up and down there now like a caged lion. I do hope the squire will be quick, or he'll certainly burst the lock of the door."

The two ladies paced the south walk side by side.

"We'll give them half an hour," said Fluff.

When this time had expired, she took Mrs. Carnegie's hand, and they both approached the open windows of the squire's parlour. When the squire saw them, he rose and confronted them. Angry red spots were on his cheeks; his hands trembled. Frances was seated at the table; she looked very pale, and as the two ladies approached she was wiping some tears silently from her eyes.

"Yes, look at her," said the squire, who was almost choking with anger. "She refuses him—she absolutely refuses him! She is satisfied that her poor old father shall end his days in the workhouse, rather than unite herself to an amiable and worthy man, who can amply provide for her. Oh, it is preposterous! I have no patience with her; she won't even listen to me. Not a word I say has the smallest effect."

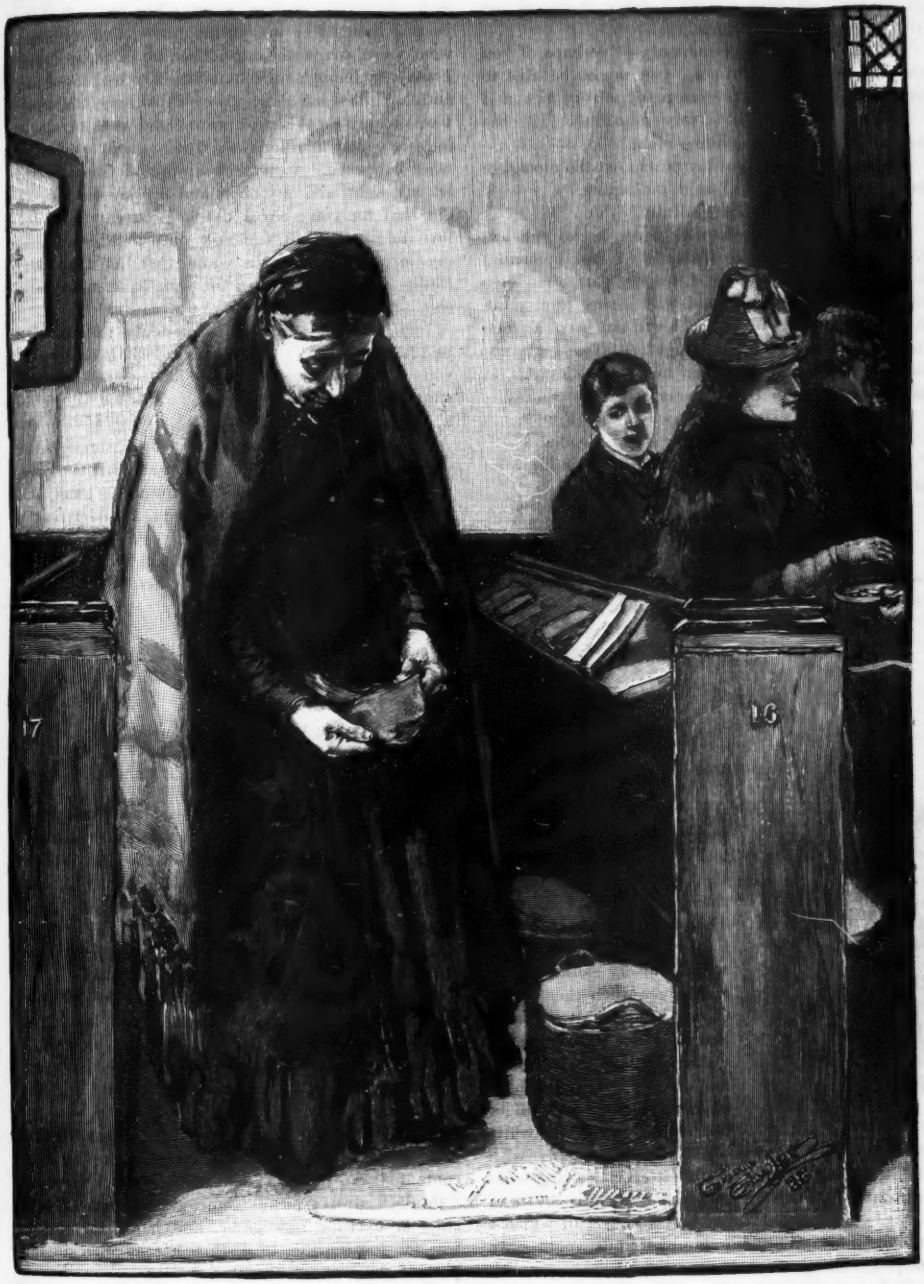
"Because, father——"

"No, Frances, I won't listen to any of your 'becauses.' But never, never again even profess to care for your father. Don't waste words, my child; for words are empty when they are not followed by deeds."

"I must take an answer to Mr. Spens to-day," said Fluff. "Perhaps, if Frances thought a little, she would change her mind."

These words seemed to sting Frances, who rose quickly to her feet.

"You know why I cannot help my father in this



"The poor, poor woman, who, with two shillings a week to live on, fished out of her halfpence a new shilling for the collection, because it was blessed Christmas Day."

"THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FATHER CHRISTMAS."—*p.* 53.

particular," she said. "Oh! I think, between you all, you will drive me mad."

"Perhaps," said Fluff suddenly—"perhaps, if you saw the gentleman, Frances, you might be able to give a different answer. He really is very nice, and —and—the fact is, he's very impatient. He has arrived—he is in the dining-room."

"The gentleman who has purchased the mortgage is in the dining-room!" said the squire.

He rubbed his hands gleefully.

"Excellent! Frances will never be so rude as to refuse a rich man to his face. I look upon him already as our deliverer. I, for my part, shall give him a hearty welcome, and will assure him, if he will only give me time, that I will not leave a stone unturned to overcome my daughter's absurd infatuation. Frances, do you hear me? I desire you to behave politely to the stranger when he comes."

"Perhaps I had better go away," said Frances.

"No, no, dear Francie; do stay," pleaded Fluff. "I'll go and fetch the gentleman; I know him; he is really very nice."

She darted away.

Frances turned her back to the window.

"You know, father, all I have done for you," she said, her beautiful eyes shining and her slim figure very erect. "I have loved Philip—oh! so deeply, so faithfully!—for ten years. For five of these years I thought he was in his grave; and my heart went there, too, with him. Then he came back, and I was very happy; for I found that he had loved me, and thought of me alone, also, all that long, long time. I was happy then, beyond words, and no woman ever more fervently thanked God. Then—then—you know what happened. I gave Philip up. I consented to let my light, and my hope, and my joy die out. I did that for you; but I did *not* consent to let my love die; and I tell you now, once and for all, that my love will never die; and that, as I so love Philip, I can never, even for your sake, marry any one but Philip!"

"Oh! Francie, Francie!" suddenly exclaimed a joyful little voice. "No one in all the world wants you to marry anyone else! The stranger isn't a stranger. Say 'Yes' to your father and to Philip at the same time."

Frances turned; Arnold stepped in through the open window and put his arm round her.

"Now, sir," he said, holding Frances's hand, and turning to the squire, "which am I to have—the Firs or Frances?"

Of course, everybody present knew the answer, so there is no need to record it here.

THE END.

THE CHRIST-CHILD'S GIFT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST," "A CHRISTMAS DREAM," ETC. ETC.



THEY were a desolate little couple, this small boy and girl, who were curled up upon the broad window-seat of their dull London nursery. Their very clothes bore that untidy, don't-care sort of look which nursery clothes are so apt to get when there is no chance of their little owners being suddenly sent for by visitors to the drawing-room, and the big bow of Hermie's sash was slipping round under one elbow, while the white socks on Whiffles' feet had parted company with his little strap shoes, and the latter were lying comfortably neglected on the floor beneath. A wax doll in a bright pink dress, and a huge ball which I do not think Whiffles' chubby hands could have clasped, were on a chair near them; but even they looked uninviting, for the children were suffering from that unpleasant feeling which occasionally seizes the wisest of us: they were tired of nothing to do.

At last the boy broke the silence.

"That nasty old doll is makin' faces at me, Hermie," he began, cautiously, pointing to Miss Pink Dress upon the chair near them. "Do you know, Hermie, I was finking," at five years old master Whiffles spoke nearly as clearly as his sister, who was three years his senior, with the exception of his "*th*'s," which were still a stumbling-block to him: "I was finking we might chop off her head an' bury her, an' then she would never make faces any more."

It was a bold thing to suggest, for the doll was new, and Hermie tender-hearted; but instead of jumping up to protect her property, she only shook her head, and looked very solemn indeed.

"Mustn't talk. I am having a think," she said mysteriously.

Whiffles nodded, gave a delighted little chuckle, and sliding down from his high seat, he went off contentedly to the other end of the room. Hermie's "thinks" always meant some grand piece of mischief or exciting new game, and her little brother was far too sensible to disturb her at such an important moment.

"Is you ready now?" he asked, a minute later, under the belief that he had been quiet for at least half an hour; and, climbing back into his place, he put both arms round his sister's neck, and gave her an affectionate hug.

"You have such *boo*tiful finks, dear," he said earnestly, for Hermie made his little world, and he thought her the cleverest and in every way the most wonderful person there could possibly be. "Is there 'ventures in it?"

"*Ad*ventures," corrected the elder child. "Yes, that is it. We are going to have them d'rectly minute, and it will be more fun than we ever had before. You see this little balcony kind of place?"

Twisting herself round, she knelt up upon the cushions, and Whiffles followed her example.

The other side of the window was a broad stone ledge, which was protected by a tolerably high balustrade, and which ran the whole length of that particular row of houses. It had been built there as a protection from fire, for if it broke out in any house, the people who lived in it could quietly step out upon "this balcony kind of place," as Hermie called it, and walk along the backs of the other houses until they were in safety. But the children did not know the real reason it had been built. They thought it had been put there to accommodate the cats, and Whiffles said so, as they stood surveying it now together.

"This is the pussies' walk. Is that where the 'venture is?"

"We'll climb out and go straight on, and see who the other people are; and when we see someone nice, we'll tap at the glass and go in."

Hermie threw back her head to toss away the long fair hair which was always falling forward into her eyes, and caught her little brother by both his hands.

"Oh! won't it be lovely!" she cried, with a number of little dimples chasing each other round her rosy lips, and with her eyes sparkling. "Make haste, Whiffles. Jane won't be up here again till tea-time, and no one will miss us."

"Must we take something to eat?" Whiffles asked gravely. He was not a greedy boy, but he remembered that Robinson Crusoe, of whom Hermie had read from the fat green book upon the shelf yonder, had made various preparations before setting out upon any journey, and he wanted to do the same.

Hermie considered. "Nothing to eat," she said at last; "'cause we haven't anything. But we might take our sea-side pails; and I think Clara Louise would like to come too. I am sure she is pale enough."

Now, Clara Louise was only a rag doll, who had lost her hair, and who had never had any legs, and, before deciding upon taking her, Hermie had looked wistfully at the bright frock of her latest treasure. But she felt afraid of hurting Clara Louise's feelings if she were left at home while the fresher doll was taken out, so Miss Pink Dress was left alone in her glory. And I think Hermie's choice was quite the prettiest part of the expedition.



"'I am having a think.'"—*p.* 42.

That same October afternoon, while the children were making plans, a girl whose face was bright, although it looked a little tired just then, was walking slowly up the stairs of the next house. Now, this house, although it stood next door, was by no means as grand as its neighbour. Instead of being beautifully furnished, and being ruled by a frowning old lady in a black silk dress, whom the children called "grandmamma," and her friends "Lady Rayton," there were at least half a dozen different sets of people living in this curtainless ugly house, and the poorest of them was this girl, who lived at the very top, and whose face, even when it was tired, looked kind and kissable.

She was an artist, and was generally very busy; but this afternoon, when she reached her own room, she lay back in her chair instead of standing at her easel, for she had just finished one picture, and was trying to think what the next should be about.

"If I were as lucky as some folk, I should just see the very scene that is worth painting," she was saying to herself rather enviously, and then—she raised her eyes and saw the very thing she wanted!

Two little children, a girl and a boy, were peeping at her through the window, with their pretty faces

flushed with excitement, and with bubbling laughter breaking from their parted lips. The younger was a tiny lad, with short golden curls clustering round the shining tin pot which he wore helmet-wise upon his head, and with eyes as blue as hyacinth-bells which have grown in a shady nook; and, in a sudden dread that he might come to harm, the girl-artist rushed to the window, and throwing it up, she took the little fellow in her arms.

"Why, you darling!" she cried, as she lifted him in, half delighted, half scared. "Have you dropped from the skies, you elves, or are you fairy burglars? I have had visitors before, but they never came to me from cloudland!"

"How do you do?" asked Hermie politely. She had clambered in unaided, and now stood surveying the young lady, who was cuddling Whiffles as if she loved him, and who yet was asking such strange questions. "We haven't come from cloudland; we have come from next door. He is Reginald, and I am Hermione."

"What grand names!" exclaimed the young lady, and then she kissed Whiffles again, and began to laugh. It was a soft laugh, and somebody who used to listen to it (and who afterwards became a great friend of the children's too) used to say that it reminded him of the hushed song of a bird mingling with sunny water as it danced caressingly over shining stones; and of a woman whose arms folded lovingly round the clinging weight of a little child; and of all that was beautiful and good. But Hermie and Whiffles did not think of any of these things; they only knew that her laugh made them want to laugh too, and so they did, and by the time their laughter ceased, the three were very good friends indeed.

"And now tell me all about yourselves," she said, at last. "What made you want to come to me?"

So they told her, and then Mary—she said that was her name, and that they might call her by it—wanted to know if they would not be missed, and someone be frightened about them.

"There is not a someone," said Hermie cheerfully. "Miss Piper—she is my governess—only comes in the morning, and we don't often see gran'ma, except on Sundays, and Jane is always going away to be with the other servants down-stairs. No one will miss us till five o'clock."

It was on the tip of Mary's tongue to say what of their mother, but she never asked children a lot of questions she would have thought rude to ask grown-up people, and perhaps that was one of the reasons all children liked her.

This particular question, however, soon settled itself, for the little ones began wandering round the room to look at the pictures, and came to a standstill before an engraving of Rivière's "Sympathy."

"I fink she is sorry 'cause her mother's dead," said Whiffles, looking up at the sad-eyed child in the picture with his own eyes very widely opened; but Hermie disagreed.

"I don't think she looks sorry enough for that," she said dreamily. "You are so very veriest sorry for your mother, you know; perhaps it is her father."

Mary stooped to kiss the wistful upturned face; she did not know which part of the little speech sounded the more pathetic.

Then they had tea, and some slices of dry bread with it. "I can't afford butter for a long time, because I bought the engraving," Mary explained merrily, and as if it were quite a natural thing that she could not have both; and while they had it the children talked to her.

They told her about their uncle Victor, and about how Jane had said Whiffles was his heir, and would be a very grand gentleman one of these days.

"I thought she meant all his hair had gone to Whiffles, and that is why he is so bald," remarked Hermie, "but when I told gran'ma, it made her so cross that I mightn't go down-stairs for a month."

Then her brother had his little say, and then, tea being over, Mary began talking to them. I do not know what started it, but the talk turned upon the coming Christmastide, which was still two months away.

"I went to school in Germany," Mary said, "and that is a country the other side of the seas, where they think a great deal about this beautiful season, and all that it means."

"Germany! I know it," called out Hermie, proud to show that Miss Piper's teaching had not been wasted. "It is a pink place on the map."

Mary laughed: "That is it, dear; but somehow it does not look so pink when you get there. Well, in this school of mine, we used to ha e a big Christmas-tree covered with lighted candles, and with little presents hanging from the branches, one for each girl."

Hermie drew a long breath. "That must have been lovely," she said. "Gran'mamma does not let us go to parties, so I never saw a pretty tree like that. I don't like Christmas."

"Oh, yes, you do, my darling." Mary slid one hand round the little girl's neck as she knelt beside her, and with the other she drew Whiffles' curly head down upon her shoulder. "I am quite sure you care very much. Why, it is a birthday, Hermie. All little children care for birthdays, don't they?"

"A birthday?" repeated the child doubtfully: this was a new way of looking at it. "It comes in the hymn—Christmas does, I mean—and the words are long; I don't understand it."

She caught up her silk sash and began industriously plaiting the knotted fringes, feeling suddenly shy; but Whiffles raised his head, and kissed Mary full upon the lips.

"Make a story of it. Tell us about Kissmas," he said, coaxingly, and Mary obediently began at once.

"Our Father Who art in heaven," she said: wondering how much or how little these motherless



"Two little children . . . were peeping at her."—*p.* 43.

children had been taught. "You know Who that is, don't you, my sweet? That is God, Who made this beautiful world, and you, and me, and Hermie, and Who loved us so much He sent us His only Son."

"I know," Whiffles cried excitedly, and rumpling up his yellow curls with both his chubby hands. "He was a baby boy. We've got a picture in the nursery, at home, and He is lying in a stable."

"That was because His mother was so poor, and she had nowhere better to cradle this little holy, helpless, beautiful Child."

"And it was His birthday," said Hermie softly. She had left off plaiting her sash, and leaned forward, with both elbows planted upon this new friend's knees. "What presents did He have, Mary?"

"Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. That means the very best and most precious things which could be brought Him. For the men who carried them knew that this pretty Baby, who lay cooing and babbling upon the golden straw, was the Christ-child, and the great Prince of Peace Who owned the whole world. And what else do you think they brought Him, Hermie?"

The child looked up and seemed to read her answer in the kind eyes. "Loves," she said.

"Right, dear, they brought Him love too, or else none of their gifts would have been worth His having. Oh, my darlings"—she waited a moment before saying these last words, and drew the children closer with those strong young arms, which felt so empty sometimes, and so satisfied to-day—"the Christ-Child is coming to us again very soon. Won't you try and prepare for Him, and give Him presents, and give Him love? People are so busy, and we are all so full of our own pleasures, that we are apt to forget all about Him, and it is so sad when the children do."

"I won't! Really, I won't!" Hermie answered her; and Whiffles said the same.

"And now, my chicks, you must be going back, for it is a quarter to five," Mary said briskly, after she had walked to the window and satisfied herself that there could be no harm in her visitors going

back the way they came. "What is it, Hermie? Oh, yes, you may come again another day if you tell Jane about it first, and she does not think grandmamma will mind. Good-bye, dear little lad. Let me lift you up; here's the pail. Now for the sister. Good-bye, and God bless you!"

"Good-bye, good-bye," returned the children, kissing their hands to her; and as she stood watching them clamber in at their nursery window, the sound of Whiffles' baby-voice was borne back to her by the wind.

"God bless you!" he echoed.

CHAPTER II.

THE children talked it all over with Jane that same night, while sitting in front of the night-nursery fire, warming their bare toes and eating their supper of sponge-cakes preparatory to be tucked up in bed. She was a good-natured woman, and was glad when any fresh pleasures entered their dull lives, though she was not quite good-natured enough to care to stay much with them in the nursery instead of going to her fellow-servants down-stairs. So, when Hermie very carefully explained that "Mary" had said that they were not to come again unless Jane were quite sure that grandmamma would not mind, Jane was quite as decided on that point as they wished her to be.

"You go just as often as the lady will have you, missy dear," she advised Hermie. "Only mind and wrap up Master Whiffles, and mind you are back again before five."

So it was arranged, and so it came to pass that during the next few weeks the new friends saw a great deal of each other. The morning, of course, was given up to Miss Piper and lesson-hours, and after their early dinner came the hour which they spent like little prisoners tramping round and round the dull square; but after that the children's time was their own until five o'clock, and it was very seldom that they did not scramble out of the one window and in at the other to spend it with Mary. At first it weighed rather heavily upon Hermie's mind that they were wasting the artist's time, for these fears and anxieties are apt to trouble the little ones much more than we bigger folk are usually willing to believe; but after turning it over and worrying about it for some days, the little girl hit upon an idea which proved to be a happy one.

"Don't you think if you painted Whiffles we should be helping you do another picture, and then we shan't feel so much in your way?" she suggested to Mary. "He is rather a pretty boy, isn't he? and I promise you he will keep very still."

It had been an effort to screw up her courage to say this, so it was really quite delightful to see how pleased Mary was. She said it was a beautiful thought—which it was, of course, because it was a kind one—and that, if Hermie did not mind, she would like to make a picture of them both together, just as she had first seen them getting in at the window.

While Mary painted she told the children tales, and so far from not moving one finger, they might laugh right out loud if they liked. And then, when the painting was over for the afternoon, there came long, delicious talks in the firelight, when Mary would lie back in her big lounging-chair with Whiffles resting in her arms, and Hermie stretched on the rug at her feet. Sometimes she told them about her own childhood, and of a little brother who had died, and of how she had longed for him to come back to her.

"I was only a tiny child when Frank died," said Mary in such a sweet, hushed voice that Hermie crept closer to her, and laid her head caressingly against the other's knee; "and I thought the sky was the floor of Paradise, where my little brother had gone. I remember being sent into the garden that first sad day, because all the house was so quiet and so gloomy inside the closed blinds; and standing to watch a tiny white cloud which was sailing through the blue of the skies. I thought it was the white wings of God's angel who was carrying Frank to Him. And then, at night, I knelt up in the bed, which seemed so wide and cold without Frank's curly head upon the empty pillow, and I peeped through the window-blinds. There was a great thunder-storm that night, and I could not see the white cloud I had watched in the morning, and so I began to cry. But when there came a flash of gold-sparkling lightning, I thought it was heaven's floor opening, and I stopped crying because I thought I saw my little brother, and his face was so happy."

"He was happy without you?" Whiffles asked wonderingly.

But Hermie said, "He was happy because he was with 'Our Father Who art in Heaven.'" And then there came one of those pauses when nobody spoke, and when the firelight glowed very brightly indeed.

"Kissmas will be here soon," Whiffles announced presently, jerking himself into a sitting position, and giving his yellow mop a refreshing shake. "I've begun my paper chain."

"Oh, have you?" asked Mary, with much interest, though she knew all about the paper chain quite as well as Whiffles himself. "How do you make it?"

"It is pink and white cake-paper," both children answered in a rush, and then Hermie went on: "You know it is all soft and fluffy when it is tied round a plum cake, don't you? But it is not fluffy to begin with, that is because it has been snipped up with scissors. It is quite smooth, and we cut it into strips, and then pin the strips into rings, and then catch them one into the other, first pink and then white, so as to make a long chain. It is so pretty. We are going to frame the pictures and windows with it to make them look all bright and Christmasy like they dic . . dac. . . ."

"Decorate, dear?"

"Yes; decorate the churches."

"I see," said Mary, as the excited child paused for breath; "and didn't I hear something too about a holly wreath?"

"That is to hang under *the* picture," returned Hermie: the one with the Christ-Child in the stable that Whiffles told about the first time we came. Only that costs two shillings, and I know we have not enough pennies in our money-box for that."

"Not enough for that," echoed Whiffles, sorrowfully, while the tears gathered slowly in Hermie's grey eyes.

It was such a great matter to them, these poor little people—even Mary could not understand quite how much, this getting of the holly wreath, on which they had set their hearts. It was to be their gift—their present, as Whiffles called it—to the dear Lord upon His birthday. They were both very fond of holly—as what child is not?—with its dark shining leaves and glistening berries; and when in the twilight of their own nursery they had first thought of getting the wreath, they had clung very close together while Hermie had spoken of it. Somewhere—everywhere—she said, the Christ-Child was. He knew what they were thinking of now, and He would take their offering at Christmastide, because it meant loving Him very much not to spend their weekly pennies for such a long time, but to save them up to buy the holly. She almost thought—the soft voice faltering for a moment in the darkness—that He would accept it as if it were "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh"

It was the night before this talk with Mary that they had had this other talk by themselves, and had gone over the contents of their money box, so when she asked them now how much there was in it, they were able to answer her very exactly.

"A sixpence, an' two pennies, an' three pennies together in silver, an' one halfpenny, an' two farthings."

"That means—let me see—oh! a shilling," Mary told them; "and there are three more pennies coming to you each in these three weeks before Christmas, so that will bring it up to eighteenpence; that means you will still be sixpence short."

Both boy and girl looked very grave indeed.

"You see, dears," Mary went on, "I could give it you if I liked, but then the wreath would be hardly your gift, would it?"

"No, it wouldn't," said both the children at once; and Hermie added, "I couldn't ask *anybody* to take a present from me that was not all my own."

"So the only other way that I can see is that you must earn it."

Mary smiled into the serious upturned faces, and then the little ones smiled back at her. They were waiting to hear how it was to be done.

"If every day until Christmas Eve you both work very hard at your lessons; if Whiffles does not sit dreaming about 'ventures' instead of listening to what Miss Piper is saying, and Hermie does her copy steadily instead of drawing holly-wreaths upon the blotting-paper, then you will both get the full number of marks, and if you do, I will give you a new threepenny bit each, and that will just make up the two shillings you want. Do you quite understand?"

Did they understand? I only wonder they did not strangle her in their delight, for brother and sister flung themselves upon her with cries of rapture, which sounded a good deal more like an Indian war-whoop than two little children pledging themselves to conquer their laziness, and "work very hard," at the lessons of which neither of them was particularly fond.

Cold weather and Miss Piper did not agree with each other, and so it was hard upon her, poor thing! to have a long walk through the slippery streets before reaching her pupils, who, meanwhile, had been toasting before the cosy fire. But, also, it was unfortunate that the form this disagreement with the weather took was in being doubly stern about all sorts of little things which, to the children, really did not seem to matter one way or the other. So what with these difficulties, and what with a new



"Molly cried so much that at first the children could not understand what she said."—*p.* 48.

trouble on Whiffles' part, which was neither more nor less than wanting to cry whenever he was spoken to sharply, it required a good deal of remembrance and love to avoid losing their full marks.

And then, just a week before Christmas, something happened which was very perplexing—that means very muddling—indeed. The two were sent for to the drawing-room to see some visitors, and one of them was an old gentleman who thought he was making himself "a great favourite with the young people" by playfully prodding at them with a heavy gold-knobbed walking-stick, and asking them questions about the price of certain herrings, which, to Hermie's amazement, he divided into halves. She had not much time, however, to look at him, for Whiffles' chin was beginning to quiver, and his anxious little sister knew that that meant a coming flood of tears.

"It does not hurt to be poked, and it amuses him, I think. Don't cry, Whiffles dear," she pleaded; and, taking courage from her whisper, the little lad's face was clearing, when the visitor, with an alarming "Hey, my boy!" proceeded to ask him in his turn the price of a couple of herrings, if a herring and a half cost three halfpence?

Whiffles' curiosity overcame his fear.

"You is very fond of fiss," he observed gravely. "Is you a fissmonger?"

To do the old gentleman justice, he laughed very much, and was not a bit angry; but Lady Rayton was, and she spoke to them all three in such an awful voice, that the one stopped laughing, and the other burst into tears; while as for Hermie, she shook in her shoes.

"My dear duke," she said, "I pray you to forgive my grandchildren.—Reginald, leave the room instantly. Hermione, take him away."

Hermie hustled him out of the room as fast as she could, and they were halfway up the back stairs before she ventured to stop and comfort him.

"Don't cry any more, Whiffles," she begged, dabbing at his wet eyes with her ever-useful sash. "It wasn't your fault you thought he was a fishmonger, though perhaps it is not as nice as being a duke. But you shouldn't ask questions; it is rude."

"He asked me questions," said Whiffles, resentfully, and Hermie gave a patient sigh.

"Lots of things are rude when you are little, and not when you aren't," she explained.

"Then I'll ask questions when I'm big, and I'll say 'Children must eat bread-y butter,' and I'll eat free biscuits, like gran'ma, so now!" Whiffles answered determinedly.

Hermie kissed him. As long as he would be comforted, she did not mind very much what it was made his tears cease, and they went climbing up the stairs together, hand in hand, and as merry as a couple of kittens.

Suddenly they met Molly, the kitchen-maid: her eyes were red, and she held a broken cup in her hand. She stared at the unusual sight of the children upon the back staircase, until Hermie explained that they were afraid of meeting more visitors if they went the ordinary way.

"What is the matter with your eyes? Have you hurt yourself?" she ended abruptly.

Molly cried so much that at first the children could not understand what she said. By slow degrees, however, they found out that Mrs. Pratt, the stately housekeeper, was very angry with her, because she had broken another cup.

"She sez I may buy one like it, or I may pack," sobbed Molly. "I've broke such a many, and she sez she'll 'have no more of my flightiness.'"

"Why don't you, then?" inquired Hermie.

"It's a shillin', miss; I haven't got one, and I daren't sell anything to raise the money, for fear Mrs. Pratt should hear of it. Oh dear! oh dear! and me so proud and all at getting such a nice place." She threw her apron over her head, and sat down upon the landing while the children stood sorrowfully looking at her.

"Hermie!" Whiffles was twitching at her sleeve. "Stoop down, I want to whisper to you. Do you fink——"

"Yes. Shall we do it?" Hermie knew what he meant. "We have it, you know."

They waited a moment in silence, and then looked at each other and nodded.

"Molly," Hermie asked with a second heavy sigh—for the troubles of this world seemed pressing very weightily upon her just then—"if we lend you a shilling, could you give it us back again soon?"

Whiffles' eyes flashed. How clever Hermie was. But Molly's answer disappointed them both.

"Oh yes certain, sure, as soon as ever the new year is turned, miss. Will you lend it me? Bless your kind little hearts."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Hermie sadly. "If you can't give it back by Christmas Day, we shan't want it at all, thank you. Come up to the nursery straight away, and I will give it you now."

So they went up-stairs, and the cherished little hoard was broken into, and Molly made happy, but when she had gone away again she left the children very quiet indeed.

"We must get a teeny weeny wreath now, for one shilling and not two," said Hermie mournfully, and she tossed back her long hair, and blinked both her eyes very hard to prevent the tears coming.

"This is the love part too," she said presently, and in the same dreamy voice in which she had spoken of the child in the picture wanting her mother. "This is the love part, too, and I think—it will—count for part of the wreath."

CHAPTER III.

MOLLY'S troubles came upon a Thursday, and two days later two wonderful things happened. First of all, a letter came from Miss Piper saying that she would not be able to come to

them again until after the Christmas holidays. The letter was written to Lady Rayton, and the governess no doubt gave a number of excellent reasons and excuses why this should be, but all that the children understood was, that she was not coming, and very glad of it they were. Whiffles had gone into the night nursery, and had climbed back again into his cot, when Hermie ran in to him with the news.

"I'se glad," he said languidly. "Oh, Hermie, this one is the hottest winter-time that ever I knew; I feel like that glass box where they put the ferns." He propped his hot little face on to the brass rim of the cot, and peeped at his sister, who was disappointed he did not seem more pleased. "'Know I couldn't have got the marks to-day, an' now the pennies are all safe," he added contentedly; and then dropped back upon the pillow, and went off into a heavy sleep.

He was waked from it ten minutes later by his sister appearing again, and this time with a face from which all the pleasure had vanished.

"Whiffles dear," she began, "something else has happened. Guess what it is."

"Can't," said Whiffles sleepily, and he rolled over on to the other side.

"Oh, you are going to sleep again!" cried Hermie, in dismay. "You are a lazy little boy, Whiffles, and this is so particular. Jane is going away."

"For long?"

"No, for short. She will be back again to-night; but oh! Whiffles, her brother Jim is ill. She says there is 'a good deal of illness about,' though I don't know about what. She made me go to Pratt's room, and ask her for some oranges for Jim, and Pratt is grumpy, and says there are not any left. Jane is like Molly, and wont have any money till after Christmas, so she can't buy any. Shall we send Jim some oranges, Whiffles?"



"Hermie was strong enough to scramble in by herself."—*p.* 50.

Whiffles didn't understand. "We haven't any," he said; and then, more eagerly, "Oh, Hermie! I fink I would like oranges, too."

"There is the wreath money," said Hermie, and stopped short.

"He shan't have it, then," said Whiffles, and it almost sounded as if he were a wee bit cross. "We shall have nofing to give the Christ-Child."

"Yes, we shall," returned Hermie. She had thought it out before waking her brother, and though she was dreadfully disappointed about it, she was sure she was doing right. What remained now was to persuade Whiffles. "Listen, dear," she said, standing on tip-toe to lean over the cot, and look down at him. "If we get the wreath, Jane's boy has nothing, and that would make the dear Christ sad. But if we give Jim the oranges, he has *them*, and the Christ-Child has the love. Do you understand?"

Whiffles shook his head. "I fink I don't," he said slowly. "But you know. Do it."

Hermie gave an affectionate pat to the yellow head, which she could not reach to kiss, and went off to get the money-box. In it was a packet which held the two promised threepenny bits, for Mary had given them some time before, saying that they were to take them when they had earned them. Hermie took them now, for she knew that every day the marks had been faithfully gained, and adding to the bright silver pieces the remaining coppers which were in the box itself, she carried them off to Jane, who, by this time, had put on her hat and jacket.

"Please buy the oranges you want; Pratt had not any. And please tell your Jim they come from Whiffles and me."

"Why, missy dear!" began Jane, and stopped, and almost looked as if she were going to cry. That was not the end of her sentence, but she could not say any more because she was so pleased at the children caring about her trouble. But I think Hermie understood, and though it made her feel very unhappy to look at the empty money-box, and her throat felt as if there were quite a lump of tears in it, she never liked Jane quite so much as at that moment when she took her money from her.

The rest of the morning was the longest the children had ever spent. Whiffles began shivering soon after Jane had started, and crept out of bed and lay down in front of the fire. His head ached, he said, and his legs felt as if they belonged to somebody else. Hermie grew frightened, and when Whiffles—sweet-tempered, happy little Whiffles—pushed her away when she came near him and then burst out crying about nothing at all, she remembered what Jane had said about there "being a good deal of illness about," and wondered vaguely if it had come anywhere "about" Whiffles.

She sat down on the rug and looked at him, with her chin resting upon her knees.

"Would you like Mary?" she asked at last. "She'd be so snugly."

Whiffles did not answer her at once, and when he did, it sounded as if he had not heard what she said.

"The little white clouds in the blue sky," he said drowsily, "and the pretty sparkles where she saw Frank."

"Whiffles!" Hermie knelt down beside him, and laid her cool cheek against his burning one. "Wake up, dear; talk to me. You frighten Hermie."

But Whiffles would not look at her. He only murmured something more about the white clouds, and drew himself closer to the fireguard.

Hermie never waited very long to make up her mind, and now it was only a minute more before she was climbing out of the back window on to the snowy parapet.

Whiffles was ill and wanted someone; Jane was away, and she was afraid of disturbing Pratt or grandmamma, so she must fetch Mary.

It was desperately cold, and though it only took a few moments to reach Mary's window, she was sprinkled by the snowflakes. Luckily the latch of the window was not fastened, and Hermie was strong enough to push it up and scramble in by herself, but when she gained the room it was a sore disappointment to find that Mary was not there. There was a pencil and paper lying upon the table, and that gave Hermie the idea of leaving a letter behind her, but it is difficult to write when one's fingers are almost blue from the cold, and when one is only used to big-letter copies. But when it was finished this is what she had said:—

DEAR MARY,—Whiffles is dieing will you plese come cose we love you and we cannot get our holy wreath Your loveing— HERMIE.

She was just finishing her name, when she heard a voice saying: "Why, little woman, who are you?" and looking up with startled eyes she saw a big man with a kind face and a long brown beard.

"Do you know Mary?" asked Hermie at once, for he had leaned over her shoulder and read the letter which was lying upon the table, and she thought he would not do that unless he were very much at home.

"Yes," said the big man, "I do," and he smiled as if he liked saying it. "Are you little Miss Rayton?"

"You know me?" cried Hermie joyously; and so he did, for he was a doctor who lived down-stairs in that same house, and, moreover, he was the same one who said that Mary's voice reminded him of so many pretty things.

"If you know me, won't you come and see my little brother? He is ill, and talks funny things, and we are all alone without anyone to make him better."

The big man looked grave, and then he said suddenly, "I'll come, little one," for he was used to deciding things almost as quickly as Hermie herself.

Then he added a few words to the letter which was waiting for Mary.

"You go back by the same way, and I'll come in by the front door. I'll be after you in no time."

"Thank you so much," said Hermie gratefully, as he lifted her out; and back she went to tell the good news to Whiffles. "A doctor is coming, and he 'll make you not hot," she explained, for the little lad was awake now, and looking rather brighter, and presently, though I do not know what he said to the servant who opened the door, nor how he explained about Hermie's message, sure enough the doctor himself walked into the nursery.

What a commotion there was the next half-hour! Not that Hermie saw much of it, for everyone seemed to forget that she had been left in charge the whole of the morning, and that it was thanks to her wisdom in seeking for her friend, as Dr. Lintot warmly put it, that anyone had troubled about the little invalid at all. For he really was ill; it was inflammation of the lungs, the doctor said, and poor Hermie was ordered to stay in the housekeeper's room, so that the nurseries might be kept quite quiet.

XUM

But by waiting on the stairs she saw the maids hurrying in what seemed all directions at once, one going for more doctors, and another for a nurse from the Children's Hospital, and a third with sal-volatile and smelling-salts for poor old Lady Rayton, who promptly went into hysterics when she heard what was the matter.

As the day wore on it was just the same. Hermie saw Uncle Victor arrive and come out of the sick-room shaking his head, and even the grand Mrs. Pratt, whom Molly had declared would not even look at a saucepan, insisted on making some poultices herself rather than trust them to the cook. Everybody seemed suddenly to remember that poor little neglected Whiffles, shut away with Hermie in the gloomy London nursery, would be Reginald, Lord Rayton, one day, if he lived, and his life, they said, was very valuable. If he lived? Yes, they began to say that at last, as the days went on, and Hermie, who caught the whisper, was nearly frantic because they would not let her see him. She tried to get to him several times, but was always caught and taken back, until the horror of her little brother dying, as Mary's brother had done, and going away without her seeing him again, began to haunt the child even in her dreams. For she had made up her mind that he was going to die, and she thought it would be upon Christmas Day. The Christ-Child wanted Whiffles to be the offering—not just a holly wreath. Yes, that was it, He wanted the little lad, with his gay laugh and yellow hair, to be one of those white-robed angels round His throne, of whom Mary had told them.

Christmas Eve she had gone to bed full of these thoughts, and very early on Christmas morning she woke up with a start, full of an unreasoning dread. The angel with the grave tender face, God's angel whom men call Death, was coming for Whiffles, and she must go to him.

Slipping out of bed, she went swiftly out of the room and up the staircase until she came to the nursery part of the house. How still everything was! A cuckoo clock in the hall below struck some muffled notes, but the little girl never paused to count the hour. She did not even wait for breath until she had crept into the bedroom, and then she stopped and glanced round her. Everything was much the same, and yet the room looked strangely unfamiliar to her after not seeing it for so long. Some shaded candles were burning on a little table, and the first grey streaks of the dawn were struggling through the closed blinds. Whiffles was lying in a bed instead of his usual cot, and talking to himself incessantly. The nurse had gone away for a couple of hours' rest, and it was Mary who was in charge. She was at the farther end of the room, half hidden by a curtain, and seeing that the child did not notice her, she decided to leave Hermie to herself. After all, it could do no harm, she thought, and it might make the poor little thing happier to look back on afterwards. So she watched her as she crept on tiptoe to the bed, and climbing on to it, first kissed her brother, and then knelt up with clasped hands.

"Gentle Jesus," she began, the soft reverent tones rising clearly above the confused murmur of sounds which came from the boy's lips, "Whiffles is a little tiny boy, and I am big. He would be lonely without me. If the great angel takes him, make him to take me too. We give ourselves to Thee, dear Christ-Child, because we cannot give the holly wreath. I am so sorry. We did try."

Then she crouched down by Whiffles' pillow, and putting her mouth to his ear, she whispered: "Don't be frightened, dear. I am so close to you, Whiffles, that the angel must see us both, and he wouldn't take you without me. We'll go to mother. We did not understand it properly, Whiffles, about the wreath, I think. Mary said He wanted us ourselves, so of course He will take us."

A silence followed, during which the candles burnt more feebly, and the conquering dawn stretched farther and farther into the room. It had reached the bed by now, and was lighting the two fair little heads upon the pillow.

Suddenly Mary started forward. She knew very little of sick-nursing, but Dr. Lintot had told her that if the patient could regain consciousness—which means if he could cease talking of all manner of strange things, and remember where he was—then the fever would be leaving him, and he would fall into a natural and restful sleep, which would probably be the means of saving his life. So now Mary left her seat behind the curtain and came hurriedly forward, because she heard Whiffles speaking, not in the muttering uneven fashion of the last few days, but in his own pretty voice, although it sounded pitiably weak.

"Hermie," he said, "you'll—stay close?"

"Yes, Whiffles, very, very close."

Hermie moved her head quietly until her lips touched his, and a Christmas peal of bells in a neighbouring church tower rang out merrily as the children kissed each other.

"I'se glad you're—come," said the weak voice presently. "I'll go—to s'eep now," and he closed his eyes with a sigh of contentment.

Hermie propped herself up on one elbow, and then lifted a warning finger, as she raised her eyes and saw Mary standing at the other side of the bed. "Hush! you mustn't talk," she whispered. "It is the Christ-Child's gift. You remember what you told us? I am giving Him Whiffles, and the angel will take me too."

But Mary looked from the gently sleeping child to the little watcher by his side, and her eyes filled with sudden tears.

"Oh, my darling, my little girl, thank God for this Christmas morning!" she said, brokenly, and then she held out her arms. "Come away, Hermie, come away. We mustn't waken him. It is the gift of the Christ-Child as you say, but He has given Whiffles back to you." MABEL E. WOTTON.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FATHER CHRISTMAS.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE OILED FEATHER," ETC. ETC.



"'You know my wishes with regard to my daughter.'"—*p. 56.*

I.

OF THE FAMILY OF FATHER CHRISTMASES IN GENERAL, AND OF MYSELF IN PARTICULAR.

YOU will observe, good reader—or good readers, for I am sure there will, according to the unalterable law of the CHRISTMAS QUIVER, be many of you—at the very outset, that these pages are called the "Autobiography of a Father Christmas," that I have used an indefinite article "a," that I have not taken to myself the honour, and, I may add, the responsibility of being *the* only Father Christmas in the world—a piece of vanity which the very geniality of my constitution and nature would make abhorrent to me.

In one sense we are all one, in another we are many; and I profess to be only one of the many; and the experiences of all the Father Christmases put together are in reality only the experience of Father Christmas himself.

But to pursue this subject would be to run into metaphysics, and metaphysics are not in my line at all. If I had ever been at college, I should have been plucked, for I am sure not a feather, or, to speak more correctly, not a snowflake, would have been left

on me. Instead of waiting to be plucked by my examiner, I might as well have plucked myself, and made the pluckings into a snowball on my own account, and pitched it at his head; the only change in the affair being a slight one, and to my advantage on the whole: viz., that I pitched into him, instead of his pitching into me. Though used to severe weather—and, indeed, considering it seasonable—I do not like to be what is commonly called "left out in the cold"; and there it is that the metaphysical gentleman would have left me, without doubt.

Many great folk have written their own lives (and, in some cases, they had much better have let it alone); and as they have written theirs, I don't see why I shouldn't write mine; for at a certain season of the year, at any rate, I am a great person; which fact, I am glad to tell you, does not prevent me from enjoying myself immensely in a general way.

These autobiographies generally begin at a man's beginning; though for myself I don't see how he can know much on that subject. No doubt, there are some family traditions about him—and the Family Bible on the first page gives him a help; and perhaps his nurse may be still alive, and she can tell him some things—some, but not all, of which, he considers suitable for transmission to posterity.

But I labour under tremendous disadvantages in this way. My beginning seems—I don't know where; so let us put it down as it is in one or two cases in the Peerage—"the origin of this title is lost in antiquity." I don't know, I'm sure, whom I should have chosen for my father, supposing someone said I might have whom I liked—the late Duke of Wellington or the Czar of all the Russias (as coming from a cold clime); but for a mother, give me the poor, poor woman who, with two shillings a week to live on, fished out of her halfpence a new shilling for the collection because it was blessed Christmas Day.

Well, now I am here, I am going to tell you the good I have done in my short life—a short life I say, for no individual Father Christmas ever lives long. When we have plaster-of-Paris in our constitution we invariably die of a disease called "Smash"; but when we are made of papier-maché we survive indeed a little longer, but it is almost always to endure more or less suffering, and I grieve to say sometimes indignity, in what for a Father Christmas may be called our "old age." We are liable to affections of the nose—it gets, in fact, I might almost say, broken—sometimes a half goes, sometimes the whole. In this department of its art surgery is behind-hand; our nasal troubles it can do almost nothing for.

Our eyes suffer too. They have been known to disappear altogether—for all the world as if they had been gouged out by some mischievous boy's fingers; and as to our ribs, they become staved in; and I have seen a Father Christmas of this kind who had such a tremendous orifice in that portion of his person connected with Christmas pudding that it seemed as if he had had a kind of earthquake there; and now was the time for any prying doctor, without resorting to vivisection, to observe how the various organs of digestion work—a study particularly interesting to medical men at Christmas-time.

You would hardly think that the great law of Compensation, which is to be found all through Nature, extends to us, but it does; and speaking in the capacity of Father Christmas generally, if I am nowhere during the rest of the year, I am everywhere, almost, at Christmas-time; and there are so many good things going at Christmas that, I don't mind being put by in a cupboard for the rest of the year—that is, of course, assuming that I survive Christmas at all.

It is with us as it is with mankind—there are all sorts and conditions amongst us. There are Father Christmases which at first sight appear to belong to the upper ten; they might be considered dukes, marquises, or earls, or at any rate landed gentry of large means amongst the Christmas family: but that is all only to the outward eye. We know no such distinctions amongst ourselves. We look upon these external things as of little moment; it matters not amongst us whether one Father Christmas's beard is a bit longer, or thicker, or whiter than another's; or whether he have on him a few snowflakes more or less. What we go in for is "Heart"—that is the very essence of the family likeness—that is what makes us all akin. If you were to vivisect us, you'd find us all to be, I might almost say, nothing but heart within; the wonder is that, seeing we are so hot within, we don't melt all the snow that is about us outside.

I never heard of but one of our family who was deficient in the matter of heart. I have heard of there being shortcomings in one way and another in different directions, but never but once in the matter of heart. And in this case I comfort myself with the thought that the creature of whom I am going to tell you was not a real Father Christmas at all—he was a bogus, an impostor—for aught that I know one of the disreputable family of Guys, who have been going down much in the world of late; and I scarcely like to use the revered name of "Father Christmas" in connection with him at all.

This wretch (excuse the strong language—but when the feelings are strong you cannot wonder if the words are to match) came into the world in a way that he should not. He was bad from beginning to end. His beginning was bad, and his doings (which I might call the middle) were bad, and the end was bad—so I have the satisfaction of knowing that he was bad altogether. I am thus saved the task of trying to excuse him; my duty is to condemn.

This spurious Father Christmas owed his parentage to a wretched boy nine and a half years old. This dreadful youth was already the parent of many domestic miseries—the fact was, he was bringing them into the world all the year round, but one would have thought that at Christmas-time at least he might have ceased from his evil deeds, and helped on in the general happiness around.

Not a bit of it. His idea of seasonableness was to invent some mischief, which would work in with the season in the most appropriate way possible—at least, appropriately in his mind; for as to appropriateness in reality, there could be no such thing.

This creature's baleful eye fell upon a lovely Father Christmas in a shop window as he was coming home from school, smarting, I am happy to say, under some

external applications, which had been administered to him (not by any medical man) for his good.

It might be that he was then in a particularly savage condition—but so it was, that, at the sight of this beautiful Father Christmas, he determined that he would have a Father Christmas of his own; and, moreover, that that Father Christmas should keep Christmas-time in a way altogether out of the ordinary beat, but also in one altogether in harmony with itself. The wretched youth had a baby sister, and going home, he promised her, with words as sweet as if his mouth had been filled with lollipops or butterscotch, that she should have a Father Christmas all to herself, and that she needn't go to sleep all night, and have to wait ever so long before he brought her something. She need only shut her eyes just for five short minutes, and then open them when he told her, and she should find a stocking full of all sorts of beautiful things—notably, what she had been longing for for a long time—a wax doll with real hair, and with eyes that opened and shut; and that said "Ma-ma" when you gave her a pinch in the proper place. Individually I should have felt more inclined to have cried out "Oh! oh!" at this interference with my diaphragm, but "Ma-ma" seemed a great point with the little child, and so she agreed with all that he proposed.

I shudder to think how this pretended Father Christmas was made; he was as big as a boy of four or five. The wretch to whom he owed his being first bought a black mask, and then dressed up a body for it with some black calico, and here and there dabbed on pieces of cotton-wool; out of this bogus Father Christmas's mouth he put a great carrot for a tongue, and he tied two balls of touch-paper in its hollow eyes. Then inside the hollow body he fixed what boys call a double cracker, which bangs off five or six times like a pistol shot.

"Now, Sissy, you lie down there on the ground; brother has made you a pretty bed—four cushions to lie on, and one for your head. Hang up the stocking—that 's right—leave the top wide open, for the dolly 's very big——"

"Will it say 'Ma' very well, Jack?"

"Oh yes, much more than that; 't is a new kind that says 'Mammy dear.' There now, mind you don't open your eyes;" and the faithful little thing squeezed her eyelids tight together, and put her hands over them, to make sure that nothing on her part should hinder Father Christmas in the outcome of his good-will.

This fearful creature the odious boy put at the bottom of the bed, and at a given signal the poor child looked up, only to see this dreadful figure, with its great red tongue and its eyes of fire, and to hear the cracker go off; at which, without more ado, she went into a fit.

You can imagine what a Christmas that was for that family; the only wonder was that the child did not die of the fright.

I must say that, though I am fond of all sorts of innocent fun, and, I might almost say, preside over such every year, I detest all practical jokes. They are often very witless, and they cause a deal of bad feeling; and anything that causes annoyance we are bound in charity to abstain from—I mean unnecessary annoyance, which generally accompanies practical jokes.

This wretched Father Christmas—who would have been quite in his proper place earlier in the year as a Guy—came to a worthy end. He was partly blown up by the double cracker, and what was left of him was pulled to pieces by the poor child's father, in his just wrath. As to Jacky himself, though no Christmas was kept in that home that year, he never remembered, during his after life, having been so warm as he had been that Christmas. What he got then did him a world of good; and for many a year, seldom did a Christmas come round without its bringing with it retrospects of a torrid and tingling character, the equivalents of which, whatever they might be, he did not wish to repeat in after life.

As I have spoken of this horrid figure—a make-believe, in word at least, of one of us—I am anxious, before I give some of my actual life-experiences, to say a word on the subject of another figure, in no way connected with us, except that it sometimes makes its way into our company, and is particularly active indoors at the same time that we are, and that is, "Punch."

I have observed his doings at Christmas parties where I (still using the term "Father Christmas" in my general sense of the term) have been. There is much, no doubt, that is comical about him, but that wife-beating, which does not meet with its merited reward, is, I believe, a thing not to be laughed at; and is productive of a great deal of mischief. Street urchins here get their first lessons in ill-treating women, and that with impunity—not but that they very often get the same sad lesson at home—but anyhow, though there is one to cry, and cry sorely at it, there is, at any rate, seldom anyone to laugh at it. "Punch," it might be said, is essentially English; so is wife-beating too, varied now and again with something worse, which at Christmas time, at any rate, I don't care to bring to the fore. I say that bringing bad things before people's eyes in such a way as to make them laugh at them, and not show that they bring their deserved punishment, tends to make men inclined to do them; and I take serious objection to Punch on this account. It is not that I am what anyone might call strait-laced, or sour, or incapable of being amused by a trifle—not a bit of it; I am rather given to Fantoccini than otherwise. Good marionettes are often as amusing as an amusing picture or book; but ever since my eyes have been opened to this view of Punch I don't care to have anything to do with him; and I wish he 'd stay at home at Christmas-time altogether.

Children must no doubt have something to amuse them. I once heard an old minister at a Christmas party saying that the children in old Egypt—long before I was thought of—had their Fantoccini, for the very figures with their movable limbs have been found in their tombs, and in a place called Etruria, wherever that is. He said they were all over India, China, and the East; but I am no antiquarian—indeed, I might almost say no scholar. I do know a thing or two; but then what I have learned is from men and not from books; any outside knowledge I may have is just from hearing what people say.

XUM

II.

HOW FATHER CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCES THE VANITY OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

 OU will understand, good reader, that I am now an old Father Christmas. I am in the fourth year of my age; and that, for a Father Christmas, is almost the same as being a Methuselah amongst men. Very few indeed of us attain to that age; and if one and another does, here and there, it is so decrepit that it cannot gather its wits together; and if it has any memory, it cannot commit to paper, at least with any propriety of style, such experiences as it may have had. Editors now-a-days are no joke; they sniff all shortcomings afar off; and it is a serious strain upon the nervous system to come into their presence at all.

I am at present residing in what is to me an almshouse—a place of honoured retirement in old age. Things in this world, and places too, are to a great extent what people make them; and if people look on me as being simply in a cupboard, or say I am "on the shelf," I don't mind that in the least. I am here in a state of honoured leisure, and I prefer occupying it with literature to being idle.

Three years have I been out in the world—for our family have no childhood: we come into the world and have to play our part in it as full-grown Father Christmases at once. All we have to do with childhood is to sympathise with it, and make it happy, and show it kindness all we can—but that "all" is our "all"—and a big "all" it is.

I am, on the whole, in good health, and, as it is said of many elderly people, in "good preservation," or "well preserved." All preserves, you will observe, are not jam. Some preserved old men and women, however, are very like jam in one respect—they are so sweet, they are preserved in sugar; others—well! they are preserved too, but it is in vinegar—they are pickles. I propose telling you a little of my three years' experience in the world. I can't tell you about the fourth, for it hasn't come yet, and it isn't safe to prophesy; for it has been well said, you should "never prophesy unless you know."

My first experience in actual life was not a happy one—but let anyone who reads these lines and who is downcast at the thoughts of a bad beginning which is not their fault, take courage. Many an unpropitious beginning has had a good ending. It doesn't do to be downhearted: it takes all the life and pluck out of one's body or one's mind, wherever one's pluck is kept. I am sure when I began to write this, my Autobiography, I didn't know how I should get on at all—in fact, I couldn't get on. I was distrustful of myself, and afraid of the editor, and the pen was bad and spluttered, and there were people playing what they call 'scales' dingling in my very ears; but I stuck to it, and up to the present have got on very comfortably—in fact, "Here I am." Things sometimes turn out better in the end than one expects. Anyhow, until the worst comes, don't be moaning and groaning as if it had come, hugging it up in your bosom as if it were all you had in the world, and for all the world couldn't let it go.

I began, as I have said, very badly; and this was all the more distressing because I never dreamed for a moment that a Father Christmas could by any possibility ever do badly at all. I had expected nothing but wholesome mirth, and pleasure-giving, and general hilarity. I knew that my mission in the world was to give happiness, and the thought of failure never entered into my head. From the moment that I had the finishing touch put to me, in the form of a large spot of vermilion on the top of my nose (that being considered to add to my general effect), up to the time I left the shop-window where I was placed to give me a chance of being put out in life, I had never dreamed of anything but healthy merriment and joy.

I did not consider it in the least beneath my dignity that my life and energies belonged to little folks—to children. I enjoyed the thought of contributing to their happiness in the happiest time of their lives—and I anticipated with great pleasure seeing some who had once been children becoming such for even an hour or two again. If I had my way, I would cut up all grown people once a week at least into little pieces and make children of them, say for a Saturday half-holiday. I would make the Archbishop read a fairy tale, and believe every word of it; and I would make the Lord Chancellor play football or bo-peep with his wig, and all the masters of public schools I would make whip-tops instead of boys. If I approved of chuck-farthing, I'd make the Governor of the Bank of England play at it for a spell, but as I don't, I'd make him what boys call "shell out," and treat everyone all round to a new sixpence and a bottle of ginger-pop. Oh! wouldn't I make everyone young again, even for an hour, and wake up the echoes of olden days in the empty chambers and corridors of their hearts! No grand pictures of fictitious value would I hang there—thousands upon thousands for what has in it no freshness and no life—no classic music would I play there; but I would make peals of laughter, an' screams, and whistles, and shouts, and jumble them a.l together, so that Echo would give up the attempt to copy them in despair. I would tap all Old Humanity upon the shoulder, and say, "Wake up, old chap; and for an hour be young again." But I feel getting too sentimental, and the public don't like sentiment—at least, not too much—a little cream it may be on the top, but milk in a general way for puddings and to drink. Besides, there is the editor!

Well, from my very constitution, and the remarks made on me by the various folk who looked in at me in the shop window, I was expecting all happiness, when my first experience came in quite a different way. Only one individual had said anything uncomplimentary against me, and he called me "an old humbug," but I didn't mind that, for he was a sinister-looking individual—an old lawyer who hadn't as much vermilion in the whole of his veins as I had on the tip of my nose—and he had scarcely made this unwarrantable assertion (for which, indeed, he might have been had up for libel), when a portly gentleman,

with rather a skinny-looking lady and a very beautiful child, came into the shop.

"Miss Slitherwick," said the portly gentleman, jingling I suppose what were sovereigns in his pocket—though, if only you have impudence enough to do the make-believe, as some do it, your keys will do as well—"Miss Slitherwick, you know my wishes generally with regard to my daughter, and I desire them to be carried out on the present occasion, and in this place. You are, I hope, thoroughly 'posted up' on the subject?"

Miss Slitherwick, who kept her situation only on the condition of being always posted up in this direction—never in arrears; always, in fact, striking a balance, and always bringing out the same result: viz., everything for Miss Chutney, and nothing for anyone else—responded suitably; and Mr. Chutney, after waving his hand in a significant manner (thereby as in a figure intimating that the whole shop was at Miss Slitherwick's disposal for Miss Chutney, though he never told her to choose some little thing for herself), took his departure to take the chair at a meeting, which people who don't know the world might suppose had a touch of Christmas expansion of heart about it, inasmuch as it was about to offer for the trifling consideration of £1 in the form of a share in the Judicious Rain Distributing Company, a bonus annually of ten shillings and a dividend of seventy per cent. to the public generally; the allotment of the shares to be guaranteed to be made *pro rata* on the applications, and not even one share to be reserved for the directors or their friends. There were to be no founders' shares, for founders' shares are rather a big mouthful for the public to swallow, and for reasons best known to the directors, they would in this Company at least not be required.

The present meeting was rather an anxious one, for the solicitor to the intended company has started some awkward questions with reference to the clouds as a consenting party—and there were vested interests and, indeed, he might say, common law rights in that direction which could not be ignored.

So off went Mr. Chutney, and very addled, I can tell you, he looked when he came home that night. I was in his house to see, having been purchased, as you shall presently hear, by his little daughter Kate—Miss Slitherwick fully approving, consenting—"aiding and abetting," as the law says—as, indeed, she daren't do anything else.

Mr. Chutney, despite all his wealth, was not in what is called "high society;" consequently, the juvenile party which his little daughter was about to give to her young friends was composed of middling people; in fact, it was made up, for the most part, of the children of the people whom he knew in the City—not the aristocracy of the City, for Mr. Chutney was insufferable to them—but various small people, highly respectable in their way, who were under obligations to him in one way or another, and who were only too pleased to have their children rubbing skirts with Miss Chutney. For as to that rubbing of skirts, it was a thing concerning which no one could tell "what would come of it"—anyhow, what might come; it was something with an infinite perspective, something without an horizon; it had in it the sprightliness of a will-o'-the-wisp, if it had nothing else, and that sprightliness has a certain effervescence in it—until—you are bogged.

There was to be a Christmas-tree at Mr. Chutney's, and I was to preside over it. I was supposed to be the beneficent being who, though my snowflakes would not melt in a temperature of 70°, still was so full of warmth internally, that I had to vent my feelings in that Christmas-tree.

I took, accordingly, great interest in the purchases which were made.

First of all, I must tell you I was bought myself. And at this I was delighted. I was not content with being kept merely in the window, as a decoy to the people passing by; indeed, it vexed me to hear so many saying, "What a lovely Father Christmas! don't you wish we could have him?" and so forth; that sort of thing went quite against the grain with me. I wanted to be at business; I wanted to make happiness, and not misery; I wanted to give pleasure to people in what they had, and not misery for what they had not. So I said to myself, "Now we'll have a grand time of it; there's lots of money here, and so there'll be lots of happiness," for at that time I was fool enough to believe that these two always went together; and I thought that I, being a costly Father Christmas, must, from my very money's worth, confer no end of joy.

As soon as I was bought, I had an opportunity of seeing and hearing all that went on, for it was not worth while putting me back in the window again. I heard, therefore, Miss Chutney's shopping, her questions, and Miss Slitherwick's answers thereto.

Miss Slitherwick had the inestimable merit in Mr. Chutney's eyes of knowing her place, and she rounded off that merit, and made it complete, by keeping in it—not only as regards herself, but also as regards her charge, which she was to consider as in fact Mr. Chutney himself, only of a different sex, and not quite so much grown.

All this came out in the purchases which were made. I was the first purchase that Kate Chutney made, and this was something pretty stiff to begin with; but I was very quickly followed by others.

These, for the sake of order, and that the whole might be the more easily remembered by those to whom the remembrance may do good, may be divided into two classes, such as Miss Chutney, or, if you can take in the idea, 'Mr. Chutney's daughter' made for herself, and for others; to which may be added a little supplement, not worthy of being made into a third class by itself: viz., a little Christmas present for Miss Slitherwick.

For herself, Miss Chutney bought a lovely doll; two guineas went there. It walked, and so far as "Ma, ma" went, it talked, it opened its eyes and shut them; and but for the impropriety of the thing, it might have winked for aught I know; but it was a wonderful doll, and that was enough. And what was a doll without its clothes? The young lady provided for it in a truly motherly way. She outfitted it with garments for day and night, with a horse and a carriage, with doll jewellery, and doll pots and pans

Miss Slitherwick fulfilling her proper functions by continually saying, "Yes, dear, of course," when her charge proposed having this and that; then she proceeded to a work-box—not that she meant to work,

there were some children coming on Christmas night, and that there was to be a tree for them. "They aren't anything very particular, my dear," he said: "they are just the children of some of the people I



"'You are not to be blamed for what happened last Christmas Day.'"—*p.* 60.

for she hated work in any form—but a new-fashioned one caught her fancy; and a writing-desk—not that that was much good either, for the poor ignorant child could hardly write half a dozen words plainly—and so, on she went merrily, Miss Slitherwick being, as in duty bound, a consenting party to all the extravagance that was going on.

Being thus amply provided for herself, Miss Chutney proceeded to think of others. And this she did, not of her own mental or heart outcoming, but by reason of a commission from her father, who told her that

know in the city, and you can buy just what you like for them."

Now to some children the "just what you like" would have been a *carte blanche* to do wonderful things. Their little hearts would have swelled with the conscious power of making others happy, and with the desire to do it; they would have been delighted at the thought of being able to be the "Lady Bountiful;" and to share their own happiness with others; but poor little Kate had never been taught such things; she had never seen any examples of them before her

eyes; they naa no part in the surroundings of her daily life; and so there was what I must call a very niggardly provision indeed made for the Christmas-tree. As I was to preside over that Christmas-tree, and was theoretically, at any rate, supposed to have been the provider of it, I was indignant, and longed to say to the shopkeeper: "Here, put in this, and that;" but what can a Father Christmas do when his own big heart is not met with bigness of heart in others? It would be a relief to him if in some way or other he could blow up—or blow out, if you like; but he can't explode any way; he must, just like many a human being, keep his feelings to himself; and very uncomfortable, I can tell you, they sometimes make him.

Miss Slitherwick was not forgotten. Her young charge presented her with a scent-bottle with a German silver head, the net cost of which was 2s. 3¾d. Of course, it wasn't silver as regards its head, nor cut-glass as regards its body, but it was a smelling-bottle and a present, and a Christmas present; and that was enough for the one by whom it was given.

Poor Miss Slitherwick! She already had a smelling-bottle at home; but it was her place to take what she was given, and to make no remarks. That smelling-bottle of Miss Slitherwick's! It had not even a German silver top; it was quite plain, and made no pretensions to be cut-glass; it had only cost eightpence the first day, but to her it was worth its weight in gold; for it had come from a little creature now lying under the sod, who had a little heart inside his little body when it was here—it had come from a little Slitherwick, who somehow or other had got something of heaven inside him, and who, because of that something, had gone without lollipops for a whole year to buy his sister that smelling-bottle as a Christmas-box. Miss Slitherwick, you should not have remembered this when you received another smelling-bottle, under somewhat different circumstances indeed, but with a real German silver head. You should have compared the two bottles, and not the two people by whom they were given; the two bottles, I say, and their prices (only think of the difference between 2s. 3¾d. and 8d.!), and not the heart-feelings from which they came.

Miss Slitherwick, though I don't entertain the opinion myself, nevertheless it is entertained, and acted upon too, that there are some people so situated in the world that they have no business with hearts—hearts are an encumbrance to them. They might go even still farther: they might become a nuisance. Hearts have been known to keep people from getting on in the world; when too heavy a strain has been put on them—the worthless brittle things have been known to break—hearts when they get into mathematics, and metaphysics, and machinery are like chips in porridge: they make everything go wrong. Some people hold that the world would get on much better without hearts at all. Aren't even the doctors continually plagued with them? They wouldn't mind if people had two or three livers, and half a dozen pairs of lungs, if only they'd dispense with hearts, and the incurable and obscure diseases incidental thereto.

Well, let us be getting on. Dear good Miss Slitherwick was utterly ashamed of the provision made for the Christmas-tree over which I was to preside, and out of her own slender pocket did her very best to put the best face on matters that she could. She bought walnuts and gilt them over, so that the tree looked laden with untold wealth—if Miss S. had robbed the Bank of England, or had shares in the Twenty-two Carat Solid Gold Rock Company, Limited, that tree would not have been unworthy of her. Moreover, she, so to speak, plated some other nuts with silver leaf, on the score of which the above remarks might be repeated, only substituting silver for gold. Moreover, she did wonderful things with twiddlings up of ribbon and coloured paper, and some cheap coloured lamps; and if only that tree were looked at from a little distance it would have passed muster well enough.

But the mischief was that, whereas "distance lends enchantment to the view," in daily life things will keep coming up close to us, and if they do, we have continually to come up close to things, and then the enchantment goes—I'm sure I can't tell you where.

So it was when Mr. Chutney's Christmas party came. All the little people had come duly impressed with the importance of the occasion, and the responsibility and privilege of being sharers in Miss Chutney's Christmas-tree; and that, if ever they had been on their good behaviour, their very best had been miserable shortcoming compared with what was expected of them now. And all might have gone well—at least, what the Chutney family would have called "well," but not what the Father Christmas, with a large heart, and Felicia Slitherwick, with a large heart, would have called "well," had it not been that amongst the party was a boy of the name of Stumps—a boy whom Nature had forgotten to round off in any way when she sent him into the world—trusting, it may be, to the experiences of life to chip off his rough edges, or to its bitter waters to rub him down smooth, as the waters wear the stones.

Stumps and his sister were of the party, and Stumps and she had both come in anything but a chastened and respectful frame of mind, for their old uncle had "fixed up," as the Americans say, a grand tree for them at home, with no end of real good things upon it, which they had got a look at on the sly, though the good uncle knew nothing about that. Stumps was a kind of boy that would have called the Lord Mayor even in his robes, "Old chap," or "Old cock," and would have squared out even at the mace itself. When I tell you this, I have exhausted my descriptive powers; what kind of a boy he was, and what he could do, you must judge for yourself.

A part of the evening's entertainment consisted in Miss Chutney's showing her young guests her Christmas presents: being those of which the reader has already heard, and some others in addition, which her father had given her as a surprise.

All wondered, all admired, all speculated as to how, if they were Miss Chutney, they should feel that night.

All but the unreverential Stumps—he was unsophisticated enough to think that he'd rather be "Stumps" than anyone else—and he'd back his sister Chatty against a dozen pale-faced Chutneys any day—

"Chatty against Chutney any day, and ten to 'one on the favourite: the other nowhere"—that was the form the matter took in Master Stumps' mind. Now this boy "Stumps," who had always an eye to the main chance, had absented himself from the little side room where Miss Chutney's Christmas presents were being displayed, and taken the opportunity of everyone's absence to make a minute inspection of the Christmas-tree. The motive was interested, for he wanted to see what there was there that would suit himself, and for what he should swop what he got if it did not suit him; and the result of this investigation was very unsatisfactory. He mentally compared Mr. Chutney's tree with the one fixed up by his American uncle at home; and then sauntered in to look at Miss Chutney's spread.

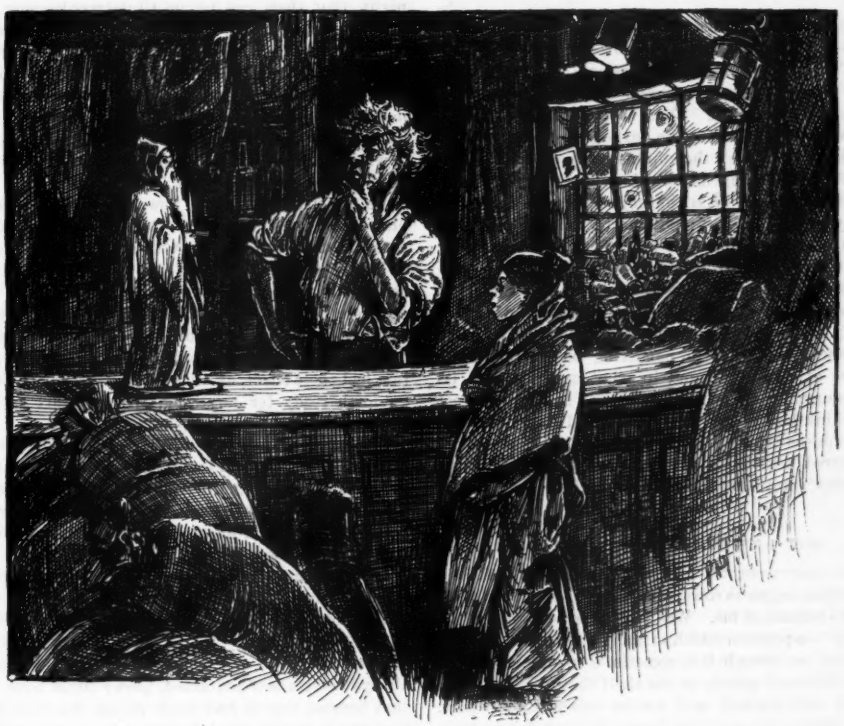
Stumps was a boy of quick apprehension, and quick feelings—he was quick every way except in going to school; but he made up with the cause of education generally, by thus supplying the exception that proved the rule, and being quick all over—he was quick in action too.

"I say, Chat," said this boy Stumps, pinching his sister's arm, "here's an awful shame! all the good things are on this table, and none on the tree. I'm blessed if I don't blow up the whole affair—we don't want their rubbishing things; there are ever so much better on our own tree for to-morrow night; and we're kept out of them a whole day by having to come here. I saw a rubbishing shilling knife, that I suppose is for me, and I know it wouldn't cut butter; but there's a regular seven-and-sixpenny one on the tree at home that would shave a mouse asleep or cut off your nose without your even knowing 'twas gone. You wouldn't know your nose was gone, Chat, until you looked in the glass, which of course you, being a girl, would never do; and even if you did, you'd have to have someone to tell you about it then—you'll see!"

When Kate Chutney had exhibited herself and her presents to her heart's content, the proceedings of the Christmas-tree began. As for me, I ought at that moment to have been full of delight—quite in my element over the fun; but, on the contrary, I was full of forebodings. It required a great effort of self-recollection to make me feel that I was a Father Christmas at all; I felt sure that there was trouble ahead, and within measurable distance too.

All went tolerably well, although I could see that the young people were not particularly enchanted with their gifts. Miss Slitherwick managed to pass that off pretty well, until we came to that fatal knife, which, sure enough, fell to that dreadful Stumps.

Oh, Stumps, that you had been a girl—or anything else but what you were!—Oh that you had only put that knife in your pocket and said nothing about it



"I fetched three-halfpence sterling."—*p.* 62.



"She begged to have me put up opposite her bed."—*p.* 63.

there, but anything you liked about it when you got home! But no! You cried out, "Look here, Chat, here's an old saw that cost sixpence. Let it go back to where it came from;" and you flung it into the Christmas-tree again. Then followed a fearful catastrophe: a Chinese lantern, struck by the knife, was upset and took fire; then up blazed poor Miss Slitherwick's paper arrangements—the whole thing was upset and came to grief. Miss Chutney's hands and face were, to say the least of it, pretty smartly singed; the party had to be broken up, and I was left to my meditations, to spend the rest of the evening as best I might.

My meditations were, as you may well imagine, not of an hilarious character; indeed, I felt myself almost like a naughty boy in disgrace, and I spent much of the succeeding year in pondering on the miserable effects of selfishness, and in what curious ways its punishment is worked out at times; and I could not but think how entirely my owner had been mistaken in her ideas of what Christmas-time should be; and I wondered whether there were many like her, and whether many Christmases are spoiled.

HOW I SPENT MY SECOND CHRISTMAS.

The year wore on, and as it neared its end, and Christmas began to draw nigh again, I wondered what was to become of me. Was I going to remain "on the shelf?"—a position which so many dread when hilarity is going on, though it is sometimes much better to be peacefully and quietly on the shelf than to be knocked about, and cracked, and maybe smashed, elsewhere. No; there was something better in store for me than that. Who should let daylight in on me one day but good Miss Slitherwick. "Father Christmas," said she, "you are not to be blamed for what happened last Christmas Day. Still, you'll have to go, for Miss Chutney has been so nervous ever since that fatal night, that there can be no Christmas-keeping here this year, at any rate; and Mr. Chutney says you had better clear out. I asked him what I was to do with you, and he said, 'Anything I liked.' I am anxious that you should have a good home, and some amends made to you for having your Christmas spoiled; so I have given you to a friend of mine who has come down in the world—as, indeed, for the matter of that, so have I done myself. But I have learned this: that there are many beautiful flowers growing in lowly places, and many sparkling streams running through them; so don't be down-hearted; and you would not be a Father Christmas unless you were ready to condescend to men of low estate."

Where do you think, good reader, I found myself, four-and-twenty hours after this kind little speech? (And these few kindly words, let me tell you in passing, had their effect, as all such have; they made me go forth ready for anything, with a heart for any fate, so as only I could make people happy.)

Where? why at Miss Slitherwick's own uncle's. Now I could understand why there were some tears in her eyes last Christmas Day; now, why she was so earnest in her wish that I should make the people happy with whom I was to spend the coming Christmas Day. She would have wished me to make anybody and everybody happy, but, as was most natural, especially her own flesh and blood.

The house to which I was conveyed was a humble one in the outskirts. It had never been a mansion—reduced in its old age to letting apartments; it had always been a self-contained, perky little house, one that boasted that it had never passed the three years by a single day in which it should be painted outside,

nor by one day the seventh year in which it must be thoroughly done up within.

Here lived Mr. James Upton, the only brother of Miss Slitherwick's mother, hereafter to be known under the name, style, and title of "Uncle." Here lived Mr. Upton and his only daughter Bessy, and so frequently did he call to tea, and make himself generally at home, that here I might also say lived Mr. Geoffrey Pigment—a young and very rising artist in the portrait line, who had painted Bessy in six different attitudes, and was now engaged on the seventh which promised to be a great success. Painted Bessys were very nice, but a substantial Bessy is nicer; and when the question came to be between what is nice and what is nicer, common sense really left no choice in Mr. Geoffrey Pigment's mind, but settled the matter at once.

"Well, Bessy, what kind of a Christmas are we going to have?" asked Geoffrey Pigment.

"Why did you say 'we,' Geoff? You know how father is; he'll never be able to get beyond the arm-chair, and perhaps I shall not be able to get him even into that, and that would be but a dull Christmas for you. You had better far go to the Pentwhistles—there will be a merry party there. I know your heart will be with me, all the same."

"And you're not afraid of Mary Pentwhistle, Bessy, though that scamp Crimple, who is after her, says that she has driven two men to commit suicide, and sent three into asylums, and a callow youth into a duck-pond, who was pulled out very wet indeed. I hear he says he never knew what ducks lived on before, nor what duckweed tasted like, but that there is an awful lot in that pond, and that duckweed anyhow, unless 'tis cooked, has a very nasty taste."

"Pish!" said Bessy; "he wants to make himself out a fine fellow himself when Mary takes him, as I know she intends to do. You may dance with Mary all the evening if you like, and I know what will happen. She'll come here next day, and say, 'Bessy, that's a nice young man of yours; do you mind changing him for Bob Crimple?' Perhaps she'll offer me that pearl brooch of her grandmother's to boot. You go to the Pentwhistles; only do not spoil poor Crimple's Christmas, for he's true to Mary; and remember there are more duck-ponds in the world than one."

"Many ponds," said Geoffrey sentimentally, "but only one duck."

"Now be off," said Bessy Upton, "and tell the Pentwhistles you'll be with them."

"Now, Bessy, look here," said the young man, "you say my heart will be here. Well, in a general way, I like to be where my heart is: 'tis more convenient, to say the least of it: so here I Christmas with you, my dear, and we'll get up a Christmas for the governor up-stairs—or down-stairs, if we can get him down—and when he's settled for the night we'll settle when 'tis to be. The last two pictures will pay for the furniture for a bigger house; and I think my foot's well on the ladder now."

"Well, if you *will* come," said Bessy, "I might as well tell you—you'll have company."

"No," said the young man, vehemently, "that's the very thing I don't want; you know the old saying, 'Two is company, but three is none'—at least, none to some people—not to me, anyhow, Bessy, when I'm with you—man or woman, Bessy; which is it? though neither's welcome."

"Man—and I want you to fetch him too. Now, there's a goody—just wait—don't go off in a tantrum, Geoff; he's a very old man."

"He's none the better for that," said Geoffrey Pigment.

"Well, you men are dreadfully impatient. I don't know how the world would get on if women were like you—'tis only a 'Father Christmas.' Aunt Slitherwick wants someone to fetch him, and I want you to go and get him, there's a dear."

If women have to say "love, honour, and obey" when they're married, men have to do the last, at any rate, whether they say it or not, before they're married, and Mr. Geoffrey Pigment was no exception to the rule. Bessy Upton had no servants to send about on such errands, but Geoffrey was her humble servant for everything, and he actually came himself and fetched me. He waited until 'twas dark, and then arrived at Mr. Chutney's with his coat collar turned up, and his hat slouched down over his eyes. I was waiting for him, ready done up in the hall; and off we went to the fair Bessy's little home.

I had a grand Christmas of it there—it was all very quiet, compared to the previous Christmas; but I had then the pleasure of performing my life-mission for the first time, though I felt I was equal, if opportunity offered, to doing much more.

But you must know, good reader, that it is a cardinal point with the Father Christmas family to do what they can, and not to lose all their opportunities in wishing that they could do more.

Old Mr. Upton was now a child; trouble had put him back, I am afraid to say how many years, but trouble had not restored him the mother on whose heart he might have laid his whitened head—the golden glint of youth changed into the hoar frost and the snows of age. The world would be only half as full of sorrows if it were twice as full of mothers. Old John Upton had lost all his money, and with it most of his hair, and Bessy was a good daughter and a good nurse to him—but a mother—no; how could she be? Wives are grand, but there is a touch ineffable about the mother, which my pen shall most honour by not making any attempt to give.

Back in old childhood, Christmas was well within the old man's thoughts, and present in gone-by manhood was his great money loss. The A1 ship *Eldorado* had gone down, and with it the venture of all he had. Those two ideas were distinct enough, and out of them was the old man's Christmas made. For, you see, Love was at work, and Love is quick at finding out many inventions.

"I have it," burst out Geoffrey Pigment; "he shall have a jolly Christmas this year—that he shall; he is but a child, Bessy," said the young man in a low and tender voice: "a child with a big sorrow; that's an out-of-the-way thing, and there will be no harm in dealing with it in an out-of-the-way manner. Let us make a Christmas for him—you and I can make Christmas for each other. See here, Bessy; I've been

telling him that Christmas-time is coming quite close, and he 's been saying, 'Ah, yes; Christmas—that 's the time when the people sing "Peace, good will," and there are lots of presents going, and a stocking, and a Father Christmas—he brings little people what they want, doesn't he? I wonder now, if I put out a stocking for him, if he 'd give me what I want? I like sponge-cakes, and almond comfits, and squibs. Once Father Christmas brought me a peg-top, but he forgot the string.' "

"Hang out the stocking to-morrow night, sir," said the young man. "I shouldn't be a bit surprised if Father Christmas came this way; indeed, I know he was seen in the street to-day."

"Yes, we 'll put it up," said the old man, "and I 'll sleep like a top, for he may not come if he knows that I 'm awake."

"Now we 'll fill the stocking for him, dear old fellow, and we 'll do something more. He said to me, 'But what about the money—will Father Christmas bring back all the money? I wonder if he knows where the *Eldorado* is? ' and I 've told him, 'Who knows? Father Christmas sometimes does very wonderful things.'

"Can you get him down, Bessy, into his chair to eat his Christmas dinner with us? and then we 'll have in Father Christmas. I know where I can get a lot of new farthings, as bright as sovereigns; you wouldn't know them from sovereigns by lamplight; you make a bag, and we 'll fill it with them, and sling it over Father Christmas's shoulder, and I 'd bet ten to one—if ever I bet at all—that he 'll think he has got back all his money from the *Eldorado*—and he will have a jolly Christmas of it."

That Christmas Eve the stocking was hung out; that Christmas morning all the delight of a child abounded in that old man's room and heart. There is happiness in being thrown forward in time, and there is happiness in being thrown back—provided only you go far enough, far enough either way—back to the time ere sorrow came, on to the time when sorrow will be no more.

I came out grandly after dinner. As the young man thought it would be, so it was; the old man gave a scream of delight when he emptied out the bag which I had upon my back, but in a moment he became quite composed. "Susan," said he, addressing his dead wife, "the *Eldorado* has come in, and here, my dear is all the money for you. I only wanted it for you; let 's count how much it is." And that Christmas night was spent by the old man in counting out the money, putting it in little heaps, and sending it to the bank, and various performances of the same kind.

And he was so well employed, there was no need of Bessy's and Geoffrey's taking special care of him; they gave an eye to him generally, and entertained each other as best they could. I was glad to see they got through the evening very well: indeed, Mr. Pigment wanted to make out that the clock was an hour fast when it struck ten, and it was time for him to go home. He looked at his watch, but that was ten, too, but he felt sure that that also must be fast, and he could only account for it by supposing that watches and clocks were subject to epidemics, and that just then there was one abroad of going fast.

It was a quiet Christmas evening—that I grant; but I felt that my life had not thus far been mis-spent; to minister even to one afflicted one was a mission. I had fulfilled the mission which that Christmas-time had been entrusted to me, and I was happy—and all will be happy who does the like.

SHOWS HOW FATHER CHRISTMAS DESCENDED IN THE SOCIAL SCALE, YET CONTINUED *HIMSELF*, FOR ALL THAT.

AS the publisher has made me promise to condense myself—an operation as necessary in ink as in steam—I must content myself with telling you that I came into my present home through an accident. I am not writing of a home for incurables, or a hospital—convalescent or otherwise. I am the honoured inmate of a poor man's house, and I don't mind in the least if I continue here until I go off the scene altogether, for a jollier time I can't conceive anyone's having than I had when Christmas came round.

A careless little child at Mr. Upton's let me fall—or rather, knocked me down, and to put it as shortly as possible, almost knocked me into what an Irishman would call "smithereens." Shock to the spinal cord, fracture of the skull (requiring trepanning), compound ditto of the thigh, dislocation of the shoulder, fearful abrasions of the facial skin, broken nose, and general shock to the system. These will give some idea of what I suffered; of course, my mission at poor Mr. Upton's was ended, and I had to go—but whither? I must tell everything—to the rag-and-bone shop. I fetched three-halfpence sterling; and to all human appearance my mission in life was ended. But with me before him for an example, let no one despair; like the Phœnix, I rose from the ashes with fresh vigour; and what became of me and what I did in the last year of my existence I shall now proceed to tell.

What the rag-and-bone man meant to do with me eventually I do not know; I shudder to think I might have been bought to be made a scarecrow of; and anything in the scaring way would have been, as you may well imagine, quite out of my line; but whatever I may come to hereafter, I was not destined as yet to come quite so low as this. On the contrary, I was to take quite a new start in life, on a lower plane, indeed, as regards worldly position and grandeur, but on one in which I really lived more than I had ever lived before, and enjoyed myself to my heart's content.

Hard by the rag-and-bone shop there lived a poor working glazier and painter, by name Jonathan Nopps. He was a man with a big heart like myself, and though his means were small, his aims were large; they embraced no less than the happiness of the whole human race, if only by any means he could bring it about. Finding it impossible with his limited means to secure the felicity of the whole of mankind—partly because he couldn't get at them, and partly because

they would not have minded him if he could—he took up the idea that the best thing he could do would be to try and make as many as were within his reach as happy as he could. He took in one respect a trade view of humanity—not the common one, as to how much could be got out of mankind, but of how much could be done for them. He believed that they had infinite capacities for being painted and varnished and puttied, that they had innumerable cracks which could be filled up, and that they need by no means present at all times such a dilapidated appearance as they often did.

The moment he saw me at his friend the rag-and-bone man's, he pounced upon me. An inspiration shot through his brain that he would give a Christmas party, and that I should be the chief feature of it. He bought me accordingly for sixpence—that itself was a rise of 400 per cent. upon my recent value, and was therefore to be taken as an omen of good things to come.

I am afraid to say what I went through in the way of operations. My new owner might have walked all the London hospitals, and carried off all the prizes, so skilfully did he put my poor mangled form together again. Glue was liberally administered as a general strengthener of the constitution, as well as a powerful local application: "Pig. Ver.," "Pig. Alb.," "Pig. Chrom.," and Pigs. of various tints, were judiciously applied here and there, as the case required. There were also partial snow-like applications of cotton-wool. Special attention was given to the nose, as the most prominent feature of the face—in fact, between ourselves, a new one of putty was stuck on. Pig. Verm. was liberally applied to the top of it; then came some varnish, to make me beam as if I were in the most exuberant health. Being well stuffed inside—which I could not but think was eminently suitable for Christmas time—I was ready by the all-important evening when Mr. Jonathan Nopps's party came off.

It was a kind of New Testament party—at least, so far as the spirit of it went—for there was one halt, and one maimed, and one blind child there; besides several who were all the same, only morally, and not one of them could have recompensed Mr. Nopps to the value, I might almost say, of the putty on my nose.

These were all entertained by the good man in question, having had not only the pleasure of the Christmas night, but also the delight of looking forward to the treat for a whole week beforehand, and the pleasure of looking back upon it for a whole week afterwards.

On that occasion I distributed in I might almost call reckless fashion, considering the circumstances, buns, oranges, apples, and tea, and ginger-pop. Shall I say squandered? no, I will not say I squandered the savings of Mr. Jonathan Nopps for quite three months beforehand, but I laid them out, and the company certainly took them in. That Christmas night was an enormous festivity. Under the genial influence of two highly odoriferous paraffin lamps, I shone like a star of the first magnitude. Not a drop of my varnish failed to do its duty; I far outdid even my own most sanguine expectations.

I was privileged also to be not only a means of enjoyment, but therein to be a very engine of power. I actually humanised, or helped to humanise, some of those young Arabs, who felt softened in heart at the kindness shown to them through me.

One little instance I may give you of my power—I may say my victorious power—that night. And talking of victory, it may not be out of place to turn my attention to St. Paul's, after all. I don't see why Mr. Nopps and I, having fought all the powers of evil in those troops of Satan, and gained a victory, should not go down into the crypt with Wellington, and Nelson especially. He said, "England expects that every man will do his duty," and we did ours. However, let that be for the present.

The instance to which I refer is this. At Mr. Nopps' party was a little girl who was quite lame. She was a pretty little girl, but very helpless. Her name was Susan—Susan Pike. Poor little Susie! she could not get near me, like the rest of the children, and when they crowded round me she got pushed about, and had to retire to the outmost edge of the ring. But the humanities, which seldom had much place in Jack Boulder's heart, took possession of it now, and putting his big strong arms under Susan's little spare body, he lifted her up and held her in them, so that she got the best view of everyone there. My word, how she did admire me! I never knew how handsome I was until then, nor did I ever know the great advantage and privilege of having a vermilion spot upon one's nose. I am convinced that one should be of a humble mind to enjoy with any degree of safety such a privilege as that.

The humanities stuck to Jack Boulder ever since that night. He then got the first idea of the blessedness of being tender, and from that Christmas night Jack adopted certain Christian ways.

But he had only some months under poor little Susie's influence. Poor child! her disease was not only in her leg, but in her body; it was in her leg because it was in her body.

She was to spend no more Christmases on earth—during the autumn she got worse and worse. You never heard, I dare say, of a Father Christmas ministering at a sick-bed—and I pride myself upon being unique in this way—but I did.

Poor little Susie's chief happiness was associated with me, and she begged to have me put up opposite her bed, to keep her company. I was willingly lent for this purpose by Mr. Nopps, and many a time I lay by her side all night, with her thin little arm round my flowing white beard.

Poor little Susie had little in this world to love, and even around me—papier-maché though I was—her little heart began to cling. To her, however, I was a person. She thought I must be very kind to be associated always with so many good things. Some wiser folk, as the world would call them, might have criticised the vermilion of my nose, or perhaps taken exception to its material—being putty; but, happier far than they, this poor child took me in my symbolic aspect, and I was an embodiment to her of kindness and love.

Well, thought I, there must be a deal of yearning for love in the human heart when this poor child fixes itself on something the moment it has a chance. Isn't

it a pity that more chances aren't given by some who have something really to give to their poor fellow-creatures! There are long straggling creepers trailing in the gutter all the world over, waiting for something to cling to and rise up upon, and—and what?—blossom, and gladden with colour and with scent. Perhaps, good reader, someone would cling to you. Forbid it not—you would not, if you could experience what I, only a papier-maché Father Christmas, feel to-day from having allowed that poor child to cling to me.

She wanted to be buried with me, but the minister's wife, who often visited her, though she considered this complimentary so far as I was concerned, did not consider it suitable, and she gave her a beautiful wax doll all dressed in white—which the poor child said must be an angel, and it would be very nice to have an angel with her in her grave.

But even for the beautiful doll the child did not entirely give me up. She thought that all that was the matter with me was my dress, and she used to talk to me and say, "Father Christmas—you dear old Father Christmas! I'll make you some beautiful white clothes some day, and then you'll be fit to go to heaven: I'm sure you will, for you're very kind and good; and I'll go to school and learn to sew, and I'll earn money enough to buy some white silk, and you'll look beautiful—that you will. If anybody wants to know who you are, I'll tell them you're somebody that liked to make poor children happy; and then they'll be all glad to see you, and they'll hug you and kiss you, and love you for ever and ever."

I don't suppose that a happier head was laid upon the pillow that Christmas night than Mr. Jonathan Nopps's. It was not a very learned head: a very simple problem in mathematics would have puzzled it; Greek and Latin it had none—in history and art it was nowhere. It knew a few plain things out of an old-fashioned book called the Bible, and like many a wiser head than his own, many a thing in that did Jonathan Nopps not understand. Nor was there any need that he should. Just as Jonathan did not understand all the mysteries of the very bread he ate, but he did eat it, and it did him good—so he understood not all either of doctrine or precept, but he practised what he knew, and verily it did him good.

Jonathan had lived this Christmas Day not for himself alone, and the day followed him into the night. It came again to him on his pillow—it seemed loth to depart; happiness-giving is happiness-getting; and I, Father Christmas, now that all the bustle was over, enjoyed a quiet time with—my owner, I suppose I must call him, but only owner so as also to be fellow-worker and friend.

As Mr. Nopps owned only a single room, I had, of course, now that the festivities were over, to abide there with him, and so it came to pass that I heard him talking to himself as he lay awake awhile.

He lay awake from very happiness. "Who am I," said Mr. Nopps, "that I should be privileged to scatter so much happiness around?—who am I that I should be able to do so much with so little? but it is the increase of good seed sown. The good Lord gives big harvests to little grains. What is man that he should be like God—that he should be allowed to be like God in doing good? I'm all aglow," said Jonathan, "as if I had fifty Christmas fires burning inside. I am satisfied as if I had had the richest dainties at fifty rich men's Christmas tables. I am rich as if I had stripped their Christmas-trees of all their gifts—who am I that all this should be given to me, and withal a blessing in the Promised Land to come?" And it was with much ado that, from sheer overmuch of happiness, the good man could get to sleep.

I only know of things at this side of the grave, but sometimes I wonder what kind is the Christmas-keeping at the other. I'm told 't is all happiness there, and that all tears are wiped away from the eyes. Here I see that there are but snatches of joy, but they say that there there will be fulness of joy. Here there are pleasures, but they are only for awhile; but I am told that there they will be "for evermore."

The great Father's children will be grown up then, and they will not want many a thing they need now, but He is the great Father here as well as there, now as well as then, and He allows His children ere they hunger and thirst no more to pluck the little ears of corn, and to drink of the little brooks by the way.

Many books are written about these things. I hope they will admit into their company, as one earnestly desiring to teach as well as to amuse, the pages which, kind reader, you have just read—

"THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FATHER CHRISTMAS."

THE CALL OF THE BELLS.

LOW in the valley the little church stands,
High on the hill-top the farm glisteas white,
Deep drifts the snow on the low-lying lands,
Hiding the pathway and hedges from sight.
Naught cares the farmer's fair daughter for snow,
Tempest or hailstorm she dreads not at all;
Church-bells are ringing, and down she must go,
Heeding but one thing—the sweet Christmas call.

Bright-hearted lass, may it ever be so—
Duty your pleasure, your first and last thought;
Be the way toilsome and painful or no,
Seeking at all times to walk as you ought!
Then through the years will you ever be fair,
Fair with the beauty of life-work fulfilled,
Fair when Life's winter has whitened your hair,
Fair when God calls and the true heart is stilled!

G. W.



THE SAVIOUR'S ADVENT.

BY THE REV. W. LANDELS, D.D.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."—GAL. iv. 4, 5.



THE fact of Christianity as it now exists is one of the best evidences of its Divine origin. That it should exist where and as it does is very wonderful from a human point of view — most wonderful when the supernatural is ignored — altogether inexplicable then. It is a wonder for which its Divine origin alone will account.

Taking the facts in the first instance as they appear to any observer, the mere outward facts of the past history and present position of Christianity—looking at them as we do at any other phenomena—fixing our eye on what cannot be disputed, before we enter on the question of how it came to be, we are compelled to arrive at the acknowledgment that it is Divine, the account which it gives of itself being the only one that commends itself to our judgment, every other leaving it in the position of an utterly inexplicable enigma.

One cannot but be struck at this Christmas-time with the rejoicings which are taking place in so many different parts of the world, and these, in so far as enlightenment and power are concerned, by far the most important parts. There is no country in Europe or America where men do not with rejoicings observe this festival. Nor is it confined to these. Amid the sands of Africa it is not forgotten, nor on the ice-bound coast of Labrador. Traces of it are found in India and China, and in many Burmese homes. At the Antipodes—in Australia and New Zealand, and in many of the islands of the Pacific, it is as much a national custom as it is among ourselves. It is a time, moreover, not only of rejoicing, but of kind and generous acts. More than at any other season of the year men are disposed to show consideration for their neighbours. The purse-strings which are tightly held all the year are loosened at this season. Many of those who steel their hearts against all appeals presented by the sufferings of the poor cannot let Christmas pass without giving something out of their abundance. not simply to supply their neighbours' wants, but to minister to their neighbours' pleasure. Friendly feeling which circumstances may have restrained all the year round now finds opportunity of expressing itself by the bestowal of substantial tokens of love and respect. Family feuds are buried at this season, as the different members gather under the old roof-tree, or round the fireside associated with the prattle of their infancy, and the merry days of their youth; and the interrupted friendships are resumed, and the ties of amity strengthened, during this season of peace and good-will.

Now this is a very significant fact, look at it how we may. The fact itself is indisputable; and the only explanation of it which is possible involves the conclusion that Christianity is Divine.

For if we begin to ask, How is it so? Whence all this rejoicing and all this good-will at this particular time? the only answer which can be given to the question from a human point of view is not at all satisfactory. We are told that all this is on account of, or is meant to celebrate, the birth of a child which took place eighteen hundred years ago. But why such rejoicing and such expressions of good-will on account of that? The rejoicings are not accounted for by His nationality, nor by His personal surroundings. For the nation to which He belonged has as a nation ceased to exist, and 1800 years after His birth that tribute is paid to Him by men of every other nation, which was withheld during His life by the men of his own. So that it is by the simple story of His life circulating among the nations so long afterwards that the extraordinary result is produced. How well God must have adapted that story to the wants and desires of mankind its effect sufficiently shows, and it cannot be—it would be a mockery of our hopes, a shock to our sense of right—sufficient to reduce us to absolute despair—we should never be

able to believe or confide in anything any more after being so cruelly trifled with—were that story to be found false. What, then, is the story? What are its external features? What was there in this child more than in other children of men, that His birth should be so widely celebrated, and in such manner? Was He socially considered the foremost of His species? Was He a prince born to an earthly throne loftier than any prince had ever filled? Was He destined to sway a mightier human sceptre over greater numbers of the human race? Was He by right of birth the temporal ruler of hundreds and millions, and did He as a mighty warrior so lead His armies forth to victory that myriads more would be constrained to yield to His conquering sway? Did the inhabitants of many lands pay their tribute to Him, filling His royal exchequer, and making His state splendid beyond those of any other Sovereign? Or is it that He was born to ordinary royal state, and that the present rejoicing is occasioned by the beneficent manner in which He exercised His temporal rule, like a second and greater Solomon, making Himself a model for all other kings?

Not by any of these suggestions are you able to explain the rejoicings of the Nativity. For if we look only at the outward circumstances of His life, and keep ourselves out of the region of the supernatural, He was really one of the meanest of men—"a root out of a dry ground"—"a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." He was a peasant's child, and never rose above a peasant's estate. His mother, when travelling, being poor, was crowded out of the inn into the stable, and in one of its stalls He was born, and had a manger for His cradle. Humbler circumstances scarcely ever attended the birth of any human child. His unknown boyhood was passed among children and youth of His own class in one of the most obscure and disreputable villages, in a country little known and less esteemed. Even when He came forth from His obscurity, His companions were peasants, His few friends mainly drawn from among the toiling and suffering and outcast poor. And after being known for only three brief years, He was put to death as a malefactor by the vilest mode of execution then known, and buried in a borrowed grave. Such are the facts of His life in its human side. What is there in these to account for the hold it has taken of the world? Surely the present rejoicing in view of these alone is altogether inexplicable. It is a wonder for which no one can account.

And if we go beyond these, we come at once into the region of the supernatural and Divine. *There* all becomes plain enough. Let it be known that this low-born child was the Son of God—that His birth had been the subject of a long line of prophetic utterance—that it was announced by angels amidst the songs of a celestial choir—that in Him the Most High God sojourned among men—that during His brief ministry he proclaimed the Divine love, and employed His Divine power to heal all manner of sickness and disease and infirmities—that He died praying for His murderers, and that His death procured forgiveness for them and the race—that having died He conquered death, rising from the dead on the third day, and finally ascended through the open heavens to the right hand of the Majesty on high; let all this be known, and the present rejoicing becomes intelligible enough. For then the meaner the circumstances of His outer life, the more is it fitted to excite the adoring gratitude of mankind. And this is substantially the story of His life in its Divine side. Is that story false? Has the world through all these years, and throughout so many lands, been rejoicing in a delusion? Does God thus mock its yearnings and its hopes? Does he make sport of its most sacred feelings? No! profane be the tongue that would thus dare to falsify the hopes of humanity. Be whose it may, whether that of professing Christian or avowed infidel, accursed be the hand which would madly dash from the world's lips its cup of joy, and sink it into the depths of despair, by driving it to the conclusion that this belief which has so answered to its longings is no better than the belief of a lie. We should deem him the worst enemy of the race who dared to affirm or to insinuate that God has led the world to rejoice in a story so marvellously fitted to awaken joyous echoes in its breast, while it has no foundation in fact. The injury such a man does to our dearest interests is only equalled by the insult which he offers to our common sense. We may safely affirm that considering the human circumstances of our Lord the story could never have obtained credence if it had not been incontestably true. Jesus of Nazareth, as a mere man, must have passed away out of the world's memory covered with the world's contempt. Jesus of Nazareth, as the incarnate God, meets the world's cravings and fills the world with joy. And by the very extent to which it is received, and the effects it has produced, are we shut up to the conclusion that the Divine as well the human side of the story is true, that Jesus Christ is the manifested God, that "In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son." Fixing your attention now on the words of the text, I ask you to consider first the meaning of—

I. *That phrase "fulness of time."* This points to the preparation which had been made for this marvellous event, which has had such a mighty influence on the history of the world. As was becoming to an event of such importance, it was not isolated but preceded by a long series of prophecies which heralded and prepared the way for its coming. These prophecies had marked its place in history as well as foretold the fact. He came not only in the manner, but at the time foretold. He came, too, when His coming was earnestly expected, while Mosaic ceremony as well as prophetic utterances pointed to His approach. The disorganised and deteriorated state into which the ceremonial had fallen, its inability to secure the regeneration or even to prevent the

deterioration of the people to whom it was given, made many feel the need of that to which it pointed. The choicest and best spirits of the nation looked for the advent of the promised Deliverer. The sad condition of the nation as subjugated to the Roman yoke, the contending sects into which it was divided, the manner in which the moral was subordinated to the ceremonial, by some of its accredited and most approved religious teachers;—all these made many sigh for the speedy fulfilment of those promises which were the hope of their nation. And though many mistook the nature of His work, and made their own carnal longings the medium through which they looked at the prophetic predictions, there were others who, with a spiritual perception of its meaning, looked for salvation in Israel, and were ready even in His lowly form to receive the Lord's Christ.

Outside the Jewish nation a kindred course of preparation had been going on.

Surprise has been expressed that so many ages of the world should have been allowed to pass before the Saviour came, and that the revelation which heralded His coming should have been so much confined to one small country; and explanations have sometimes been tendered which are very much beside the mark. The true explanation is found in the phrase—"*The fulness of time.*" "In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." These words point to a preparatory process as having been necessary to, and as having preceded, the Saviour's coming. The world needed such a process in order that it might be *mentally and morally prepared for receiving Him.* It needed, too, the development of the ages, in order that the means of diffusing the revelation might be supplied. It had to be convinced of its need before it would welcome the Deliverer. It had to reach a stage of mental development before it could apprehend the truths of the Gospel. *Politically*, it had to be prepared for the free and comparatively safe transit of the heralds of the cross. And when the preparatory process was completed—"in the fulness of time"—Christ came. Humanity for four thousand years had been trying to work out the problem of its own regeneration. Under every form of government, in all conceivable circumstances, it had made its experiments, and had confessedly and signally failed. The expectation of the thoughtful turned to look, and the woes of the multitude cried aloud, for the appearance of a superhuman helper. Deteriorating morally, however, it had advanced intellectually, and in the Greek language possessed for the first time an admirable vehicle for the communication of religious truth. The conquests of Alexander brought that language into use throughout the known world. The rise of the Roman Empire did but consolidate and extend its dominion, while its roads furnished the means of travel, and its far-reaching arm afforded protection, to the messengers who bore into the distant parts of the earth the glad tidings of salvation.

Thus, both as regards the world's demonstrated need of a Saviour and its preparedness for receiving and transmitting the revelation which He gave, He may be said to have come "in the fulness of time."

II. The two following phrases describe the form and condition in which He appeared:—*The first relating to His human nature; the second to His legal position.*

1. When we read of His being "made of a woman" we are taught *how truly human He was*—how completely He took upon Himself our nature in all its parts, with all its natural conditions, and thus became in all respects one of ourselves. As born of woman He could lay claim to the most complete humanity. No one of woman born was more human than He. He had all the natural qualities which pertain to all the race. His incarnation was no making to appear, no assumption of an unreal or shadowy form, but an actual putting on of our humanity, a clothing of His Divinity in human flesh, a taking to Himself of a true body and a reasonable soul, a coming down of the Divine to the level of His creatures, bearing their nature, and standing in their place.

2. His being "made under the law" describes *the legal position which He assumed on our account*, and is fitted to enhance our estimate of His condescension in taking upon Himself our nature. As we are said to have been under the law before He came to redeem us from the thraldom, the position which He took was that which we occupied, so that an understanding of what it meant in our case will show what it meant in His. Let it be observed, then, that we were under the law in the sense of *our eternal life being made contingent on our obedience to its requirements.* By obedience, perfect and unfailing, life was secured to us. By one act of disobedience, or by one failure to meet its requirements, life was for ever forfeited. It could never be procured again on law terms. Unless we were redeemed from the law, placed on a new and different footing, as sinners we must die.

When the Saviour was made under the law He voluntarily placed Himself in our position. As Creator and Lawgiver, the law could not require of Him an obedience like ours. But He took upon Him our nature in order that for our sakes He might come under the law as we were, and that His life and ours might become contingent on His perfect obedience to its requirements.

If we are not impressed with the position which our Saviour thus occupied, it is only because we fail to realise its solemnity and its awfulness. Let us, if we would realise it aright, keep in mind his *true and essential humanity;* for it was a condition of his incarnation that His Divine nature left him still free to feel and think and act as a man. Consider, then, how a sense of responsibility must have pressed on Him, when the destiny of the whole human race was made dependent on His obedience. We know by

experience in some measure with what awfulness our acts are invested when we feel that the welfare of many is made dependent thereon, and what an additional strain is thereby made upon us. And how must the human mind of our Saviour have been affected by the thought that the myriads of the human race, born and unborn, were to have their eternal condition affected by His obedience, or disobedience—that one act of deviation from the requirements of the law during any part of His earthly life would seal both His doom and theirs, cutting them off for ever from all hope of a glorious immortality and consigning them to endless misery and despair; how this must have made His whole life a course of prolonged and awful sacrifice and suffering which none could understand or appreciate but Himself! And how this suffering must have been intensified by the temptations to which He was exposed—from the assaults made upon Him by the powers of darkness, when all hell was animated by the consciousness that His obedience was its defeat, and His disobedience its victory, and thus grew more fierce and desperate in its assaults as He neared the close of His course, until He Himself bore testimony to the power with which it assailed Him, when He spoke of the final struggle as "the hour and power of darkness"! How must it have been intensified also by the ingratitude and cruelty of those for whom He was enduring so much, when they made His course so difficult and painful, blaspheming and reviling Him, attributing His miracles to Satanic agency, and at last crucifying Him and deriding Him in His last agony, thus giving Him the strongest conceivable provocation, to resent with impatience their evil treatment, and thereby to fail in the obedience which He was rendering on their account! And above all, how must He have suffered from the hidings of His Father's countenance, the withdrawal of Divine consolation and support, when, as the opposition of devils was most fiercely raging, and the cruelty of men had reached its climax, He had to exclaim, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Of the suffering of His life, the endurance which was required of Him up to that hour—who can conceive? None but the Divine Sufferer Himself. Human or angelic mind is all inadequate to its realisation. Human or angelic mind cannot comprehend all that was meant by His being thus made under the law. And yet He bore the strain up to the very last. There was no failure of His obedience. No murmur of resentment or impatience escaped His lips. No distrust of God. Nothing which the law could disapprove.

III. *The final purpose of His coming described* in the words, "to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Our redemption consists in our release from the thraldom in which we were held by the law as doomed by it to death, because of our failure to comply with, or, in other words, our violation of, its requirements. Not that we have altogether done with the law. As a rule of life it is as valuable as it ever was, except as it is surpassed and superseded by the example which our Saviour hath set us, and the Spirit which He gives us to breathe. Whatsoever it enjoins upon us is still right and incumbent, as well as becoming. It is our duty still to practise every virtue which it inculcates, to avoid every practice or feeling which it condemns. In this respect we are not freed from it. Our redemption does not consist in this, for this good reason: that to souls that love righteousness there is in such requirements no bondage. But while we are not freed from the law's moral dominion, we are redeemed from its curse, inasmuch it hath not, because of our failure to meet its requirements, any power to consign us to death. In this respect it no longer holds us in its grasp, like victims awaiting their doom. Its power to do this is gone since our representative voluntarily came under it and fulfilled it in our stead, honouring it more by so doing than it would have been honoured, either by the perfect obedience or the eternal perdition of the whole human race.

Then this slavery, being abolished, *is meant to be followed by sonship.* Freed from the condemnation of the law, we have access to the privileges of those who are sons of God. We have the freedom of our Father's house and our Father's possessions. It is our privilege to call God Father, and to enjoy all the dignity and all the blessings which belong to His children. God deals with us as His sons—prodigal sons, indeed, until by penitence and faith we return to Him, but still sons. He invites our filial confidence and our filial intercourse. He bids us call Him Father: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, 'My Father, Thou art the Guide of my youth?'" Legally, we are in the position of unfallen sons of God—not slaves, but sons and heirs. And it only remains for us by faith to claim our privileges, to recognise our relation, and to act accordingly, in order to our receiving the adoption of sons.

We say, *by faith.* For while the work of Christ opens to us all the privileges of sonship, it is only by faith that we enter on their actual possession or enjoyment. In this sense "we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And hence it is written, "To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Faith sees what Christ has done for us, how He hath freed us from the law's condemnation, from exposure to death by the law, how He hath placed us legally in the position of those who have fulfilled the law, so that we may approach God and hold intercourse with God as confidently as His unfallen children, and look with them for a share in the paternal inheritance. And seeing this, it engenders in us filial feelings. We call God our Father. We think of Him as our Father, and feel towards Him as our Father, and love and trust Him as our Father, and expect from Him all that we have a right to expect from our Father. And God responds

to our confidence. He respects the feelings Himself has evoked. He holds paternal converse with us; owns us as His children by His paternal dealings with us; and ultimately, having by all the discipline of our earthly life strengthened the ties which unite us to Himself, He by recognising us as His children before an assembled universe, bestows upon us, in the highest sense of the words, "the adoption of sons."

Such is the glorious purpose the Saviour came to accomplish; and be it understood by you all that this work has been done for you. The Saviour who was born on that far-off Christmas morning was to be a Saviour unto all people. He assumed your nature and mine. The obedience He rendered, the suffering He endured, was for you as well as for me. He lived and died for your redemption as well as for mine. For you as for me He has prepared the way for our receiving the adoption of sons. O let not unbelief deprive you of the blessings He has procured for you. Credit the testimony borne by Scripture to the work He has wrought for you as much as for any creature of the race. Enter by faith on your privilege of freedom from the curse of the law. Venture to call God, Father. In view of all that Christ has done on your behalf, He now appeals to you, saying, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?"

OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

CHAPTER I.

AND that poor little baby was God!"

"Was He poor—poor like us, mammy?" asked little Nellie plaintively, her wan baby face lighting up with interest and pity.

"No; nothin' near so bad off as us!" struck in her brother gloomily, "'cos it wasn't so cold there, was it mother?"

"I don't think so, dear," answered "mother," as her needle flew in and out of the warm bright cloth she was embroidering; "but afterwards, when He grew up, He knew what it was to go hungry, and often He hadn't got 'where to lay His head.' Thread me another needle, Paul."

"And why did He be poor?" queried Nellie's weak little voice.

"Just so that He might be able to feel sorry for us."

"If He is sorry, how can He let us go on like this?" asked Paul gloomily. "We haven't done anything wrong, and you——"

"Oh, Paul, that's wicked," interrupted his mother; "He knows what's best for us, though it's hard to think so at the time."

"Well, I wish He didn't be poor, 'cos Nellie's so hungry and cold; but can't He give us a fire, and nice warm tea, now He's growed up?"

"Yes, dear, I s'pose so," returned her mother, sighing wearily.

"Do ask Him then, mammy, please. Can He hear up there?"

"Yes, Nellie, though He does seem far off sometimes," sighed the poor mother, as the tears began to roll over her thin cheeks; "but never mind, darling," she continued, struggling bravely with her depression, "p'raps He'll send us pennies enough to buy some tea, and a fire, when I've taken this work to the warehouse. We *must* have a fire," she said, half to



"'Don't be long, Paul.'"—*p.* 70.

herself; "my fingers are so numbed with cold I can't work without."

A shuffling footstep, which had been audible ascending the stairs as she spoke, had stopped outside the door, which was pushed open with scant ceremony, to admit a slatternly, ill-tempered-looking woman.

"*Must* have a fire, *must* yer?" she asked indignantly, setting her arms akimbo. "Well, I'll tell yer what it is, Mrs. Whatsername, there's a 'must' as comes first, an' that's my rent. 'Ere, it's a fortnet come Saturday since I've seen the colour o' yer money, and the week afore not all paid up, neither."

"If you'll only wait a week or two longer I'll get it all paid up," pleaded the lodger. "They're sure to have plenty of work to give out so near Christmas, but I shan't be able to work half so quick without a bit o' fire this bitter weather, and that I can't have, if I give you all I take."

"It's all very fine," was the reply. "Why don't yer go out a-charin', 'stead a-sittin' there sewin' like a lady? That 'ud warm yer, and pay yer better too, I guess."

"I wish I could, but I'd got this work, you see, when my husband and—the little one I lost—an' then I couldn't spare the time to look after what I mightn't get; an' who do you think would employ me without anyone to speak for me?"

"That's none o' my business. You could a' got a job if you'd 'ad a mind to, I dessay. All I've got to say is, if you can't pay to-night for last week an' what's left on the week afore, you must go elsewhere, an' that's more'n many' ud say, for then yer'll be a week behind; an' remember, you must pay up altogether afore Christmas, or out you go, an' think yerself lucky not to 'ave yer bed taken!"

"You shall have the money, Mrs. Smith;" and as the poor woman spoke, she knew that when she had paid her bill at the chandler's shop at the corner of the road, and supplied herself with light to work by, either the fire, or the meal she had promised herself and her hungry children must be given up for that day at least. She rose wearily, folded up her parcel of completed work, and put on her battered black bonnet and thin old jacket.

"That's all right, then," said Mrs. Smith, following her, as she went sadly and silently out of the room. "I don't want to be hard on yer, yer know, but only this very mornin', I turned away a lady wot's got regler work. An' if lodgers don't pay—which they don't 'arf on 'em—'ow'm I to pay my rent, I arsk yer?"

True enough, Mrs. Cichowski thought as she passed down the bare dirty stairs, but surely all the lodgers could not be as hardly situated as herself. God did indeed seem to be far off, and utterly forgetful of her and her troubles. And can we who are fed and clothed, and have loving friends near to share and soothe the trials which life brings to most of us, wonder at her want of faith? Would it have been so easy for us to realise the fact, that God was hiding His face for His own wise and loving purposes?

"Naughty woman, to be so cross to poor mammy, isn't she, Paul?" asked Nellie, the moment they were alone.

"She's no worse than others what thinks a sight more o' themselves," replied Paul bitterly. "Look at the clergyman that was goin' to do such a lot for us, and ain't been nigh us ever since! He's got a good warm coat on his back, an' as much as he wants to eat—what's he care for the like of us? He had a face that was good enough to look at, too," muttered the boy regretfully. "*He* don't know what bein' hungry an' cold is like! Why, I dessay he's sittin' before a bright fire now, with a carpet all over the room, an' the kettle singin' away on the 'ob ready for tea, an' muffins toastin' in the fender, How *should* he know?"

Little Nellie opened her eyes wide, and glanced wistfully round the miserable place they called home, as Paul's words conjured up before her childish mind a picture of almost impossible brightness and comfort. What she saw was so different. A small bare room, containing a rickety little chair bedstead, covered by a thin patchwork quilt, and the remains of some worn-out clothing; a tin bowl and broken plate on the floor; the little brown jug in which her mother made tea—when she had it; and the tin lamp she worked by on the chimney-piece; no table or chair; no fire in the grate; no blind or curtain at the window, only a piece of rag which had been pinned across the lower half of it to keep the draught out; and Paul crouching opposite her, beside the empty grate, leaning his head dejectedly against the wall. She came close to him, slid her little hand into his, and began to cry.

"Don't, Nellie, don't!" he said, jumping up suddenly. "Look here," he continued, as she rubbed her dirty knuckles into her wet eyes until her white cheeks were covered with grey streaks, "you be a good girl an' get on the bed. I'll cover you up nice and warm, then I'll go out an' try to pick up a penny or two, so we'll have our tea an' our fire too, in spite of Mrs. Smith, if I have any luck! Won't mother be pleased? I'd have gone before, only she was afraid I should get lost in the fog; but if she can go, why can't I?"

"Don't be long, Paul," replied Nellie, brightening a little; "an' I'll ask the dear little baby God to send you pennies."

"All right," he returned indulgently, as he lifted her on to the bed, and tucked her up. He then dragged from underneath it a case, which he opened, and from which he took a violin. With loving, reverent touch, which was almost a caress, he took it into his hands. Next to his mother and Nellie he loved the instrument, both with the love of a born musician, and also because it had been his father's last gift to him. As he passed into the foggy street, he was thinking of that dearly loved father, who had been taken from them only half a year ago. How,

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the first time he had taken the violin into the streets to play the tunes his father had taught him, he had said, "Courage, my Paul; wait a little till I am well and strong again. We will both play before great ladies and gentlemen some day!" Would this ambition ever be realised? Paul wondered drearily; or would he die as his father had done, before he could gain a hearing from those lucky people who could afford to pay for beautiful music, as they did for the other beautiful things of which their lives were full? The only son of a man whose musical genius had met with sufficient appreciation in his native land to enable him to live by it and bring up his family, Henri Cichowski had been left by his father in his twentieth year with a small sum of money, and the violin, which had been purchased, as he knew, at the cost of daily self-denial on the part of the whole family. Though his father had contented himself with a success which left him comparatively unknown to fame, he had cherished wider ambitions for his son. Had he lived longer they might possibly have been realised, for he was a prudent man. His death occurred, however, just after he had incurred the expense of marrying a second daughter. Had Henri been contented to remain where he was, amongst friends, he would probably have made his way by degrees; but what his father had dreamed of as the crowning point of his ambition, to be attained only by long devotion to his art, the foolish lad thought himself capable of achieving at the outset of his career. The splendid recognition awarded to genius in London, of which he had heard, determined him to go there. Against all persuasion, he had persisted in this step. The first person in England to show him any kindness had been a poor hard-working widow, in whose house he had lodged. When she died, leaving her only child Mary unprovided for, the young musician had married her. The hardships they had encountered had resulted in the death of three children, and eventually of the father himself. Like many consumptive people, the poor man had, till within a day or two of his death, believed in his ultimate recovery, and in his direst distress had always refused to part with his beloved instrument. "I will never use another," he would say; "it is my father's legacy to me, and when I die it will be for my son." What prospect had Paul of making this legacy a means of living even? Less than his father had started with, even supposing he possessed greater talent. How would the question he had asked himself be answered?

CHAPTER II.

"Three—five—sevenpence ha'penny. Bravo! What luck! An' me not out more'n three hours or so. Poor little Nell! I wonder if she's been askin', an' that's why I've got on so well?" And the sting which rose to Paul's eyes, followed by a moisture that obliged him to resort to a vigorous application of his shabby coat-sleeve to them, was not owing entirely to the fog. "Let's see; that'll buy—tea, three-'apence; bread, a penny; firin', thrippence 'apenny—that is, if Mrs. Smith'll let us 'ave it of her—three pen'orth o' coal an' a haporth o' wood; then we can 'ave a bit o' fried fish for a treat, an' some milk—we must 'ave some milk for Nellie." And Paul, thinking that he would get the fire lighted first of all, set off at a run, coming into collision with the wayfarers in the foggy streets, until he was obliged to slacken his pace.

"What! mother 's not back yet?" he asked, on reaching their room and finding only Nellie there.

"Want mother!" whimpered the child.

"Look, Nellie! look!" he said, displaying the tea and bread, which he had bought on his way home, as it led him past the shop. "An' that isn't all; I got some more pennies."

"I did tell Him," replied Nellie, languidly eyeing the bread without appetite. "Did He send the pennies?"

"Well, I s'pose so," returned Paul. "Ain't you hungry? 'Ave a bit now, while I make a nice bright fire against mother comes 'ome." Nellie shook her head.

"Ah, you 've gone past your food, that's what it is," said the boy, with a wisdom born of experience. "Never mind, I'll get some milk in a minute or two, an' you shall 'ave some nice 'ot bread an' milk. You'll eat that up fast enough!"

Nellie made no reply, and he ran off to coax Mrs. Smith to let him have the materials for a fire from her. Very soon one was burning cheerfully in the little grate, and having borrowed a saucepan to boil the water in, Paul left Nellie to go and fetch her some milk. He was not uneasy at his mother's absence; she had been kept waiting for her work before, and he knew it would take her longer to find her way home to-day, on account of the fog, but he wished that he had found her there, for he was ravenously hungry, and did not feel as if he should be able to stop eating, when once he began, till all before him was finished. He had hardly been able to keep his fingers off the bread while carrying it home, "an' when it comes to anything like fried fish—all 'ot an' smellin' so good—why, I could eat the whole lot, bread an' fish an' all! But that won't do, for mother's as 'ungry as I am," he said to himself; "an' p'raps Nellie 'll fancy a bit too, when she's 'ad some warm milk. I know—I 'll get that ready first, an' get her to take a little, for she does look queer, poor little thing! an' p'raps by then mother 'll be 'ome."

But though the boy waited what seemed to him, in his hungry condition, a long time after he had returned with the milk, she did not come. His hunger became unbearable, and he could not withstand the temptation to finish the sop he had prepared for his sister, who had only been able to swallow a little of the milk. Suddenly it struck him that if he took his violin out with him again, he might earn some

more money, which would enable him to buy bread and fish enough for the three of them.

"Tell mother I shan't be long," he said hopefully, as he ran off again.

This time, however, he played away without receiving anything for his trouble. Everybody in the streets seemed to be in a hurry to get home out of the fog, and to have neither time nor inclination to listen to or reward him for his music. Presently he stopped before an "eating-house," attracted by the savoury odours, wafted from the inside of the shop, as a customer came out looking warm and satisfied. Paul stood for a minute or two, with his face pressed against the window, looking longingly through the blurred glass at "hot sausages," "pease pudding," "boiled plum," etc., all enveloped in clouds of steam, rising from some contrivance for keeping the eatables hot.

"I wonder if they'd let me play inside?" he thought; "may be, as they're jolly an' comfortable in there out o' the cold, some o' the customers wouldn't mind sparin' a penny or two for a tune!"

Pushing aside the swing door, he entered boldly.

"Now, then, what's for you, sir?" asked one of the young men behind the counter.

"Nothin', thank you," said Paul reluctantly; "but would you mind me playin' in here a bit?"

"Get out, you young rascal! I know what you're after," said the man angrily, following the boy's ravenous glance along the counter. "We don't want none o' your sort 'ere!"



"He stopped before an eating-house."

"I wasn't goin' to touch nothin'," Paul retorted indignantly.

"Now, then, what's the matter?" asked the master, coming from the other end of the shop, where he had been serving a customer. There was a kind of bluff good-nature about the man's broad red face, which emboldened Paul to repeat his request.

"No! no!" he replied; "it's too late! There won't be nobody much in now, till nine or ten o'clock! Besides, how do I know if that 's all you're up to, eh?"

"Won't you let me give you a tune, then?" asked Paul, his great blue eyes eagerly scanning the man's face.

"No thanks, I ain't musical myself; an' if I was I could make as good a noise as them fiddles do, drawin' a knife across a plate," the man replied, with a laugh at his own humour.

Paul was in despair. It was evidently no use trying to earn anything more to-night. Yet he was nearly wild with the gnawings of hunger; not with that kind of hunger which only gives a strong desire for food, and makes one eat with appetite, but with that fierce craving which is absolute pain, and which, in his case, was rendered more acute by the appetising odours around him. With a faint blush on his thin cheeks, the words fell from his lips, in spite of himself—

"I'm so 'ungry!"

"Well, you can 'ave as good a feed 'ere as anywheres in London for a penny!" replied the man, looking at him with attention.

Paul shook his head and turned hopelessly away, while a great lump that seemed as if it would choke him, rose in his throat.

"Ah! I thought beggin' was your game!" commented the man, regarding him irresolutely; "but if I was to give a meal to every young rascal as come askin' for it, I might as well 'ave the shutters up at once! Besides, if I was to give one to you, you'd send twenty more o' your own sort to-morrer. I know the ways of yer!"

"I'm *not* a beggar," retorted Paul indignantly; "an' I don't want you to *give* me nothin'; but I'm awful 'ungry, an' if you'd only trust me till to-morrer——"

A burst of laughter from two or three of the assistants greeted this request.

"Well, if that ain't good!" said the man he had first addressed. "He don't take us for simpletons! Oh, no! not at all!"

"'Old your noise, Jones!" said his employer, for something in the boy's manner and expression made him doubt whether he had been right in believing him to be an habitual beggar. "You'd call out loud enough if you was 'ungry, I'll be bound! I'll tell you what I'll do, my lad, I will trust you for a penn'orth of pease-puddin'; but don't you come

sneakin' in 'ere every now and then; nor don't you send nobody else o' the same sort, because——"

"I don't want you to trust me," replied Paul proudly, "if you're afraid to. I'll pay you to-morrow, fair enough; but I'll leave the violin behind till I bring the money; it's worth more'n I shall eat, anyhow!"

"Serve 'im with three penn'orth of anything he likes," said the man shortly, holding out his hand for the instrument.

"Thank you, sir!" said Paul gratefully; "I'll be sure an' come for it to-morrer."

"Mind you do!" replied the man gruffly; "for it won't pay me to be runnin' about to find someone to buy an old fiddle—it ain't in my line; so if you don't turn up in a day or two, I shall pawn it for what I can get."

"I shall be here to-morrer, about this time," said Paul, after he had finished such a meal as he had not eaten for many a day; "an' you'll take care of it, please?" he added, wistfully, for now that the pangs of hunger were appeased, he did not at all like leaving his father's legacy in strange hands.



"Her thin little arms clasped his neck even more tightly than usual."—*p.* 74.

"Just step outside, one of you, an' see where that youngster goes," commanded the good man, who had been half inclined to trust the boy in spite of his suspicions. The man he had addressed before as Jones, immediately left the shop. Paul was so much absorbed in his own thoughts, and eager anticipations of the pleasure his mother would feel, on finding a warm fire and comfortable meal awaiting her, that he never noticed that he was being followed, although the fog had lightened considerably during the last half hour. Just as he was coming out of the fried-fish shop with his purchase in his hand, he ran up against Jones. Suddenly there flashed into his mind the construction that might be placed on his conduct, and with a guilty look he took to his heels. True, he had not said he had not the money to pay for his meal, but his conduct had certainly implied as much, and in spite of his efforts to argue the matter out in his own favour, Paul felt that he had acted a lie, and determined that he would explain how it was that he had allowed himself to do so to-morrow. Now, he must hasten home to his mother, and tell her the afternoon's adventure. But to his surprise he found that she had not yet returned. He began to feel anxious, but it would be no use going to the warehouse after her now; she certainly must have left it a good hour ago. Perhaps she had lost her way in the fog; if so, it was still no use seeking her, for he did not know where to look, and as it had lifted she would be able to find her way. Finding that she did not come, he made the tea, and put it on the hob to keep warm. He drank a little himself, and toasted a little bread for Nellie to dip in his cup; for, to his great disappointment, she could not touch the fish. Then she wanted to be nursed, and cried herself to sleep in his arms. He sat beside the waning fire with her, till he was quite cold and very sleepy. Still, no one came near, and putting Nellie into bed, he curled himself up at her feet, and fell into a troubled slumber.

It was still dark when he awoke next morning, and with a feeling of self-reproach, and wonder that he could have slept so soundly during his mother's unaccountable absence, sprang off the bed, and began to light the fire. He was going to look for his mother, but he meant to make Nellie as comfortable as possible first. His movements soon awoke her, and though he could not persuade her to eat much, she drank a little of the tea left from the night before, which he had re-warmed. The meal he made from the remainder of yesterday's feast, was scarcely better than hers, for he felt anxious and worried.

Something dreadful must have happened to have kept his mother away all night. As cheerfully as he could, he told Nellie he was "going to fetch mother," which seemed to satisfy her; and though her thin little arms clasped his neck even more tightly than usual when she gave him her good-bye kiss, she let him leave her without a murmur. His errand proved fruitless; his mother had left the warehouse about five o'clock in the afternoon with the money that had been paid her, but without any fresh work. This was all he could ascertain. All sorts of fearful fancies crowded into his mind, as he dejectedly retraced his steps. Perhaps she had been murdered for the sake of the money—he had heard of such things; perhaps she had gone to seek work elsewhere, and, losing her way in the fog, had been overtaken by the night, and was wearily finding her way home even now. But the whole day and another night, passed with no news of her, and he began to feel sure that something dreadful had happened to prevent her from coming home to them. What was he to do? He knew of no one to whom he could turn for help. Thick and fast the shadows had been falling lately round the desolate family, and now, indeed, it seemed as if every glimmering of hope was quenched in thickest darkness. With this trouble came a new sense of responsibility. Paul felt that he must be doing something, for Nellie seemed worse, and now she had only him to take care of her. The landlady had been up-stairs asking for her rent again, and had told him, that it was good broth she wanted, but that as she couldn't afford to give it her, and as their mother seemed to have taken herself off and left them for somebody else to take care of, they'd better go into the "house." Paul begged her to give them one more week's shelter; his mother would never leave them, "he was sure."

"It's my belief she's either run away or made away with 'erself," the woman replied.

Paul smothered his anger at this suggestion, and, having gained an unwilling consent to his request, went out to try and earn the money to redeem his violin, for if after all he had to sell it, he felt sure it ought to bring them several shillings, as he had often heard his father say that it had cost a great deal of money. "And, Nellie dear," he whispered, before he left her, "you 'd better ask for pennies again to-day, for we want 'em bad enough. And mother, ask——" he could say no more, but Nellie understood him, and giving her a reassuring pat, he went away, feeling as if he had the world upon his shoulders.

After three hours waiting about, he earned fourpence by carrying a portmanteau home for its owner. He immediately hurried off to the eating-house.

"If you please, sir, I've come for my violin," he said breathlessly, tendering the money to the master of the shop.

"Oh, you 'ave, 'ave you? What's your little game now, I should like to know? I s'pose that's every penny you've got, or you'd like me to think so. I'm not goin' to give you anything more on trust, you young rascal! An' you with money in your pocket all the time to go and buy fried fish!"

Paul attempted to explain.

"A likely story that!" replied the man incredulously. "I kept your fiddle for you yesterday, accord'n' to promise; but you can keep your thrippence, for it's gone now!"

"Gone!" echoed Paul faintly, and with a glance of reproachful misery he turned to leave the shop, but the floor seemed to rise before his uncertain footsteps, there was a rushing in his ears, a dark mist swam before his eyes, and he felt himself falling.

"What's the good o' crowdin'? Here, carry him into the parlour." The same voice was speaking that had a moment ago carried such despair to the boy's heart, but he heard it as if it had nothing to do with him and with a faint sensation of surprise, such as we sometimes experience in dreams, felt himself raised and carried somewhere. When he next opened his eyes, their languid glance encountered the puzzled gaze of the master of the shop. In a moment everything came rushing back to him, and he made an attempt to struggle into a sitting posture, with a vague intention of getting away.

"Come, come; easy now! There wasn't no call for all this fuss!" said the man. "Your fiddle's safe enough, d'ye hear?"

Paul covered his face with his hands and burst into tears, but he was too much a boy to let such weakness overpower him long, and was soon able to hear how it happened that his violin could not be restored to him at a moment's notice.

"You see," began the man, "Mr. Chester—that's our parson—comes in yesterday quite friendly—as he often does, for he's a pleasant sort o' man, an' a real gentleman—an' ses he, 'Davis, where did you get that instrument?' for I'd 'ung it up in the shop. So I told him the whole business, an', what's more, I ses, 'I believe it's stole, an' the boy didn't know where to get rid of it, an' has got frightened an' palmed it off on me for what he could get."

Paul opened his mouth indignantly. "'Old your tongue, my boy," continued Davis. "Nothin's proved either for or against you yet. 'Owever, stole or not stole, Mr. Chester's got it; for, ses he, 'The lad's not cheated you, Davis, if he never comes again, for I shouldn't be surprised if that violin was worth a good sum.'—'All the worse, sir,' ses I. 'How's a poor boy like that got anything o' that kind honestly?'—'Well,' ses he, 'I believe from what you tell me that this is the boy I've been looking for this long time. I was goin' to see 'im an' 'is mother just before I was ill, an' then I lost sight of 'em. So,' ses he, 'if you'll let me pay the boy's dinner, an' have the instrument, I'll take the risk.' So ses I, 'Take it, an' welcome, sir!' An' he ses, 'When he comes, which I think he will, send 'im round to me, for if it's the same boy, the violin's his father's, Davis.'"

"Where is he?" asked Paul, his face glowing

with hope and excitement, for he felt that this must be the clergyman who had seemed so kind, and of whose broken promise he had spoken so bitterly to Nellie. "I must go to 'im—now, directly!"

"Well, I'll go round with you; it ain't so very far," said Davis, with suspicion still in his glance.

Paul thanked him eagerly, and waited with impatience while he added a coat and hat to his costume. After a short tram ride they alighted at Mr. Chester's house, were admitted, and ushered into what seemed, to the boy's unaccustomed eyes, a luxuriously furnished room. But before many moments all his attention was absorbed by a familiar object, for there upon the table lay his violin. With a glad cry he sprang forward, and took it into his trembling hands. Then the door opened, and Paul, turning eagerly with the exclamation, "Oh, sir, I've got the money, an' I want my violin!" found himself gazing into the kind face he had described as being "good to look at."

"All in good time, my boy," replied Mr. Chester; "but I want a little talk with you first."

Very soon his sympathetic questions had drawn from the boy the whole story of the troubles of the last few weeks, ending with the disappearance of his mother. He shook his head gravely over that.

"Well, my boy," he said kindly, "we will do our best to find her; but first of all we must try and arrange something for Nellie. Come, we will go to her at once. Stay, have you had anything to eat?" Paul replied that he did not want anything; but Mr. Chester sent for some broth, which he made him drink; some more was put into a bottle, and, taking a thick travelling-rug over his arm, he and Paul set out.

CHAPTER III.

When they arrived, Mr. Chester found Nellie looking so weak and ill that he changed his first purpose, which had been to make her as comfortable as possible till he could get her admitted into a hospital. So, sending the boy for a cab, he went down-stairs to pay the landlady the rent owing to her, and a week over. He then told her to keep the room vacant for that time, in case of her lodger's reappearance, leaving his address, so that he might be communicated with at once if any news of her was received. By the time Paul returned, these arrangements were completed, and wrapping the little invalid first in the miserable bedclothes, and then in the rug, he carried her tenderly down to the cab, and placing her in her brother's arms, told the man to drive to his house. Paul's joy may be imagined when he was informed of Mr. Chester's purpose. There had been a prospect of separation from Nellie, for, during their walk from his house, he had made a proposal which Paul had thought it his duty to gratefully accept, even though it involved leaving her in the care of strangers. She was to have been taken to a hospital, or left in Mrs. Smith's care, while he was to enter Mr. Chester's service. In any case he was to earn the help and care his benefactor intended bestowing upon him, by cleaning knives, boots, windows, running errands, etc., out of school-time. For that he should go regularly to school Mr. Chester insisted.

"Of course when your mother comes back we shall have to make different arrangements for Nellie, but I am sure she will be glad to let you come to me," said Mr. Chester; "you will be fed and clothed and taught, and we will see what else we can do to help her; the next thing will be to do our best to find her."

"But I'm 'fraid all I can do won't be worth what all that'll cost, sir," said Paul gratefully; "I'd like to work all day, an' then it wouldn't pay you, I know."

"I think it will, my boy," replied Mr. Chester kindly; "for, remember, I shall expect you to work hard; there will be no more playing in the streets, you know; and in return for what I am doing for you, I shall ask you to leave your violin in my care for the present. I shall let you have it at certain stated times, when your work is done. Then you will be able to feel that you are really helping to earn your own and Nellie's living—and that is what you want, is it not?"

"That it is," said Paul; "but there'll be lots left to thank you for, only some'ow I don't mind bein' grateful to you for it."

A few days' experience of his new life strengthened this feeling, and he determined that he would show his gratitude, by taking pains to do everything he was told, as well as it could be done. There was no lack of employment for him, for there were three boys in the house besides himself—"his family," Mr. Chester called them, though they did not bear his name, and but for his paternal care would have been destitute. Paul was to be added to their number.

Seven years before, when the young wife died whom Mr. Chester had loved with a depth of affection their year of companionship had only increased, he had determined, as he had no idea of marrying again, to spend such a proportion of his income as would have been required to bring up a family, upon the maintenance of six orphan and destitute boys, to be chosen by him from time to time, as circumstances brought them under his notice. Three had already been inmates of his home for some time, and, having finished their compulsory course at the board school, were helping to earn their own living in various capacities.

The uncertainty concerning his mother made it very hard for the boy to fix his attention upon the tasks set him in anticipation of his beginning again at the board school, which he had already attended in a desultory fashion up till now. But his suspense did not last long. About a week after his arrival he was sent for to go to Mr. Chester's room. The moment the boy saw his face he knew that

something had been heard about his mother, and that it was something sad.

"My boy," he said tenderly, "at last we have heard."

"What?" asked Paul.

"That your mother has been taken away from her troubles," he replied.

"How? Have you seen her? Are you sure?" asked the boy, wondering dimly that he could not cry.

"You were quite right, Paul; she did not leave you willingly, nor did she take her own life, as Mrs. Smith believed," said Mr. Chester, encircling the boy with his arm. "There were two or three accidents that day; but she just fainted from exhaustion, was taken into a police-station, and never recovered."

"I can't—I ain't goin' to believe it!" Paul burst out. "What, while I was stuffin' away like a animal! It's too bad to be true! Why, often she's give me the last bit o' bread, an' gone without 'erself! 'I ain't a 'ungry growing boy,' she'd say, jest to pretend!"

"My dear boy," said Mr. Chester, drawing the boy closer to him, "I know how you feel; you didn't know, or you'd have gone to her help; but what could you have done? And that meal helped you to look after Nellie. Don't you think she would have been glad of that?"

Paul burst into tears. "But she didn't know," he sobbed.

"There is one thing you may feel sure of—she knows now all that is needed to make her happy," replied Mr. Chester, "for, from all you tell me, your dear mother trusted in God through all her troubles. I am sure she was a good woman, Paul; but it is a sad Christmas for you. God bless and comfort you, my boy. Shall we tell Him all about it before you go to Nellie?"

Paul nodded, and, kneeling side by side, the loving sympathetic man spoke for the grief-stricken boy in simple words to the great "Father of the fatherless," commending him and his sister so earnestly to His care and keeping, that the young mourner rose from his knees feeling comforted and strengthened to bear the grief which only time could cure.

"And now, Paul," he said, "will you undertake to tell Nellie, or shall Miss Chester do so?—for I must leave you, as I have a great deal of business to arrange."

"I will, please; she's more used to me," said Paul, and pressing the kind hand that grasped his own gratefully to his lips, he went immediately to perform his sad task. Nellie took the news more quietly than he had expected. She seemed consoled when she heard that some day she would go to her mother if she were a good little girl, although it might be a long time first, and that Paul would stay with her.

As soon as he left her, Paul went to his usual tasks, although his heart ached sadly over them; for he felt that he must do all in his power to show his gratitude to his benefactors. There was plenty for him to do, for the next day would be Christmas Eve, and the usual bustle of preparation for the festival was increased, by the distribution of gifts to the poor of the parish.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Chester, when at the end of the day they were all assembled for prayers, "I think you heard the news of our rector's death last week?"

"Yes, sir," said the eldest of the three; "it won't be a very merry Christmas for Mrs. Beauchamp and the young ladies."

Paul listened with interest; he had heard a great deal of conversation going on between the boys on the subject during the last week.

"No, indeed," replied Mr. Chester; "and it will make a great deal of difference to us; to you boys it will bring, or be the means of bringing, a longer holiday from evening work, I expect."

"We shan't mind that, sir; though of course we're sorry for the reason," answered one of the lads.

"I daresay I shall find you something else to do," said Mr. Chester.

"Bravo! All right, sir. We're ready!" came in an eager chorus from all.

"You saw the gentleman who read the lessons this morning?" asked Mr. Chester, smiling indulgently upon this natural outburst. "Well, that is our new rector."

This statement was received in silence.

"And," he continued, "he will not require my help."

There was a chorus of indignant protest.

"I hoped, as you all know," continued Mr. Chester, "to spend the rest of my life among the people here, but it was not to be. Two months ago a small living was offered me, which I declined. Last week, knowing that it was still vacant, I wrote to recall my refusal; yesterday I heard that I was appointed."

"Then you'll be vicar, sir; isn't that better?" asked one of the boys.

"For some things, perhaps, yes," replied Mr. Chester gravely; "only I would rather have remained here as curate. But the new rector is young and strong, and intends to do without a curate, so next week we must begin to move."

A fortnight later saw them installed in their new home, in a poor and populous district, situated in a north-western suburb of London. Then came school and the many occupations of his new life to weaken the impression, which had at first been so strong in the boy's mind, that his mother could not be dead. Paul's happiness and gratitude increased with every day. It was so delightful to see Nellie looking so neat and pretty in the nice warm clothes that he was assured his labour helped to provide for her. She was looking so well too, and Miss Chester was beginning to teach her her letters. Even had his service been worth all that was spent on them, which the boy knew well enough it was not, he

felt that nothing could repay the love and care they received. Only one attainable desire was left ungratified, and that was the possession of his violin. It was not long before this joy was added to his daily life. About six weeks after they had settled at the vicarage, Mr. Chester called Paul to him one evening, and, telling him that he felt sure he could trust him not to use the instrument "while any duty was left undone," restored it to him. A few days later Paul was delighting himself and the boys, just before prayer-time, by his performance of "Hark! the herald angels sing," when Mr. Chester entered unperceived by him, and, holding up a warning finger to those who were aware of his presence, took up his station behind the young musician.

"Well done, Paul!" he said, laying his hand kindly on the boy's shoulder as the last jubilant note died away; "I had no idea you could play as well as that."

Nothing more was said on the subject then, but the following Saturday, Paul was told to put on his best clothes and prepare to accompany Mr. Chester in his afternoon walk. Hitherto his duties had deprived him of this pleasure, which was generally conferred on the boy who had worked hardest at lessons during the week.

"I wonder what's up now?" cried one of the boys bursting into the room where Paul awaited the summons to join Mr. Chester. "You're to take your violin, youngster! I was told to say so!"

What could be the meaning of this command, Paul was almost afraid to guess; something pleasant, he felt sure. He was not kept long in suspense. Mr. Chester told him that he was taking him to see a very clever violinist; "so play your best, Paul," he said, "for if he thinks you have talent enough to make it worth while, I will try and arrange to get some lessons for you—not from Herr Schroeder himself—that would be too expensive; but from someone who can teach you all you will want to know for the present."

Paul began to stammer out his eager thanks.

"Stop—don't be too excited," said Mr. Chester with his kind smile; "there is nothing settled yet, you know."

"Suppose the gentleman's out, sir?" suggested Paul.

"I made an appointment with him," answered Mr. Chester. "Don't be frightened!"

"I'll try not to," Paul replied. But, in spite of his efforts to control his excitement, when half an hour later he stood in the *maestro's* presence, it was with an unsteady hand that he drew the bow across the strings, although the gentleman was apparently paying no attention to him.

"Stop!" cried Herr Schroeder in an excited tone after Paul's first two or three notes; "give me your violin!"



"'Carry him into the parlour.'"—*p.* 74.

Paul obeyed; and the musician, taking it into his hand, examined it closely, then began to play—first little snatches, interspersed with exclamations of delight; then when he had, as it were, tried the temper of the instrument, he burst into a brilliant "Rapsodie," while the boy listened, his face glowing with appreciation.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed the player enthusiastically as he lowered his bow; "it is worth much—ach! very much—money. Will you sell it? I will give fifty pounds now, and after—say, three months—fifty more, to have that violin"

"It is a Cremona, then?" asked Mr. Chester with interest.

"A genuine Stradivarius!" replied Herr Schroeder; and he began to point out to his eager listeners the proofs of his statement.

"Well, Paul, what do you say? Will you sell it? It is yours," said Mr. Chester, watching the boy's changing countenance.

"It isn't mine—not yet," cried Paul. "But, oh, sir, please don't sell it—my father's violin; it is yours, of course; but some day I will pay you. I can't let it go; you are rich—you don't want for nothing—an' he wouldn't when he was often hungry an' ill."

"I will not sell it, Paul; don't be afraid," said Mr. Chester, exchanging glances with the *maestro*. "But remember, my boy, what the money would mean to you. No more work to do, before and after lessons; we could pay another boy to do that."

"That is scarcely fair—to tempt the boy with such motives," began Herr Schroeder.

Paul laughed with the tears in his eyes.

"I can work!" he said. "I will try to do more; but if we ain't costin' too much, sir, I'd rather keep father's violin!"

The musician nodded approvingly, and, handing the instrument back to him, told him to play something.

"Good," he said, when Paul had finished playing; "you will keep it, my young friend, and I shall teach you to play; only you shall lend me your violin when I will play at some grand concerts, and, with permission, you shall be there to hear. How will that do?"

Paul turned red and white with excitement, and, stepping eagerly forward, placed the instrument in the *maestro's* hand; then, with sudden dutiful remembrance, turned with an appealing glance to Mr. Chester, as if asking approval of his action.

"You are most kind, Schroeder," said Mr. Chester, with as much gratitude as if the benefit had been conferred on himself.—"Ah! my boy, I never dreamed of this for you," he continued, turning to Paul; "why, this gentleman will not teach some people who can pay him well."

"Ah! no, where is the good if they do not love music? There are many who think they do; but they will not work, and they cannot lend me a Stradivarius," said Herr Schroeder. "And now," he continued, "you shall come every Saturday afternoon at this time, for a half-hour at first; you will be punctual; and we shall see if the enthusiasm lasts. Never mind to thank me; your thanks shall be to work hard. Next Saturday, then, I shall see you again."

With reiterated thanks to the benevolent musician, they prepared to return.

"Can you spare me a few minutes more?" asked Mr. Chester.

"I have an appointment at four," replied Herr Schroeder; "but I shall be pleased to walk a little way with you."

"Thanks; then, Paul, you walk on, and if I do not overtake you before, wait for me by the station."

"Well, what do you think of him?" he asked enthusiastically, as soon as the boy was out of hearing.

"He has been taught, I perceive," replied Herr Schroeder; "but how much, I cannot tell; if not much, he is clever. He will be clever, I think."

"But do you think him clever enough to look forward to a successful musical career?" asked Mr. Chester earnestly.

"Ach! I cannot say; in his position I would not trust to it. It is hard work at first; it takes time, and money to live while studying, and friends—unless he is something marvellous. Give him a trade, my friend; and after, if he can be great—good—he will be; and the greater that it was not too easy."

"I suppose you are right," was the disappointed reply; "and it would not be fair to the other boys, to spend an undue portion of time and money on an uncertainty. But you are giving your time—you must think he shows promise."

"I like the boy; and—you forget the violin. We shall see."

But we must hasten over the next four years, which passed rapidly away, bringing the brother and sister to a fresh epoch of their existence. Nellie, now in her tenth year, began to attend a middle-class school, where she was to be trained for the position of mistress; and Paul was placed with a firm of music-publishers. This new order of things brought the lessons, which had been mutually delightful to master and pupil, to an end. Paul, however, resolved that Herr Schroeder's kindness should not be thrown away, and continued to give every spare moment to the study and practice of music with unabated enthusiasm.

CHAPTER IV.

"YOU are quite right, Nellie; I ought to have noticed it before."

It was Paul who spoke. Brother and sister were walking home from church together, and his words were in answer to what she had been saying to him a day or two before.

"He works too hard, that's what it is; he ought to have gone for his holiday in the autumn. I wonder why he would not."

"Oh, Paul, don't you know?" answered Nellie. "I heard him tell Miss Chester he could not afford it, he said there were so many in the parish wanting help; he is so good! I wish I could earn money to help, like you, Paul."

"Ah, and that was just before Parker and Beale came to the house; he could afford that, you see," remarked her brother.

"Yes; and Miss Chester told me there were

others he would like to have, but he cannot, and that is what is worrying him so. Oh, Paul, don't you want to help him?"

"Of course; but what can I do yet?" he asked.

Nellie could not answer him. She knew that her brother was always at work of one kind or another.

But suddenly into Paul's mind flashed the answer to his own question. His violin! But no, he could not part with it. He said nothing to Nellie, but for the next week or two the idea haunted him, and took half the pleasure out of his practice. There was a sharp struggle between gratitude and his own inclinations, but the better feeling conquered at last. If Herr Schroeder would promise not to part with the violin, he should have it until Paul could save money enough to buy it back. It would take years to do this, he knew; and it was with a very sad heart that he presented himself to his late master a week or two later, and offered him his instrument.

"What does it mean? 'You want money?' Ach! you are in debt?" asked Herr Schroeder in surprise.

"No, no," cried Paul; "at least, yes—to Mr. Chester and to you—but——"

"You are not in debt? Then you are discouraged? You find difficulties?"

"It is not that," began Paul; and then, encouraged by his friend's kind interest, he told him the whole story.

"My boy, I will buy it," said Herr Schroeder. "I know what it costs you, but I will not seek to turn you from your generous purpose."

Paul blushed. "I don't deserve any praise, sir," he said; "it was a long time before I could make up my mind. After all, I owe everything to him; and, you know, I am hoping that some day I shall be able to buy it back again."

"Well, we will see," replied the musician. "We will speak of that afterwards; now let me hear how you have studied. Play me something."

Silently Paul took his instrument into his hands—as he thought, for the last time probably—and played as the *maestro* had never heard him play before.

"Who has taught you?" he cried, when the sweet sounds had ceased.

"Only yourself, sir," replied Paul modestly; "but I have had two years' practice since my last lesson."

"Then I am proud of my pupil," said Herr Schroeder enthusiastically. "God has given you a great talent, but you have done wonders with it; pity that you and your instrument must part—yet I am selfish. I have, however, an idea. I will write you now a cheque for fifty pounds, and lend you a good violin—not like your own, but good enough till you can buy it back again. This you shall do by playing for me at the recitals I am about to give, in the New Year. Each evening you play for me, you shall say, 'There is paid three, or perhaps five, guineas of the money to buy back my dear father's violin.' Ach! what do you say?"

"I play in public? Oh, my master, and as your pupil?" Paul stammered with a radiant face.

"We must, of course, first consult your more than father," continued Herr Schroeder; "and if he will, for the present you shall be my guest; yes indeed, for there is still something to be learnt; and it will be more convenient so. No thanks. You shall bring me a great success this winter."

Paul felt as if treading upon air as he hurried home with his cheque in his pocket, and it is difficult to say whether the giver or the receiver of it felt most pleasure in devoting it to its charitable purpose. Mr. Chester, always convinced of his *protégé's* gratitude, was profoundly touched by this fresh proof of it.

"My dear Paul," he said, when he heard of Herr Schroeder's kind proposal, "we shall miss you sadly, but I must not allow a selfish affection to stand in the way of your advancement. There is no saying to what great things this may lead for you. There is only one stipulation I wish to make; do not give up your present employment till success is assured in the career you hope to adopt."

Paul readily promised to do as Mr. Chester wished. The following week saw him and his belongings transferred to Herr Schroeder's house.

At last the eventful evening has arrived. Mr. and Miss Chester, Nellie and the boys, are at the hall. The first part of the programme is over, and there is a stir, a murmur of expectation and comment, as the youthful *débutant* steps upon the platform and makes his bow to the audience. Some of his new musical friends greet his appearance with applause; but it is not only their generous encouragement which brings such a happy look of modest confidence to his face. A moment before Herr Schroeder had handed him his father's violin, and he feels that if anything could help him to do credit to his kind patron, it is the sensation of perfect comprehension of its capabilities, and of loving familiarity with which he grasps it. Raising it to his shoulder, he listens to the first few bars of introduction, and then, as if he "had caught confessions of its secret thought," he and his violin soon hold the audience spellbound. During the excitement produced by his performance, a lady is removed from the hall in a fainting condition. At last his ordeal is over, and he is receiving the delighted congratulations of his friends, when he is informed that a lady is waiting to see him in an ante-room.

"Come, my friend," says Herr Schroeder, "perhaps it is some great person who wishes to engage your services for her next 'At Home.'"

As they entered the room together, a tall, middle-aged lady started forward.

"Paul!" she exclaimed, "don't you know me—my son! my dear boy!"

"Mother!" he cried. For it was indeed his mother restored to him at this moment of triumph, to make his happiness complete. Then Nellie was



"He and his violin soon held the audience spellbound."—*p.* 79.

sent for, and Mr. and Miss Chester. After some conversation the little family, reunited after their long separation, went together to the hotel where Mrs. Cichowski was staying, for there was much to hear and to relate on both sides. Before they parted she told them how she had been knocked down by a cab while crossing the street, and having sustained such severe injuries as to become unconscious, had been taken to a hospital. There were no means of finding out anything about her, and it was three weeks before she was able to give an account of herself, or send to inquire after her children. When her messenger returned she learnt, not only that the children had disappeared, but that the house was occupied by other tenants, who knew nothing of them. After being discharged from the hospital she spent the first money she earned in advertising their disappearance; but as it was in a paper that Mr. Chester never saw, and there was no one else who took any interest in them, the advertisement of course produced no result. Then she lost heart and courage, and after a hard struggle was obliged to go into the workhouse for a time. "God's goodness sent me friends there, who helped me to procure work," she said; "but it was a hard life, and disappointing, for all my spare time and money were spent in looking for my children, without any sign of success. At last a lady who was interested in my sad story, got me the post of attendant to the patients in a hydropathic establishment. There, a year ago, I met my kind friend and employer Miss Proctor. As soon as she was well enough, she promised me she would take me with her to London, and we would begin a fresh search for my children. We only arrived last night, and the first thing I saw on leaving the hotel this morning, was my son's name. I was sure it was you, my boy; the name is uncommon. And so Miss Proctor brought me to hear you p'ay to-night."

There is little more to tell. For a time Miss Proctor retained Mrs. Cichowski's services as companion, remaining in London that she might be near her children; but before another New Year had dawned Paul was able to provide a home for her and Nellie, near their good kind friends at the vicarage. For his first success had been followed by others; engagements poured in, and he was able to enter, with every prospect of earning fame and success, upon the career of which his father had dreamed for him, and in the hope of which he had worked so perseveringly. Nor did he forget the lessons of love to God and man learnt under Mr. Chester's care; for with the cordial approval of his mother, he devoted a tenth of all he earned to the maintenance of "the Home," in the hope that his thank-offering might be the means of helping to bring others "Out of the Shadows" of poverty, ignorance, and misery, which once lowered so darkly on his own path.

RUTH MITCHELL.